

ZEN NOTES



佐々木指月

SOKEI-AN SAYS

The Mahayana-Hinayana aspects of Buddhism were often on Sokei-an's mind in 1933. During the year he gave three lectures on the subject. The first, given 2/19/33 titled The Middle Way, appeared in ZN XIV/3, 1967. Three Buddhisms was given April 16th, a day before his letter on the subject to Goddard. A third, given July 29, 1933, was the 6th article in a series titled Principles of Buddhism and concerns itself with the obligation of the enlightened to pass on their wisdom as their recompense for having received it.

THREE BUDDHISMS

Buddhism has changed three times throughout its history. We call its three phases Arhat Buddhism to be attained by one's own exertion; Bodhisattva; and Buddhism provided by something other than one's own self.

In the third, Buddhism is revealed to one by a power that is not in him. He is humble and ignorant, but the invisible Buddha reveals his law to him. He does not exert himself to attain the law of Buddha—but the Buddha, by his mercy, shows him the law—the mysterious power of the universe.

Today in Japan there are two Buddhisms, each having their own followers. I shall explain how the Buddha's Buddhism came to be displayed in these different aspects.

While the Buddha was living, his Buddhism was called that of the Arhat. This was the Buddhism for monks—not for lay followers. From that arhat Buddhism, the other branch grew out, extended. It is called the Buddhism of the

bodhisattva—for lay followers. The third is called the Buddhism revealed by Buddha.

The first two belong to that Buddhism to be obtained by one's own exertion, and the last is Buddhism revealed by the power of another. From the source of arhat Buddhism, it developed into the Buddhism of the bodhisattva, and from that came the third development. These are natural developments.

I am a Zen student, but I have these three faiths in myself, and I prove my experience because I underwent three different periods in my understanding.

Arhat Buddhists do not have faith in a God outside as the Vedic, or Brahman, religion taught in India before the time of the Buddha. The Buddha refused to make a vow to an invisible God and Goddess, and did not follow the ceremonies of that ritual religion. He went alone, passed six years, and found his own faith within himself. It was not so simple—visiting one teacher after another. I am not blindly adhering to the description of the Buddha attaining enlightenment in six years; his thoughts developed from his youth to his maturity—eighty years. I do not believe that the Buddha left only the four Agamas, but that he left many little Mahayana sutras. The Lankavatara Sutra is almost like a memorandum containing all the different elements of his teaching, and certainly came from many older sutras.

We can understand these fragmentary notes of the four volumes; others, we suspect, are missing. I think many teachings have come from the very lips of the

Buddha. We have to search through many private sutras for this teaching, not depending only upon the four Agamas.

Certainly the first teaching was the arhat teaching; to refuse life among human beings (ordinary life) and put yourself into a formula, establish the rule. It took great effort to observe the commandments, and their attainment was like digging a diamond from the earth. The true self inside is connected to the universe--this is not a notion or a vision, but the true light enshrined within. To illustrate this, the Buddha said, "It is like a fire that cannot burn itself up, like a sword that cannot cut itself, like an eye that cannot see itself."

The real Buddha in oneself is the absolute. It shines and it performs, but it is invisible to itself. The one who attains this understanding is an arhat. This is really the ultimate of Buddhism in the Buddha's day. This understanding has no connection with the phenomenal world--the inner light is abstracted from phenomenal existence. The arhat stays there and keeps himself in that shining and burning fire of the Absolute.

This changed into the bodhi-sattva religion--became the natural development for that invisible fire. It performs its functions: eating, sleeping, talking, etc. All the performances of the human being are displayed in his own understanding. This life is not a vision--not something to be abominated. This life is true. Nothing else really exists in the universe. This is the Buddhism of the concrete.

Arhat is the Buddhism of the abstract.

In this understanding, bodhi-sattva religion reached the ultimatum: "This human being is Buddha and *this* land is the Pure Land."

Here, once more, through our experience, Buddhism undergoes a change: Now this same power is revealed, not only in us, but in everything. It is the same power, but not coming from our own intention. The cat, dog, tree, perform the marvelous function of daily life, and we recognize a power greater than ourselves.

