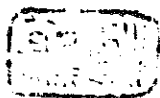


GEN NOTES



YEAR OF THE MONKEY (FEB. 16, 1980-FEB. 4, 1981)
1980, 1968, 1956, 1944, 1932, 1920, 1908---Monkey Years

Don't look before you leap. It's a good time for new ideas. Riots, revolutions, rulers changed. The monkey person is amused.

Monkeys Past and Present: Julius Caesar, Leonardo da Vinci, Modigliani, Gauguin, Winslow Homer, Grandma Moses, The Marquis de Sade, Byron, Alexander Dumas, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Taylor, Mick Jagger, The Duchess of Windsor, Harry Truman, Buster Keaton, Federico Fellini, Antony Tudor, E. J. Hackney.

Marriage: Monkeys do best with people from the Rat or Dragon years. They do the worst with Tiger, Snake or Boar--can make do with Ram or Dog.

Of all the signs in the cycle the monkey produces the most extraordinary-natured people--erratic geniuses,clever and skillful in grand scale operations,adroit in finance,inventive and original,they are able to solve problems with astonishing ease.

Asians know the monkey well. They find him enormously amusing as well as a legendary source of assistance in trouble,despite his natural bent for mischief.

Monkeys are thought to have a special affinity for the moon,especially for the new moon. At the time of the waning moon,monkeys are observed to feel depressed,and when there is a lunar eclipse,they become positively disturbed. A Zen poem reads:

*A pair of monkeys are reaching
For the moon in the water.*

Buddhists sometimes reveal an ambivalence toward the monkey, for while they venerate him on the one hand for having (according to legend) accompanied the famous priest Hsuan-tsang. to India to help him obtain and bring back to China the true texts of the Buddha's teachings,on the other hand they view him (because of his apparent snatching at the moon) as a symbol of greed. So they classify the monkey as one of the "Three Senseless Creatures":the tiger,who is always angry;the deer,who is always lovesick;and the monkey,who is always greedy and grasping (a folly for which he pays a high price if he reaches too far for the moon's reflection and is drowned).

Monkey year people have a disconcerting habit of agreeing with others. They feel more comfortable when they agree,but this sort of agreement is merely a policy tactic. If a monkey year person sets out to do something and is unable to start out immediately he often becomes discouraged and abandons the project even before he has actually tried it. Monkey people have a poor opinion of other people and tend to hold them in contempt. Yet monkey people are prized for their skills,talents,and flexibility. They are good at making decisions and have a common-sense practicality. They are fired with a deep desire for knowledge,and they read, see,and know a great deal. They have good memories and can recall fine points and details with ease. They are also passionate and strong-natured but they tend to cool off quickly. They become famous if they are allowed to pursue their own course. The monkey year man's relations with women will not be good. They must be careful about overexplaining, for by talking too much they will drive people away.

The monkey person has a great thirst for knowledge and is absolutely up to date on every thing that is going on in the world. He is so artful that he can even fool the dragon who is strong,stubborn,and no fool himself,and resist the magnetism of the tiger,whom he teases unmercifully. He has few scruples and will not hesitate to stoop to a lie as long as he is sure of getting away with it.Whatever he does,though,he is so charming and so clever at making himself liked that we cannot bring ourselves to be

cross with him.

In a nutshell, the monkey is an opportunist, and he's right to be one because his luck will bring him every opportunity. Shrewd and sly in money matters, the monkey will prove an admirable associate and collaborator in anything requiring a quick wit, clear sightedness, and perhaps a conscience that is fairly easy to satisfy. The monkey will easily fall in love, but will as quickly tire of the object of his affections and look for another. His sense of humor saves him from disaster. He knows how to laugh at his own misfortunes and draw the necessary conclusion from them.

The monkey makes a good partner for the dragon, who can profit from his guile, while the monkey in turn can make good use of the dragon's strength.

The monkey gets on well with the rat, too. The rat, fascinated by the monkey's surface brilliance, will put up with all his nonsense and love him passionately all his life, even if it's a one-sided affair.

The monkey makes fun of the tiger, but he would be better advised to treat him with respect. Any partnership is bound to result in fireworks. The monkey cannot stand violence, but to laugh at a thing doesn't mean you can't fall a victim to it. The monkey resists being devoured. Whatever the sign of his marriage partner, the monkey is likely to have a lot of children. Women of this sign have a healthy outlook on life: they have a good philosophy.

