

ZEN NOTES



February 19, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett,

At the risk of annoying you by my frequent letters regarding the proposed rendering of the Awakening of Faith, I want to tell you of my thoughts that have been taking shape during the last few days.

In the 1900 edition there is a sentence that speaks of Amida Buddha and because of which the Shinshu has always counted this Shastra as one of its authoritative texts. But as it contradicts all the rest of the scripture there is ground for believing that it is an interpolation. Prof. S. and I have talked this over and he knows that I believe that it is an interpolation. Perhaps that is one of the reasons he dislikes my interpreting the scripture, as it might involve him. He as an authority in literary criticism of Mahayana texts could hardly take that stand, and moreover he is a professor in a Shinshu university, it would jeopardize his position and standing if he did so. But I as a free lance, could thus interpret it and by so doing would restore the scripture in the good graces of the Zenshu.

Now if we accept Prof. S's refusal of his approval of my making this interpretation and I go ahead with it on my own responsibility, he is free of any connection with it. I do not know that this enters into his mind in this connection, but it may, and if it does, he will positively refuse to approve my having anything to do with it.

I thought I would bring this phase of the matter to your attention in connection of my suggestion that you act as middleman in an effort to get his guarded approval.

I note in your last letter you write that Mrs. Suzuki does not have a very high opinion of Ogata san, and you ask my estimate of him. I know Ogata very well and think a great deal of him. He is only a boy in spirit as well as years, but he is earnest and faithful. He feels that he has a mission especially to present the Dharma to children. Mrs. S. as you know takes very strong prejudices against people. She has always disliked Ogata, and until he went to Shokokuji she always insisted he had had no monks training, which was untrue, but she kept repeating it. Mrs. S. likes to pose as the only guide of foreigners to the riches of Mahayana, and Ogata by his friendly helpfulness was interfering with her monopoly, therefore on all occasions she deprecated his ability. But within his limits I know he is all right. It is a pity he has not more general education but that can not be helped, and as long as his heart is right he will be useful either in Japan or in Calif. Of course he will never be a scholarly and advanced literateur, but he will fill a place of real usefulness. Yours sincerely,

Dwight Goddard

March first, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett:

Again I thank you for your gracious letter; I am quite unworthy of it and it made me feel very humble but grateful.

I wrote to Mrs. Forman as you suggested and received a reply saying that she would be very glad to meet you in Buffalo on your return and would so write you. Thank you for your kindness in this.

There were one or two things in your letter that I will answer at once. The Roshi Sokatsu Shaku, the Master of the N.Y. Sasaki, is a militant Rinzai Zen, of the same family as Suzuki and Senzaki, but he is an odd personality. He is quite intense and was bitterly disappointed that he was not counted the successor of Shoyen Shaku, so he set out to make a place for himself. He is not liked very well by the others of the "family" because of his aggressive personality and unconscious egoism. He set out to train many leaders, whom he imbued with his missionary zeal, and then organized them into the Ryoann something, or The Union of Independent Zen temples. He has no proper temple of his own, but has a very pretty house with a nice garden that he planned and planted and tends all by himself. Then he has a zendo for his disciples, but when he needs a temple he goes to a neighboring one. I called upon him at a time when I was not in very good favor because I had declined to submit to Sasaki's insistence that I become his disciple and obey him in all things. But slowly the prejudice wore off, and I had a very nice visit with him. His senior disciple I liked very much, a university graduate in philosophy, and very friendly sort. I think he is all right, in spite of Suzuki's and Senzaki's lack of

appreciation. He is certainly in earnest.

Your question as to suitable books for Zen beginners has puzzled me for a long time. I do not have a teacher's mind, so I feel helpless. But of one thing I feel sure, that a long and varied reading of general Buddhist literature is needed, to clear away the inherited concepts that so block the entrance of new and different ideas. We sure have got to be patient with beginners. I generally recommend first, *The Light of Asia*, and then some of the general books "about" Buddha and his gospel. This feeling of lack was why I wrote the *Golden Path*, I wanted something that was complete and related to present day things, so as to give a starting place. I feel also that we do not want to give too many books to beginners or give the impression that they are necessary. Zen Buddhism is the *practice* of the Noble Path, not what books say about it, or philosophies based upon it. It is first, last and always, the practice of the Noble Path especially the last stage, dhyana. But why am I writing this to you? You who are so much better a teacher. My general book business died out very quickly no body wanted any Buddhist books, even enquirers didnt want to buy; but any books you may want I can get for you and at better prices than the stores will allow you. Tell me what you want.