Through the attainment of arhat *and* Bodhi, we realize that though we are small and feeble, we are eternal. Then we will reach the other faith, knowing that the Buddha Vairochana, or Amitabha (the same as the Christian idea of God) is in us. We feel the communication between *this* and *that*. We have now come to another point of view of religion.

The Buddha foretold all three phases. His Buddhism, through a long period, came back to the old forms. At first, his was a revolt against the old.

Now, the Buddhist has faith in his understanding. We have faith through our wisdom.

In the Buddha's teaching, the follower passes through these three stages, makes clear his elemental faith in religion, and comes to the final conclusion as to what religion is.

These three developments are natural developments. We do not know how far we can go, but perhaps we cannot go far beyond these three aspects.

INSIDE THE FZI, 4

The Yankee Buddhist, Dwight Goddard, the Chicago lady, Ruth Everett, and the Japanese teacher, Sokei-an Sasaki, in the middle of 1933 were drawn together and then went their separate ways, one to Ceylon, one to Japan and one in New York City. Their communications during these months (including Everett's and Dr. Suzuki's at secondhand) acquaint us with their interrelated energies as they stir up karmic waves still continuing. The meeting between Everett and Sokei-an, a rapprochement between Sokei-an and Goddard (who did not strike a harmony at their earliest coming together in 1929, mentioned by Goddard in the April 13th letter) and the hopes and fears for the future of the two male wayfarers--foreshadowed their mutual and individual futures, now our past.

Dr. Goddard to Ruth Everett

April 13, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett:

Your note is received. I am so glad you found Mrs. Forman an attractive personality: truly thoughtful and cultured personalities are so rare who are interested in the Dharma, that we must cherish them, as an antidote to the other kind (if for no other reason).

As to Mr. Sasaki. I, too, have been a little repelled by his manner. When I first met him as he came at my invitation and expense to visit me. He came dressed nicely but in a rather pronounced California sports suit, and at once tried to dominate me as though he were my master, which I resented. Then on

other occasions I have felt a kind of egoistic self-assertion in him that I do not like. He evidently admires and seeks to imitate the older type of Zen Masters who first sought to repel seekers until he saw in them a desire and purpose earnest enough to be worthy of his teaching. His intimates always speak well of him, and in the last two years I have increasingly thought better of him, and have made up my mind that he is all right as far as sincerity and earnestness of purpose is concerned. But still the question remains whether he is the right or best kind of a type for earnest American seekers of the Way. I like your self-control in being able to "mark time" when you think it wise to do so; I am too apt to be moved by impulse to be moved by circumstances, and yet in my sober moments I more and more realize that the time is not yet ripe for much aggressive propaganda. There is need for Buddhist ideas to be more widely circulated and have time to sink in more deeply. Patience is a cardinal Buddhist virtue and I am glad you have so generous a measure of it. You must be our Gen. Foch of this campaign and think for us more impulsive barbarians. This is the reason why I have felt so strongly about this Awakening of Faith interpretation; for I think it the one best Scripture to lay a safe and broad foundation and I am very earnest to get it in place as early as possible. (There goes my impatience again).

My bank, the Union Trust of Cleveland, is being reorganised.

The trust department appears to be all right, thanks be, but the commercial department plans a present dividend of 40% and after that uncertain. But that 40% is for the present tied up, so my plans must wait for that to become liquid or some new dividends of the trust appear before I can start on my proposed trip.

I think I have spoken to you about the "urge" that is always drawing me toward China. It is particularly active at this time and as always toward South China and the temple of Hui-neng. I shall first go to Ceylon to be with Wong Mou-lam, but if he can be persuaded after a time to return with me to China and study together in the haunts of Hui-neng, I shall be particularly pleased. Even my feeling of helplessness in the face of a foreign language thins away in the face of the Chinese language. I already know a little of it, and from my success in memorising a few short sutras, I believe I can yet read the Buddhist scriptures in their Chinese dress, or at least be able to understand a Chinese Roshi's instruction and teaching.

I am very grateful for our acquaintance, your fellowship heartens me wonderfully..

Sincerely,

Dwight Goddard

Two feet of snow last night; very beautiful but impossible at present.