CONVERSATIONS WITH FARKAS

Hackney Speaking

On Discipline

If you are really on the path of discipline, or better, training yourself, you have to have some idea of what you are doing. For instance, why would you lead a disciplined life rather than an undisciplined one? Zen practice can take you a long way. A Zen student will do things for different reasons than from earlier times. Suppose you give up superstition or hysteria and you are on the right path because of the real reasons which are...? What do you consider the real reason for training yourself, or doing things the right way? Why do you do it?

I trained or disciplined myself from an early age. For example, in 1958 I saw the Olympic runners. I then began to train myself strenuously. I got up early, worked hard and ran every afternoon by myself for miles on the golf course. I disciplined myself for different reasons, some to overcome faults, others just to be intelligent--eating pastries when I get up in the morning makes me feel unhealthy, so I do not do it. This is not really discipline, but right practice.

What prompted you?

It was what was necessary to do. It was obvious. When you arrive home and the cats have made a mess, you clean it up. Kicking them, and groaning aloud don't change the fact that the cleaning must be done.

THE RECORD OF LIN-CHI

Mounting the High Seat in the Hall, the Master said: "There is one who lives on the summit of the peak from which he can find no way down. Another, at a busy crossroads, can go neither forward nor back. Of these two, who is ahead, who behind? Do not take them to be Vimalakirti or the Great Master Ta-shih."

Then he came down from the High Seat.

SOKEI-AN SAYS

As usual, Lin-chi mounted the High Seat, at the usual hour, in his main temple hall, and, without accepting any of the monk's questions, he immediately showed his students the great principle of Zen.

While in other schools of Buddhism, the teachers give the monks some philosophical discourse, Lin-chi, as a Zen master, immediately showed the students the great principle of Zen.

In the Eastern manner of speaking, "on the summit of the peak" is the equivalent of "on the top of Mount Sumeru"--it means the whole world.

Today we think the world is round, but in ancient days people thought the whole world was standing in the ocean and the ocean was surrounded by iron mountains, all supported by a circling wind. The sun and moon were going around, the sun taking a day and night, the moon a month. People, animals, all sentient beings, stood on this mountain. Not necessarily upright, some lay flat--worms, for instance.

A person stands upon the top of this mountain peak, in Lin-chi's way--alone. As Zen students, without any explanation, we understand Lin-chi's word immediately, but I shall offer some explanation--

It is the *state* which words cannot describe that Lin-chi indicates. It is the state of the Zen student who meditates. Seated upon a stone or under a tree--that is the description of a student who meditates. He feels as though he is sitting on the top of the whole world. There is no earth beneath him, no heaven above him. He is alone, in the center of Mind. This is the way he feels in his meditation when he attains that state.

Who is the "one" standing on the peak? Is this man or god?

This is the same "one" who, hanging by his teeth from a tree-branch, is asked: "What is the main principle of Buddhism? He cannot say a word (find a way down). He is at the summit. All Arhats reach this summit.

This was the question used by Hsiang-yen (Kyogen) to teach his pupils an important point in Zen. If this one speaks a word, he will fall. How can he answer at this moment? The 5,048 volumes of sutras (the Tripitaka) cannot explain the point to which you are now driven. This summit must be reached before attaining Buddhahood.

The Zen master who eats wild roots and herbs cooked in a broken pot is another way of describing the one who stays alone on a solitary mountain peak in this state of mind. No one offers him any food to eat or water to drink. He carries an earthen pot in which to cook his food. Perhaps one of its legs is broken. He must gather deer dung or cow dung to

make a fire. Perhaps he eats only roots or wild vegetables and acorns.

There are such Zen masters. They dislike the human world; they like to be alone. They hate to think anything in human concepts. Their minds are not suited to human words. They are direct and bright. No wonder they don't want to speak to human beings whose minds are packed full of desires and grubby thoughts.

Those who do nothing for their fellow Zen students are also called those "who dwell upon the summit of a solitary peak, who can find no path by which to come down." They have entirely severed themselves from the mind of men, and no longer live in this world. They choose to stay in the desert between sand and blue sky, or in stone caves. They have not only severed themselves from the world of men, but from the mind of man. The ancient ascetics lived in such a fashion.