About your coming trip to New York. I wish very much you would meet Rev. Shigetsu Sasaki, 63 West 70th st. N.Y.. You ought to know him. In some ways he is

autocratic and blunt of the old school Zen masters, but underneath he is true. He has an artists temperament, is an excellent wood carver of Buddha images, and earns his money by repairing all kinds of art treasures for Tiffany. When you meet him try and turn the conversation to his artwork and ask to see some of his carvings. I think you will like him, in spite of his bluff assertive exterior.

If you could spare an hour for me while you are in New York and will make an appointment, or tell me where you will stay, I would like to call on you while you are there. I have been planning to go to New York anyway and I could combine things. There is another man I would like very much to have you meet. Daniel A Cahn, 660 Riverside Drive. He is the head of a big "ladies Hat" wholesale house, and the leading spirit of the New York lodge of Theosophists, or the division that repudiate Mrs Besant and go back to Madam Blavatsky, only Mr Cahn, who is quite a personality is a sincere believer in Buddhism, and is working to get Theosophists back of Madam Blavatsky to their original Buddhist beginnings. You will get ideas from him all right. His business address is or was, 65 West 35th St. I think the name of the Shop is "The Tannenbaum Ladies Hats."

Since sending you the Ashvaghosha MSS I have kept steadily studying and meditating upon it and there has come to me added insight into the development of his thought. I enclose the "Contents" page which I wish you would put

with the rest when you return it. You may never have thought of it, but the Indian approach to philosophy is different from ours. They first bring forward the main conclusion, then they fill in the background with detail as though they were painting a picture. They have no idea of sequence and system, it all goes into the hat or rather the picture. We love an ordered sequence, beginning with a supposed premise and advancing by logical steps to a conclusion. Anything different from this confuses and baffles us. It is because of this that I feel it necessary to rewrite the translations of these old scriptures. For our ordinary minds they need to be rearranged and systematised very drastically. Professor Suzuki with all his insight and erudition does not have an orderly or systematic mind and therefore does not feel the need of rewriting "working over" these old scriptures as I do. On the whole I am sorry I referred the question to him, but no I am not sorry, for if I had not this new light on the development of its theme would not have come. After the MSS gets back it will take about a month to retype it, and then I could be free to go to Japan and talk it over with him. But when your valued reaction comes it may offer a much better plan. This is not to hurry your examination, but only to bring the matter up to date.

Yours sincerely,
Dwight Goddard

March 14, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett,

I am writing at this time to simply acknowledge the receipt of your recent letters and to express my gratitude for them. I am certainly enriched by your wise sympathy and helpfulness.

In regard to your instruction about the practice of dhyana, at present I can only thank you. There is much to study and reflect upon. At first it depressed me because I saw how far away the ideal is, but later I saw that there was nothing impossible and that the difficulties lay within my own mind. Moreover, I daily repeat the phrase: However difficult the way of Buddha may be, I vow to follow it to the end. Fortunately time does not enter in, to condition it, and patience can accomplish wonders.

In regard to the problem of publishing the Awakening of Faith MSS. I thank you sincerely for your painstaking consideration and measure of approval. I note that your suggestion and Professor Suzuki's wishes practically coincide, and they weigh very heavily in my mind, but as a result of your letter, the problem seems to divide into three angles, which have to be considered separately before a synthetic result can be arrived at.

1. There is the angle of Professor Suzuki's wishes and feelings to be considered.
2. There is the angle of its wisdom in relation to the spread of the Dharma in English speaking countries.
3. There is the angle of its relation to me personally as to my duty in the matter.

As to the first nothing more may be said at present. As to the second. It seems to me that the whole weight is on the side of publishing. The reason that prompted Ashvaghosha in writing was to make the Mahayana clear to common people. He said there were other scriptures that sufficiently expounded it for scholars; it was his desire to explain it for common people. Then there are seven great Chinese commentaries on it and every Zen master expounds it in lectures. If they saw the need of interpretation so universally why is the need over at this time? I am not convinced here. As to the third. It is the duty of every follower of the Blessed One to spread and explain the Dharma to the best of his ability and in his own way. My poor talent seems to be in the direction of this and the other interpretations. I am a poor disciple in practice; I am no exact scholar; but I think I do have a gift of imagination by which I can see into and analyse and express in a clear and inspiring way. It is my "stuff". I feel a compulsion to go ahead a "and do my stuff", This may be egoism, but I am humble in my purpose, and truly desire to do what a good disciple ought to do without regard to special difficulties and conditions. Fortunately, the problem has not to be decided immediately for the return of the MSS with your many and practical suggestions and my own thinking, has made it necessary to rewrite a great many pages and even to reconsider the whole plan of division into chapters. I enclose a new plan of Chapter divisions,

that I am working on now.