Sokei-an to Dr. Goddard

April 17, 1933

Dear Dr. Goddard,

I must write a letter to you for the word which the patriarch of Japan Suma Temple, Rt. Rev. Hogaku

Seigoken suggested to me to send you, and a particular pt. of Buddhism which I wish to tell you before you sail to Ceylon as my advice.

About 10 days ago Mrs. Everett of Chicago came here to meet me. Then she told me that you are not quite contented with Zen and you are going to hunt some Hinayana teaching in Ceylon. Relating to it, I decided to point out for you my understanding of Hinayana Buddhism.

Buddhism from Buddha's Buddhism changed its phase at least three times.

1st is Arhat Buddhism. 2nd Bodhi-sattva Buddhism. 3rd is Dhyana Buddhism. 1st is Hinayana. 2nd is Mahayana. 3rd is ultra-Mahayana. All these have their best points and also their short-comings. As a Buddhist in his thoughts these 3 must be amalgamated. Shortcoming of Hinayana is just that the monks exist for their own salvation. As a consequence of this the monk brushes the secular life aside. And the shortcoming of Mahayana is that the monk exists to associate with secular life--in consequence he falls into the pit of Antinomianism. And shortcoming of 3rd is that blind faith without enlighten oneself one tries to depend upon protection of Amitabha or Vairocana as in the Jodo or Shingon sects.

However these 3 phases are the natural development of Buddhism, my understanding of Buddhism through these 25/30 years. I underwent experience that I have passed through these 3 aspects. Before you go to search Buddhism

in Ceylon, I wish you would ponder this. I trust your understanding of Buddhism does not make any particular inclination toward any one of these.

In regard to the next point I wish to tell the patriarch's suggestion. He says that you are searching for a Zen Master, that he is contented with little provision for his desire and he could live absolutely celibate and that he does not expect to have any remuneration for his services. He said if you search for any Zen Master in such a condition there will be no one to answer to your request throughout Japan, but if you change your idea to search for a Zen Master in the condition that you want one who has great desire and does not mind living not practicing celibacy and he wants money--then there will be a regiment of Zen Masters come at your request.

Then he said his proposal in answer to your request he would come and be contented with small wants and celibacy and he does not want any money but if you support about 20 disciples and him, food vesture and house absolutely and also fare to come any time he will gladly come. This is all in regard to this matter.

And I wish to add my word. In your letter you suggested I might come to the country and would perform my function without wood-carving etc.--but in my faith I would not push myself toward any direction (artificially) factitiously. If there is any relation arranged under the perfect guidance? guide of the Buddha nature it would

develop naturally. I am existing myself to be perfection of teaching hard every day and nothing else I wish to do.

I fear to speak too many words for nothing therefore I stop my writing here.

In the name of the 3 treasures,
Soshin Sasaki

A postscript on a letter from Goddard to Everett dated April 20, 1933
I had a curious letter from Rev. Sasaki of New York saying that you had told him that I had become dissatisfied with Zen Buddhism and was going to Ceylon to study Hinayana etc. How did he get that big idea?

Dr. Goddard to Ruth Everett
June 24, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett:

Thank you for your sympathetic letter and its counsel. I will try to profit by it.

The most important news is the receipt of a courteous and friendly letter from Prof. Suzuki, withdrawing his objections to my publishing the interpretation of his Ashvaghosha. I will send it to you just as soon as I am through with it. It is just as I surmised, the objection is more on the part of Mrs. S. than of him. He writes that he will be unable to make the new translation of it right away as the more important translations of the Gandavyuha and Prajna-paramita must take precedence. He writes that the Zen Essays Second Series is out at last and of his sending me a copy very soon. The Third Series is about half corrected and he hopes it will be ready for distribution before Christmas.

Dr. Goddard to Ruth Everett

July 22, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett:

He says the new Chinese MSS that he has gotten hold of throw much light on the early history of Chan in China, and its history can now be more fully and accurately stated.

The next news is that Luzac finally decided not to publish my MSS, and has at last returned it to me after keeping it four months. I am now planning to publish it myself, and this time I am going to distribute it gratis as the sale is so small. I am tempted to print it nicely with a semi-flexible cover, so that it will be valued for its nice binding as well as its teaching. It will cost double what it would to bind in paper but will be much more likely to be valued and kept rather than be lightly thrown into the waste paper basket...

My plans for the winter are in flux. I have given up an early start partly on account of money shortage and partly to give me time to publish and distribute the Awakening MSS. The money supply will be straightened out during July as my Cleveland bank is re-organised. I guess I have been disturbed too much during the past three months and I am looking forward to a more tranquil fall and long sea voyage and home returning to China for the winter. My meditation has suffered by my restlessness, but I try to go through the form at least every day, and the suggestions I have received from your letters and article are helping me. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Dwight Goddard

Do not bother to answer this.

I am prompted to write you a few lines to tell you that I am beginning to feel that I am making some progress in my dhyana practice. I hardly dare to say so, but ever since I began at your suggestion to sit cross-legged there has been a gradual clearing in my mind. There is far less feeling of compulsion and a subtle contentment as though at last I had found my home. Today even I had a kind of answer to my baffling Mu-koan. If I was in Kyoto, I would like very much to spring it on Roshi. But of course by tomorrow it may evaporate, and then again it may not. Wouldn't it be great if I actually had made some progress?

Another bit of news. I have sold the Union Village "hermitage" property. The reaction that came to me after giving it publicity in the last issue of Zen, all seemed to impress me that I was on the wrong track, I was putting the cart before the horse. Trying to provide a shelter before there was a Brotherhood to shelter. I have had a good many inquiries but they all were from learners who wanted a home free from monetary anxiety where they could get some "thing". I did not have a single response from one who wanted to be a Buddha. There came over me an impression that I had once before long ago, that I must find a true Bodhisattva and then out of respect for him take good care of him so that together we may help others to find and follow the Path. When I find him,

then I think it will be easy to locate the hermitage and all the rest will follow naturally. Perhaps it is all "just planning" as usual, but I feel better about it, at any rate.

Another bit of news is that my money affairs have been straightening themselves out so that I can start on my trip now just as soon as the book is printed and distributed. The book is being printed at a big establishment in New York who definitely promise that I shall have the bound books August 11. You may be interested to know that after a good deal of thinking I decided to make it a small pocket size book with a flexible cover dark green printed in gold with a lotus design. I think it will be quite attractive. Then I have decided not to make it a business venture but to definitely from the beginning plan to give it to any who ask for it as my service to a needy world. At present I think I can make the *Tatsuta Maru* that leaves Los Angeles September 9 and yet have a few days with the *Sangha* at Los Angeles. I will have to mail books pretty fast to do it, but I think I can succeed.

I went to New York recently and kept near Sasaki San. I found him rather blue, but quite decided to hang on. Hitherto a rich Japanese, the New York buyer for Yamana has stood back of him making up any deficit at the close of the year, but now he has notified Sasaki that as times are now he is not sure he can do it much longer. I seemed to get closer to Sasaki this time

than ever before. He frankly said that he understood me better than he did, and his experience thus far in New York had convinced him that my way of solitude might after all be better for America than his and Sensaki's way of having a City center and frequent lectures and practice hours. He said just as Sensaki wrote me once that he felt he must continue his old way, but that if I could make an isolated hole where he could come and stay for periods to refresh his spirit, he would be heartily glad. Now if I can on this coming trip find my Chinese Master and with him found my hermitage, perhaps next time in California somewhere, I shall feel that some progress has at last been made. How I wish that Wong Mou-lam may be the man.

When I started I only planned a brief letter just to relieve my feeling but it has run on shamefully. You must bear with it and me.

Yours sincerely,
Dwight Goddard

Summer 1933

Sokei-an to Ruth F. Everett

One morning I found a letter in my mail box. For a little while I was in a quandary. To see that unfamiliar handwriting on the envelope and that unknown address. But that quandary was ephemeral and I evolved my memory from that stylish handwriting and before I opened the envelope I understood the letter is from you. I was surprised that the Japanese Consul General knows my decision to at-

tend Gupie's meeting in Chicago. I am quite sure you are not familiar with this expression to call that General executive of the World Fellowship of Faiths Das Gupta. He is an old Gupi to us. I thought he is composing some Coney Island religious show in Chicago but I am very glad it seems to take a little more sober aspect.