I met such a man. Of course he wasn't an ascetic--he was an old man trying to find gold in the West. Near the bank of the Columbia River, he found some depression where no cold wind strikes in winter and he cultivated potatoes there. He lived alone, and once a year a little steamboat came up the river, and he visited farmers to sell those potatoes he had cultivated in the past year, in exchange for food or commodities he needed. Then he stayed alone until the next year.

I came across him and I asked him the reason why he did this. He said, "Boy, no one ever asked me the reason why I want to be alone. I am an old man. I have forgotten how to speak human words."

He was very aloof. He was just an old farmer, but if he had been born in ancient days, in China or somewhere, having had some contact with Zen temples somewhere, he would have taken up such a life.

Well, it is not necessary to stay in a depression along the Columbia River. When someone meditates a long time and practices thinking everything without human words--no demon can find a gap through which to pivot him; no deva can find a way to offer flowers to such attainment. He is absolutely in Nirvana, mind and body. He has failed to find any path by which he can come down to the world of man to give his teachings. He is like the man who imagines he has swallowed all the Buddhas at one gulp and there are no sentient beings in the world to be converted.

Many Zen masters take such an attitude. Such a one says: "I find no record that I must teach this enlightenment to man. This is my wish. I wished to be enlightened and I have accomplished this. I don't wish to teach anyone else. They enjoy their lives and it isn't my business. I don't like them because they don't understand what I am saying. I don't need to bother with them. I eat acorns and drink from the stream and live in the mountains. The blue sky is my blanket (of course it is easy in a warm climate but pretty hard in New York)." He is like Vimalakirti who sits in a ten foot square room always. Someone made a poem about it:

Yuimakitsu sitting in silence

The birds sitting in the tree tops

This is a type of attaining the almost ultimate attainment of this Zen training. We must really attain that state--not that state of mind but that state of understanding. If you imitate such men you are unbalanced. Doctors think it has something to do with a state of mind. State of mind and state of understanding are two different things.

Such a man leaves all behind him--he leaps out of his house into the woods.

Another stands at the crossroads of a city. This indicates one who does everything for the sake of others. The one who stays upon the summit of the mountain is the type of person who has forgotten human beings. But the one at the crossroads, though he does not necessarily understand truth better, has arrived at this particular state of understanding. In order to promulgate his teaching he stands at the crossroads all day, his face covered with dust and sand, accosting all comers. Today in the Orient, some Zen teachers take such an attitude.

To get food in my grandfather's day, nuns with samisens sang, like your Salvation Army. These singers still exist, but no longer as nuns. They are just beggers.

I am not standing at the crossroads, but I came to this country, lived in the center of this city, and sacrificed myself to give Oriental religion to you. And if you look at me carefully, you will find my face is covered with turd.

As for the one who can go neither forward nor back--this is a description of a certain kind of Zen master's mind. There is neither front nor back to him. He is like an empty house. Nothing can be hidden. The windows are open twenty-four hours a day. Everyone can peep into his mind; he doesn't conceal anything. He is plain in the sunshine, plain in the shadow. He has only one aim, to be plain, to be simple, to be modest, so anyone can understand him.

Hotei Osho--you call him the Smiling Buddha--was one of my brothers. Very fat, a big boy. He always carried a sack. I don't know what was in it. He wasn't a Buddha, he was a Zen master. He lived in different conditions from that of the summit, but his state of attainment was exactly the same.

Neither of these two types of student is ahead of or behind the other.

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI is expected for a March 30th-April 5th SESSHIN co-sponsored by the L.I. Rinzai-ji. Persons on our First Class mailing list will receive applications. ZN subscribers may be included in this list by request.

CORRECTION (From Mt. Baldy)

It was the darkening time of late afternoon when the sun has already gone down behind the trees. A young man--tall, thin, austere--strode into the kitchen and stopped. The Zen Master, sitting at the table across the room, raised his fist and pointed a finger at the ceiling. The young man paused only for a second. Then he too raised his fist upward. "No, no!" the Zen Master corrected. "Turn on the light."