One thing that has impressed me of late is my one-sided dependence on Japanese Zen. I feel I should examine into Chinese Ch'an and the coming of Mr Wong's letter from Ceylon offering to help me, has decided me to go to him as

early as I can, and see if I can profit by the association. But just at present my funds are all tied up in the Cleveland bank and I must perforce remain here for the present. This will give me time to rewrite the MSS and reconsider that problem.
Yours sincerely,
Dwight Goddard

EDITOR'S NOTES on "Inside the FZI"

which in this issue shows and tells something of what was happening in 1933.

Mrs. (Georgia) Forman, a Social Registerite from Buffalo who appears in the cover-photo with Ruth Everett (Sasaki) carrying a pilgrim hat--as you can see--responded to some extent to Ruth Everett's attempts to interest her in Zen. (Mentioned in March first letter.)

Daniel Cahn (mentioned in Goddard's March first, 1933 letter) along with his wife Belle are listed as paying \$5 tuition (for several months in 1928) in the first chapter of the Journal of the Ryomo Zen Buddhism Institute, the American Branch.

The second chapter (so described by Florence, later Audree, Kepner, the Recording Secretary) has as its second item the receipt of the sum of \$25 for current expenses from Dr. Dwight Goddard (his first and only payment).

In his March first, 1933, letter, Dr. Goddard says that Sasaki was "repairing all kinds of art treasures for Tiffany." It was Yamanaka Company that employed Sokei-an for restoring and repairing art treasures. (I vaguely recall being told some of them might have belonged to the Cleveland Museum. A fine display of their treasures is currently until May 17 at the Japan House Gallery, 333 E. 47th St.)

Apologies to Dr. Goddard's memory for a typo we made in copying his letter. "Shaky", line was correctly typed by him as "Shaku."

CONVERSATIONS WITH FARKAS

Noted by Hackney

Neurotic people or crazy people who have delusions of one sort or another are enormously judgmental about others. I remember when some older women in a rest home I visited would want my attention. I used to spend a few minutes with each one. Perhaps one would take longer than the others felt was legitimate. There was no question in their minds that she was doing this on purpose and to them. They were all of one mind about this so anytime the others did anything they knew what was going on--then they would complain to me and say "She shouldn't have done that..." They know. The ones that monkey know all about the others that monkey. What they don't know is that they are revealing themselves. (There was a famous Zen master who came to visit here. I was not interested in him until I saw what he was wearing. He had a sleeveless coat that was edged with monkey fur. It was so stylish that I asked him to give a talk.)

It is the same as when women sense jealousy in other women. They are really telling about themselves.

The only way your mind can deal with this kind of thing is when it has really made that which is unconscious, conscious, which is what psychoanalysis is supposed to enable you to do. And which Zen in fact makes you do, if you do it.

There is so much the mind can do in an instant because it works like a computer. There are the operations that take place in between the presentation of the problem and the presentation of the answer. They must be done at fantastic speed. How do they do it?

Look at the action of the mind of the person who is first looking (or sitting). He thinks the mind-stuff, the data, the details of it are what is the important part to notice. But this is not true at all. You only notice the process which is that at that moment your mind is thinking. This was made clear to me by hearing how others practice. Take walking for instance--their idea about walking is totally different from being with it. Their idea is to *know* that your foot is touching the ground, to *know* that your heel is touching, to *know* that this, this and this is happening. You concentrate on it. Zen is different. Nevertheless, one should be able to do both.

From the RECORD OF BANKEI
Translated by HASKEL

Since the Buddha Mind which each of you received at birth is not "created", it doesn't contain even a speck of delusion, so anyone who goes about saying, "I'm deluded because I'm an unenlightened being" is a person of terrible unfiliality who unjustly accuses his own parents. The reason is that within the Buddha Mind which you received from your parents at birth, the Buddhas of the past and the people of the present too are all one substance without any difference between them. It's just like the water of the ocean: In the depths of winter, the water freezes and turns to ice, with the ice assuming various forms--angular, or round. But when it melts, it all just becomes the one water of the ocean. When someone realizes the Unborn (nature of) the Buddha Mind, that's the water *itself*, just as it is, without anything obstructing it. And when you attach to things that confront you, giving rise to thoughts, creating all different sorts of "things" and changing your Buddha Mind, it's not the least bit different.

Copyright Peter Haskel

SOKEI-AN SAYS

The True Word It was told that, when the baby Buddha was born, he said: "Between heaven and earth, I am the only one to be revered." After this, whatever he spoke during his whole life was just the extension of his first word. If you don't understand, ask any baby, "What is the way of true Buddhism?" The baby will answer with the true word. If you don't understand, and do not find Buddhism this way, you will never find it.