My teacher ordered me from Japan to join the meeting, not knowing its real feature and I write him to ask his decision that it is important my attending it.

And I have not received answer yet. I cannot find the real purpose of this religious meeting yet. The point is not in my grip to make my shoe heels clatter toward Chicago.

Yes, I decided once to go there, but now I decide not to go. I fear that I shall disappoint the General Consul. A few days ago I wrote a letter to the Gupie that I will come definitely. I would do anything in whatever condition I am if there were real virtue in it. I do not care to give away this little temple or I lose my life but I know so well about the nature of this religious congregation in Chicago and I feel very sorry for those teachers who come from Japan paying the large expense. To talk about what is a question in this Chicago Gupta meeting. Maybe Bicky McConel (?) is to be a figure head but I am quite sure he cannot do much with this world fellowship of faiths. If this preconceived idea about this meeting of mine is wrong I am very glad.

I fully appreciate your kind-

ness to entertain me as your guest in your home during the length of the gathering. Spiritually I am already received as a friend of you and your daughter in your home. I am grateful. I understand you will visit Japan this fall and you are permit to me to ask you to send my message to my own teacher through your courtesy.

Unfortunately my teacher is now in the feeble condition of health. I fear that he cannot entertain you for a visit. However there is some time still before you leave for Japan. According to the tidings from Japan might I ask you accept your suggestion.

Dr. Goddard visited me here several weeks ago. He stated not much about you but told me enthusiastically about your patience in learning Japanese customs and I did not reply much to him about it but I said to him that your daughter told me my mother fainted many times trying to acquire the Japanese habit of sitting and we looked at each other astonishingly in the white light of Broadway where our conversation was taking place. (I and Dr. G.)

Do we have any more opportunity to see each other before you sail? Perhaps not. And please remember me to your daughter. There will be no more staring contest in our next meet. I hope you safe going to Japan.

(Bon voyage) K and also hope you the gateless gate of Mu.
Sincerely,
Sokei-an

Sokei-an to Ruth F. Everett

Fall of 1933

My teacher's villa is in Yanata of Shimosa. It is a little country town. If you will go there I will write an introduction to my teacher that you can carry with you. I believe he is not confined to his bed always.

You ask me about my future plans. I do not plan for future but when I get old and my hand tremble and my eye grows dim I will go west with my one donkey and call one Japanese railroad from one to other and I die in desert. Bur Dr. Goddard write me recently he will make a home for old Buddhist monks in America. It is a wonderful idea. I am going to ask him to give me a little ground for my tombstone. You said through my busy days that gateless gateway seems part of another existence. That is a good hit. Dr. G. these days occasionally makes a very good hit. I think he is advancing in Zen baseball. I am very glad I find some Buddhist friends these days. It throws some music in my loneliness. Here in New York I am ssmply living among the deaf and mute.

Sincerely your,
(Unsigned)

Dr. Goddard to Ruth Everett

August 22, 1933

My dear Mrs. Everett:

Your letter of July 27 came promptly but was put aside for a convenient time to reply adequately which convenient time has never come. I have been busy sending out the new book--Principle and

Practice--sent about 600 to individuals addresses and one hundred each to Public libraries and College libraries. May some of the seed thus broadcasted find suitable ground in which to germinate.

During the last few days my active mind has been dreaming about my task after I return from China. First I want to realise my old dream of a hermitage for true hearted Zen monks, this time in California perhaps. Second I dream of an organization to bear some such name as THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION for Dhyana Buddhism. In Los Angeles there is a City attorney who is now acting as Treasurer for Senzaki's sangha, and whom I more and more like. In San Francisco there is a Naval doctor J.C. Thompson who has some money he has set aside to will to the endowment of the Dharma. I want to get with their assistance a formal and legal association organised capable of receiving and holding property to be used for the propagation of Dhyana Buddhism in our distracted country, and which can keep an oversight over the scattered sanghas and be in position to make grants in aid to suitable ones or to individual monks living the homeless life in hermitages. It is a grandiose dream and my thankless task in it may be to do the thing which I most abominate--passing the Buddha's begging bowl about, that it may be surely founded legally practically and spiritually and financially. Now if I can only find my Chinese Zen Master to come back with me from China and be the spiritual head

of it, what a success it might be. But alas there is so much conditioning karma to be matured. Nevertheless "It is not I that is to do it, Prajna that works through us".