Painful Efforts

All of you right now are extremely fortunate. When I was young, either there were no enlightened teachers about, or else, if there were, I didn't have the good fortune to meet up with them, and being from youth exceedingly thick-headed, I underwent unimaginable hardships. How uselessly I struggled! I can't forget those wasted efforts which have left a deep impression on me, and that's why, in my strong desire to have all of you comfortably and without painful exertion attain complete realization, I make it a point to come out before you like this every day and urge you on. All of you should consider yourselves fortunate! Where else could you ever find this sort of opportunity?

Although I didn't intend to tell you about this--how when I was young I struggled uselessly thanks to my own thick-headedness--if there should be among the young people here anyone who engages in painful efforts as I did, thinking it's impossible to attain complete realization without them, why then *I'll* be to blame; so although I didn't intend to tell you about all this, you young people, listen carefully! Since without engaging in painful efforts as I did you can attain complete realization, first of all let me tell you about my own painful efforts, and that way you'll realize that *you* can attain complete realization without going and doing as Bankei did; so as long as you're going to listen, keep this in mind. Well, then, let me begin... (Here follows Bankei's story of his enlightenment in the Unborn, for which see Zen Notes XXI/11, 12).

MORE BANKEI

When the Teacher was at the Nyohoji, he instructed the assembly, saying: "All of you are truly endowed with good karma to have met with a teacher! Without having to wear out your straw sandals, to exhaust your strength pursuing flowers in the sky or engage in difficult and painful practices, you can directly enter the True Dharma. Don't waste your time!"

A monk said: "All the same, there's just one thing: it seems to me it's like trying to 'cross over rivers and travel past towns'--without using a boat, much less even taking a step, you'll never get anywhere."

The Teacher declared: "As you are right here at this very moment is *it*. There's no 'getting anywhere' or 'not getting anywhere.' This is what's meant by the teaching of sudden enlightenment. Hesitate and you've lost it; waver and you've left it far behind."

A WORD OF APPRECIATION to all those who have been patient with our tardiness in various ways and who, mostly without solicitation, have generously responded to our greater needs this year and thus enabled us to complete our fiftieth year without falling into debt. Thank you.

garnata

BOOK NOTED by Mary Farkas
ZEN CULTURE by Thomas Hoover, Random House, Inc., New
York, 1977 \$8.95

When I was very young and was one day having a gownup conversation with an old philosopher, he brought to my attention that students of today (half a century ago) often do not know how to look at a book. First, you ought to look at it physically: print, paper, chapters, length, index, references, bibliography, illustrations, introduction, and whatever else there might be to it. And of course the author, publisher, and date. This way you certainly would get the "feel" of it. I add something else. I always open it casually and read a paragraph wherever my eye lights. This by itself is often enough. Following is the paragraph I opened to in Hoover's book plus a later "note" I like. That "osmosis" is a good modern word. The subject I've thought about. Though I do not agree with what he says (especially that "anti-rational" bit) and certainly wouldn't use his book as a source of reliable information, reading further, I found I enjoyed both his expression and selection of material. One could argue with almost any of his statements, but, as that highly successful writer in the same field, Nancy Wilson Ross, comments, the book as a whole is "a pleasure to read.

".. According to Ch'an (and Zen), understanding comes only by ignoring the intellect and heeding the instincts, the intuition.

Thus Zen became the religion of the antirational, what might be called the counter mind. The counter mind has taken on more concrete significance in recent years with the discovery that the human mind is not a single entity but is divided into two quite different functional sections. We now know that the left hemisphere of the brain governs the logical, analytical portion of our lives, whereas the right hemisphere is the seat of our intuitive, nonverbal perception and understanding. As far back as the ancient Greeks, we in the West have maintained an almost unshakable belief in the superiority of the analytical side of the mind, and this belief may well be the most consistent distinguishing quality of Western philosophy. By contrast, the East in general and Zen in particular have advanced the opposite view... Ask a Japanese to "explain" a Zen rock garden and he will inspect you blankly, uncomprehending. The question will never have occurred to him, and he may try to spare you embarrassment by pretending you never asked or by changing the subject. Should you persist, he may go out and take its dimensions for you, thinking by this objective, modern response to satisfy your Western requirements. When you stop asking and surrender to a kind of intuitive osmosis, you will have begun the journey into the culture of the counter mind."

Copyright 1980
Published monthly by
(The First Zen Institute of America, Inc.
113 East 30th St., New York, NY 10016

Vol. XXVII, No. 1, Jan. 1980
Mary Farkas, Editor
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED