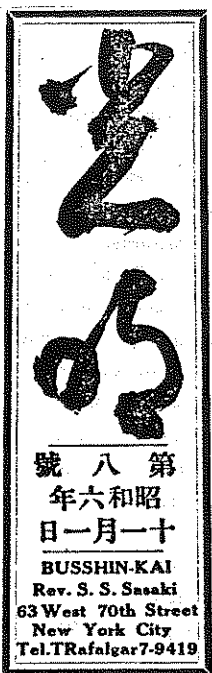


ZEN notes



INSIDE THE FZI,6

At the same time (Summer, 1933) Ruth Everett wrote inviting Sokei-an to stay at her home for the World Fellowship of Faiths meeting at the University of Chicago, a professor of philosophy, James B. Pratt, was writing from Williamstown, Massachusetts. In 1928 his *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism* (Macmillan) was a notable attempt (still readable), as he said: "to get a synthetic view of Buddhism, to grasp it as a whole, and also to discover the actual conditions of the religion as it is believed and lived today."

Sokei-an's reply to the professor's inquiry points directly to what Sokei-an saw as the Western world's contribution to the synthesis he foresaw as the result of Buddhism coming to the West. The Buddhism of the past was to manifest itself in terms of the twentieth century, whose vocabulary was science.

James B. Pratt to Sokei-an June 1,
1933, 2 pp. handwritten on both sides

The Rev. Sokei-ann-Sasaki
New York City

Dear Sir:-

Unfortunately for all concerned, I fear, I have the task (accepted most unwillingly) of representing Buddhism next month in Chicago, at the "Religious Institute" which the University of Chicago is arranging. My two subjects are: "Buddhism and Modern Scientific Thinking," and "Buddhism and Inter-cultural Contacts." Both subjects are for me very difficult; for I have done little reading of current Buddhist writing since I published my *Pilgrimage of Buddhism* in 1928 and in the short time remaining I hardly know where to turn. I should be able to represent Buddhism more worthily, if you would kindly let me know your opinion on the two subjects named above, and I should of course be personally very grateful. The second subject, which seems rather vague, is intended to cover such things as the attitude of Buddhism to such things as world peace, war, internationalism, and also Buddhist missionary activity.

I should be very grateful to you for any facts and opinions on these subjects that you might be able or willing to send me. If you have seen my *Pilgrimage* you know of my great admiration for your religion, and so will realize my desire to represent it properly in Chicago.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) James B. Pratt

From Sokei-an to J.B. Pratt, undated
In answer to letter of June 1, 1933

Received letter. I am encouraged to introduce old Buddhism to the modern world.

I abbreviate unnecessary expressions of courtesy but will enter into the point of your question. Correlation of Science and Buddhism is a task of a Buddhist which belongs to the future.

Modern Science suggests to us that a Buddhist could use it as a device to explain Buddhism. We occasionally illustrate this possibility to our students by comparing our thoughts and what we could see in the demonstration of the science of Physics, but no Buddhist plans such (things) systematically and no Buddhist ever started in such phase of the work in Japan, but if we don't start this study no other country will at this period. When we explain all phenomena is transitory and the utmost Reality is indemonstratable by any other method relating to our five senses. But for instance to conceive it as noumena, that invisible side of existence is so easily explained. Ancient day the Buddhist spent time and labor metaphysically to explain, but today it is far easier. To illustrate optics it will cover some work of Sariputra, Buddha's disciple, who tried to explain the visible side of entity through the physical eyes.

We must understand Buddhism talks truth but it is told by ancient method. We certainly must use the modern method to disclose the truth which Buddha conceived. This belongs entirely to the work of the future. There Science and Buddhism will

combine. If you read Prajnaparamita Sutra, the Chinese version consisting of 500 volumes you will get many hints pertaining to this problem.

All material which is useful to this aspect in Buddhism is not introduced to the Western world yet. No European scholar has yet translated such from the scriptures of the Orient.

The Buddhism which has been translated is nothing but the legendary part of Buddhism. To us it is of no importance. Useful part of Buddhism is still concealed in the mystery of the Chinese character (hieroglyphic) filigraph (*sic*). Edkins, in his "Chinese Buddhism," says in the preface that he studied the Chinese language for 40 years, but according to his translation work we know his knowledge of this language is very far from perfect. Knowing Chinese is not sufficient to read with understanding the Chinese scriptures of Buddhism.

What can we do about this trouble? I have no way to introduce you to any translated book for your purpose of study.

The second question—answer is very difficult because so many different types of Buddhism. In Japan we have five types in 13 different sects and 56 branches. A Buddhist country who has fallen in Hinayana Buddhism and one which has fallen in Mahayana Buddhism shows us entirely different attitudes toward daily life. All these different types of Buddhism—if you wish to have the charts of how these different types of Buddhism influence points of intercultural will be a great work arduous task—one man's whole life work. I hope some one will do it, but the

Westerner's aspect toward the practical part of Buddhism I do not agree with at all. Talking Buddhism is pessimism—Buddhist countries are inactive etc—All Orientals will not agree but small illustration, how Japanese Buddhism influences art or tea ceremony or flower arrangement or jiu-jitsu, can be very easily explained.

I am sorry that I cannot answer more fully. (Unsigned by Sokei-an)

From James B. Pratt to Sokei-an

June 28, 1933

The Rev. Sokei-ann-Sasaki
New York

Dear Sir:-

It was very good of you to write me so helpful a letter as you did in answer to my questions. Your words confirm me in my original opinion that the two questions on which I unfortunately have to speak are badly chosen and susceptible of hardly any but a negative answer. Particularly is this true of the question about Science. I am more hopeful of the second, especially might something be said concerning the efforts of men like yourself to spread in this country and in England some of the finer influences of Buddhism. It might help me considerably if you could send me some information concerning the work, the aims and the prospects of "The Buddhist Society of America," the First Zen Buddhist Institute in New York. I hope this would not be too much to ask.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) James B. Pratt

From Sokei-an to James B. Pratt
Undated, unsigned answer to letter
of June 28, 1933

I received second letter and am impressed your kindness deeply by your words--Chinese idiom--"Virtue finally finds neighbors virtue finds neighbors it will never be alone."

I am very glad to answer your question about First Zen Institute, but there is not much to tell. I began my work in New York about 4 years ago. To provide a little spring for the thirsty wisdom seekers. Right away after that I gather about 8 of those who like to drink of the fountain.

During 4 years they have not gone but I have not gathered more (increased their no.) These days I have about 15 members. My method of Buddhism is called Zen Buddhism transmission. The method established in China, T'ang Dynasty, and transmitted to Japan. We are keeping this method almost through 500 years without much moderation. I think you are already informed of this type of Buddhism. The method is based upon the practice of meditation. By observing inner activity, analyzing the grade of his perceiving function brings one to the realization as a being of truth. "I am Truth," but to train the other, teacher will give student a koan--question--for instance, "Before father and mother, what were you?" Student answer to teacher, usually by word, "Absolute," "Oneness," "God," or "Buddha" or "Infinite," or "essence," or even "Electron" "Proton" or mayhap "Ether," but the master would deny this answer, would say all these names made really after parents.

Without any such acquired conception, demonstrate that which you were.

Then the answer is of course silence, or glowing eye, or sometimes step out from my presence, sometimes hit me or shout in loud voice--this answer the master answers; You are demonstrating it from the standpoint of our comprehension--Show it me--the reality--before your comprehension.

Then student will bring himself into almost nearest to the point and several days after will come to the room of master and without difficulty will demonstrate it. This is one of the methods of Zen--called Sanzen.

There are many koans giving koans one by one master drag the student into many different stages of realization and finally throw him into Nirvana. Then he will open eye in Nirvana--will see both sides of Reality--Then teacher will give him commandment. There are many different types of commandment in Mahayana Buddhism. In such way master teaches fundamental of human life to student.

Well I will not write much to you as though I teach the fish to swim. I depend upon your insight to understand what Zen is. I studied Zen from my teacher, Sokatsu Shaku, I entered into monastery 20 years old and am ordained as teacher of Zen when 47--and my life here in New York is to waste my best part of life (am 51) This is mere experiment that this kind of Buddhism can take root in this land or not. I hope occasionally reciprocate letters between us.

(Unsigned by Sokei-an)

On Saturdays I have just given ten lectures on Primitive Buddhism. Now during the summer,I shall speak about the principles of Buddhism. I think you already understand the type of teaching of the primitive period,given from the Buddha's golden lips,so now I shall expound the ideas of Buddhism in detail.

Usually I speak about the eight noble paths (or sacred eightfold path) by their names and a brief interpretation,but the important points must be interpreted very carefully. While your knowledge of Buddhism is not yet deep enough to understand profound theory,I cannot tell you about the creed of Buddhism in full detail,but during the last three or four years I think you have come to understand the outline of this religion,so I can occasionally give finer interpretations. These interpretations must be included in the study of the profound theory of Buddhism.

Buddhism itself is not a theory;theory is a means of explanation. Through theory we must reach somewhere ,and that reaching point is the One Silence. The One Silence (or SILENCE) has two aspects: samadhi and *marga*. Samadhi is the tranquillity of mind practiced by meditation. There is no English equivalent,no translation for samadhi, so we use this word as it is. The Japanese name for it is *jo*. The second aspect is the way or path, *marga*, *do* in Japanese,the path referred to in the sacred eightfold path. This also includes all the

"ways" of Buddhism. So the One Silence (or one samaya) includes the two principles,samadhi and *marga*,*jo* and *do*--tranquillity and the way to carry it out.

The first of the two aspects, samadhi,comes into the center and the other goes out from the center. Everything has these two aspects. Science also proves this: that there are two aspects of power. The Buddha experienced this in his SILENCE.

Be fore you reach samadhi, you cannot experience *marga*. Samadhi is the first step on the Way--really the foundation of Buddhism. And there are three ways of realization of Reality in this being;Samaya in body, samaya in mind,samaya in word. (There is no word to speak but "AH." This word embraces posture and Silence. This is the end of Buddhism.) In the Zen school,this Silence is our way of practice,the source of the way of the chariot of Dharma.

The Buddha referred to it as "my wisdom (*sarva-jnana*),my all-knowledge." Sometimes he expressed it as "my seed of wisdom." In the seed of wisdom,all the potentiality of knowledge is compounded. In this samaya is the three-fold Silence of word,mind,and body. When the seed of Wisdom is expressed,all potentiality is in the experience. When one says "seed of wisdom," you may think it means particles of mind, all that happens in the universe--past,present,and future--but this is not correct. You must understand that the seed is the essence--everything in one. There is no development;it is elemental. If there is an impure element in it,you cannot get into it. You must wipe out everything

to come into this essential samaya.

The Buddha said: "My seed of wisdom is like a great chariot. Its wheel will go through the Eightfold Path and enter Nirvana."

I have never seen this line in the primitive sutras, but it is a Mahayana teaching that the seed of the Buddha's Wisdom will roll out.

There are eight gates (the spokes of the wheel?) but once in Nirvana, the eight perish.

This theory is expounded in Mahayana Buddhism, and it is the source of the many different sects. Some sects of Buddhism emphasize samadhi; others emphasize *marga*.

In the Mahayana, the word samadhi changed its character a little bit, giving a sharper meaning to the two aspects of stopping and going. The Mahayana practice is to stop everything, observe it, and then carry it out. The Tendai sect speaks of three aspects: stopping, observing and training by conduct. I think these three aspects--stop, observe, and practice--cover all of Buddhism, though the two aspects, stop and practice, are really enough. You stop all activity and observe how everything comes naturally by the power of nature. Then you carry out your practice. There is no other Buddhism.

It is not really necessary to speak of practice. To stop is an unnatural command--it comes only in the training of intense meditation. But when you learn how to stop you create a great natural chariot that carries you to the outside by the Eightfold Path.

There is a famous Mumonkan koan about a monk who made 800 carts, took off all the axles, piled

them up and set them afire, burning them up. The disciples could not understand the teacher's attitude about this; they thought something was wrong in the monk's head--working for so many years and then to burn them up for nothing. Why did he burn the carts' axles? They were mystified. But when you pass this koan, you will understand.

Man sees from the outside (no chariot)--but if you open the Gate, you will see your own chariot within.

How to carry out the teaching? In the Orient, it is emphasized that one must have a sense of propriety. They speak of three proprieties: formal, semi-formal, and informal--conversation in the Zen room between equals, or positions of guest and host. It is as in Chinese calligraphy. There are three types of writing: square, symmetrical, and formal (for use in official documents). In a letter between father and child, the child will use semi-formal; writing between friends, it is the formal style that is used.

In our correct conduct, we must never make any mistake in these formulas--for our private life, public life, semi-public, and formal--all have different laws of behavior. Not knowing the laws of propriety, we will all make mistakes in carrying out our potentiality, gained from the Dharma of Buddhism. An artist will realize how to carry out emotion--silence, form, smooth rhythm.

In Buddhism, we count ten grades. There are six grades of Manu; these are acquired from lower to higher, sometimes inherited from former deeds.

1. Naraka, being of Hell. He has

fear of death, so the commandment not to kill is for him.

2. Preta. He steals by attraction of deed, so he is commanded not to steal.

3. The animal stage of desire.

4. Adu lterous state.

5. Ashura, the angry state. He is extravagant or talks vain words.

6. Manu.

The Deva, the four higher aspects of the sentient being, are given elsewhere.

THE RECORD OF BANKEI

Translated by Haskel

The Master addressed the assembly: "All of you should realize the vital, functioning, living Buddha Mind. For several hundred years now, (people in) both China and Japan have misunderstood the Zen teaching, either trying to attain enlightenment by doing zazen or seeking to find 'the one who sees and hears,' (all of which) is a great error. Zazen is (just) another name for the original mind, and means to sit in tranquility with a tranquil mind. When you sit in meditation, you're simply sitting, just as you are, and when you do walking meditation, you're simply walking, just as you are. Even if

(your mouth were big enough) to swallow heaven and earth, (the truth of) Buddhism couldn't be spoken. Those who do speak about Buddhism, for the most part, are blinding men's eyes. In the mind you received from your parents at birth, there isn't even a trace of delusion. So when you fail to realize this and insist you're deluded because you're an unenlightened being, you're unjustly accusing your own parents! The Buddhas of the past and the people of today are all of the same substance--there's no difference between them. For example, when water from the ocean is ladled into different sorts of tubs and the weather turns cold, the water freezes, and according to whether the tub is large or small, round or square, the ice thus formed will assume various different shapes; yet when (the ice) melts, all the water is (seen to be) of the same substance as the ocean. Failing to realize the living, functioning Buddha, you try instead to realize Buddhahood by accumulating virtue through religious practice or by realizing enlightenment. Lost in error, you go from darkness into darkness. Pathetic isn't it? (That's why) I don't teach you about Buddhism, but when I talk to you only deal with all you peoples' wrong ideas."

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JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SESSHIN

Tentative schedule Oct. 13-19

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CONVERSATIONS WITH FARKAS

Noted by Hackney

We are a youth-oriented culture. People often still cling to ways that are appropriate to the age of 15 when in fact they are much older. It starts with the infant. If the infant doesn't get its full share of stuff, it will always be yelling for something, because it has a hunger for something it isn't getting to develop through that phase of its functioning. The studies by Erickson give a good picture of this. I believe that different aspects of people often have to develop separately (as in the Buddhist Six Ways theory, we are continually shifting from one to another mode of functioning). People think that they should be totally integrated personalities, but they are not. Some areas of their development may have gone very fast, whereas others may be way back there. Some aspects may not be developed at all. If you developed all parts equally, you would be in very good shape, but any part that has not developed properly will always be a problem. The only way the totally integrated personality can be brought about--together like a team instead of being held back by some part that is in a bad shape or rebellious--is to work on the ones that are not developed and get them through their growing pains. It is possible. Not easy, but possible.

There are a number of areas that one can easily see and work on. The male sexual drive, especially since Freud, has attracted the most

attention. I think this is unfortunate. From my observation, men are most tormented by their need to succeed. If men are devoting all their energy to their sexuality, then there is obviously something wrong. This is not natural. The prominence that this has taken in their eyes is due to the fact that their drive to achieve has been stultified.

The old Indian system had some merits in its handling of the course of people's lives. There is a natural course of life that operates in people as well as plants and animals propelled by a powerful drive to fulfill its demand. For example, a woman who has never had a baby will feel a certain drawing power to do this. She may reach a decision that she does not want to have children, but the instinctual drive will be there and she won't know what to do with it. And if she sees "Oh, I am not going to marry and have a husband," this is worrisome and almost impossible to analyze away.

Men's wanting of children is different from women's. According to a theory I once read about, the reason that men have so much concern with being creative is that they are jealous of woman's physical ability to "create" a baby. The man's participation is quite different from hers. Her body is being utilized by nature for its purpose. To the extent that she can identify with nature's purpose, she is the way itself. Man's drive is to build, to construct, to control, and to fight and kill. This is not something wrong in him. He had to have it, to survive.

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