I leave here August 24 by motor-bus for Los Angeles. My address until Sept. 9 will be 441 Turner St. Los Angeles. After that in care of Chase National Bank, Shanghai, China.

With all good wishes and affectionate regards,

Yours sincerely,
Dwight Goddard

I do so hope you will find something in the new book to approve.

CONVERSATIONS WITH FARKAS

Noted by Hackney

The Buddha is never shown in transport--in fact, the opposite. He has a cool, even mind. The business of trance or intoxication is attachment of the highest order. Sokei--an meant by trance something quite different.

The idea of sublimating sexuality to a spiritual realm is different from wallowing in what some call "love" for God. In Shingon you invite the deity and he comes and there is complete union expressed by a mudra which in popular sign language expresses sexual congress. This is thought of as yoga--linked, joined--two becoming one. But this joining is the opposite of the great excitement for God which is being expressed by those who speak of their "love" of God. What they are describing

is not union, but the *desire* for union. The manifestation of Shiva is different. Shiva is creating, is the Creator and Destroyer.

If you are doing the dance of Shiva, you are expressing not the excitement that is in it, but the emanation or shining, the putting forth of ki perhaps. The giving out of Shiva is not the joining with the absolute or the taking of something in. It is creation.

Desire is the small one who wants to be completed. But Shiva's giving out is the opposite. You can say the dance of Shiva is the giving out, not the getting. It is complete. It is not the little sperms rushing out to get at an egg. The one manifesting the Buddha Mind or Tao is the Source.

People express their desire for something which is sensual. It is the desire for the other--dualism. Desire does not exist in unity. Like a man says, "I love you so much I want to eat you up." Look at the art of Rubens--big, fat infantile or animal bodies that can be eaten. This taking in has to do of course with orality--I want to eat it! It is all to take in, to absorb, to devour. It isn't that there are two--man and woman--and they are mutually interrelated. It is that one devours the other.

The destructive aspect of Shiva is taking it all back--this is breathing.

The first dance I ever wanted to do was Shiva. In a sense, Tudor has begun some of his dances this way. There is nothing, and something rises and begins and goes out, performs and then comes back.

zen notes

Or, there is one--you start with one-- it becomes many. Then all drops off and becomes one again. But Whether you think of the one as enclosed with skin or rimless and empty is a major question. Everything comes from this empty one.

What about going out and teaching? The people who are studying Buddhism now are often studying it--just as Sokei-an said they were doing in Japan--as a profession. They want a way to make their livelihood. They are teaching courses in meditation.

What do you teach in such a course? Everything you need to know about "how" to practice meditation can be described or shown to you in five minutes. So what do you need classes in meditation for? The reason is that people doing this want some way of making a living and think this is what you should do. Is this what the Buddha meant his missionaries to do? The people doing it are sincere and the people being taught want to be dependent. Many students are really looking for parents. This is the opposite of becoming an individual, the problem of people who have not attained the Buddha's completion, "I am the only one to be revered". Perhaps today we would call it infant narcissism.

THE RECORD OF BANKEI

Translated by Haskel

Once the Master said: "In my teaching, I don't set up any particular object such as realizing satori or studying koans, like the other masters everywhere about. Nor do I rely on the words of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs. I just point things out directly, so there's nothing (in my teaching) to hold onto, and that's why no one will readily accept it. Those who are wise and highly learned are obstructed by their own cleverness, and so they can't accept (my teaching). On the other hand, there are a great many ignorant, unlettered folk, who without any intellectual ability, can't be pushed on to become Zen masters yet truly and thoroughly understand and have faith (in what I say), people who won't let themselves be (uselessly) distracted."

He added: "Even if people can't be said to have attained complete realization, my teaching is like a golden ball that's been smashed to pieces and scattered about, so that anyone who gets one piece has one piece of illumination, anyone who gets two pieces, two pieces of illumination, and so on, bit by bit, with no one who won't benefit according to his own portion (of attainment)."

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