

ZEN NOTES



THE VOW

In the early years of the First Zen Institute, Audrey Kepner was the first person to keep track of its history. That is to say, she kept copies of correspondence and notes of Sasaki's talks. She used some private but legible abbreviations and had a sufficiently high form-level writing to make it possible for others to read her notes fairly accurately if they had some acquaintance with the subject-matter. This was fortunate, for up to 1934, the only record of Sasaki's talks was in her handwritten notes, though there were some typed and edited versions of such notes of which the originals had been destroyed.

Audrey (the name by which most of us who knew her thought of her) was not exactly what we used to stereotype as an "old maid", though she had never been married that I know of, nor was she a "marrying" type. She had some truck with swamis and "isms," and had changed her name to Audrey, *Audrée*, or *Audré* from Florence to conform to numerological recommendations. This and other peccadilloes laid her open to the jibes of more sophisticated members to whom she never quite made it to be a peer. Perhaps the high point of her career at the FZI was in 1931, when she was elected one of the first trustees, to serve for one year, and was also the Recording Secretary at the business meeting May 6th. Seven other women made up the slate of nine, plus one man. (Not Iwami, though he was present.) She became the first of a procession of notable women who "helped" Sasaki.

Audrey was a retired teacher, high school history, I think. A bustling small woman with short springy white hair, a dogged jaw, and a venturesome spirit. She had a rugged old car and was always engaged in some enterprise in which she attempted to obtain the aid of others. She would rent a house and then try to get people to live in it, or take on a tearoom restaurant, or a combination of the two. Sasaki himself may have been such a project for her. Or it may have been his society that showed possibilities for her entrepreneurial proclivities. His lectures appeared to her as a kind of asset, perhaps, so she took careful notes of them, plucking out the substance of his talks and filtering out the non-essentials. Often, she'd note on the side of the page: "Ask Reverend." Details of geography, dates, and names tended to be accurate, as was her spelling. It was her intention to type up and edit this material shortly after its speaking, but time rarely permitted this, as she was always busy about something.

Most important of the early talks Audrey noted were his commentaries on the first translation into English of the Record of Rinzai (*Lin-chi Lu*) beginning July 6, 1932. Of the 167 lectures Sasaki gave on the text, which he completed translating in 1936, the first 71 (through September, 1933) were recorded only by Audrey. In September, 1933, Edna Kenton began to take notes also; in June, 1934, two other note-takers were added. During all this time, Sasaki never wrote down a word in English other than the translation of the text from the Chinese.

SOKEI-AN SAYS
Principles of Buddhism, V
The Buddhist Attitude Toward
Daily Life

To endure the vicissitudes of existence, the Buddhist must know the law that applies to daily life.

In the Buddha's time, there were Buddhists who renounced family life and there were those who remained at home, but all followed the idea of Buddhism in their daily lives. All Buddhists today should hold this same idea, taught by Shakyamuni Buddha, whom we call the Buddha. There are many today and there will be many in the future who have different ideas about Buddhism, but when I speak of this religion, I mean the Buddhism of the Buddha himself.

He was the prince of Kapilavastu, who, at the age of 30, renounced his home and travelled throughout India to meet teachers. When he came to the conclusion that all the teachers he had met failed to give him true attainment, he decided to study alone--to start from the very beginning.

If you were Shakyamuni Buddha and you did not believe in any of the religions dominating your country--if you had no faith in any religion written or told, but were trying to find the one faith within yourself, what would *you* do? From where would you start? What point could you put your finger on? I think some of you would think the same way and experience the same way as the Buddha: I must search for the truth within myself. The Buddha

came to many pitfalls, and had to build entirely anew. He searched for something that he could depend upon--finally coming to the conclusion that he could depend upon his own consciousness and that everything was reflected in it. This was the foundation of his religion and he began to build upon it by meditation. His religion is non-ego, but certainly he had to begin it from his own ego: rupa atman--my body is my self, your body is not my self, without body there is no ego. Rupa is the body that reflects all this phenomena, receives the vibrations of color and form. Today, the scientists will demonstrate this by optical illusion: color is vibration, etheric waves making contact with the optic nerve. The eye co-vibrates with the etheric vibration and, according to the length of the waves, you cognize color. So color is not outside--but in the eye. Thus, inverted observation will wipe out the old idea of phenomena. (Lifts fan) This is not red. A knife is not painful--the pain is on the flesh. To see the Reality of all phenomena, we must observe from an entirely different aspect; the same applies to sound.

This rupa (body) is also elusive. Rupa atman--I exist. This concept is erroneous. I have nothing to do with my body--then what is body? What produces body? It is produced by my perception; my ability to see produces my self; then, perception is my self--vedana atman. Vedana means perception. Sometimes when one is thinking something strongly, one does not feel pain--like a soldier in the battlefield who feels

nothing when the bullet hits him, but only later feels the pain and knows that he is wounded. Suddenly, the pain is in his thoughts--not in his sense perception--and that is his self.

Samjna atman means that with conception the whole universe is recognized. If you do not recognize it, it does not exist. Time is also your conception.

You think you exist. This recognition of ego is much more developed in man than in plants and animals. Samjna is myself--without samjna there is no ego. What makes samjna? Thoughts and conceptions are not single existences--many atomic specks compose a thought. It is like the body, composed of many elements--electrons, atoms, etc. If you analyze your thoughts very carefully, you will doubt what you are thinking about--such small fragments of conceptions. We call this manu--that which makes oneself. A child exists in this manu.

Man has a root and branches. The root is called vijnana. It is the consciousness that goes through all the systems of existence--all living things. Therefore, vijnana consciousness is my self, and it is also not my self--my self is not my self.

The Buddha's ego is our ego. I am speaking about this, but the Buddha experienced it through the five skandhas, the shadows of consciousness.

The five skandhas are not myself, this being which is vijnana--fundamental consciousness. Being comes from non-being, but all potent-

iality is in it; we call this amala consciousness. No one can demonstrate it--you cannot prove any consciousness in the stone. But when the kalpa fire wipes out all systems, and there is no consciousness--no living soul--then it will show its emptiness. All goes back to the nirvana consciousness where everything is in a latent stage. Nothing is annihilated in this stage, but we cannot prove it with our conceptions. It is like the great ocean--waves on top and peace at the bottom.

If we prove it with our mind at the deepest grade of consciousness, we can know that it exists, but we cannot express it. But if you experience it through meditation, then you will find the real home of your soul (consciousness). You will realize that invisibility is not your home; intangibility is the real home. It is not a conception. If you prove this state--that is Nirvana. Many times you pass the gate but you never enter into it. That stage is "unspeakable."

When the Buddha came into that entire emptiness, he was emancipated from all consciousness and subconsciousness, all conceptions. Entering the universal consciousness, he became entirely empty.

In the state of emptiness, you place no merit on anything--you eat, you dream--you do not care. Then suddenly you will realize in a flash--Ah, *this* is my self! This is original wisdom, intrinsic, not acquired. But you cannot find the spark if you attach to anything--man, sky, gold. To renounce your home is child's play--you must renounce all con-

ceptions, this clinging to your brain. Your teacher is teaching, but your thoughts run about like mice in the kitchen.

The state of samadhi is not like a trance as under ether. Our trance has strain in it, a keen strain of all the power of consciousness (not *my* consciousness), yet it is entirely empty. In this moment-- Ah, this is that. You will understand when you undergo this experience-- religion must enter from this point, and not from books, lectures, or teachers. Come close to that holy moment. Without it, you cannot say you have entered into religion.

To attain this, the student must renounce himself: I renounce rupa, vedana, samjna, and so forth.

Here you will realize that stage from the koan: Before father and mother (before all conception of existence, before all perception), what were you? Holding such a question, you meditate upon it, and you will enter into the state of emptiness. You have entered here many times, but you lack the intuition to enlighten yourself. You must analyze it! The first stage is to renounce conceptions, perceptions, and sensation.

It is easy to talk about it, but you must enter into the universe and let the universe enter into you. When you realize this-- you do not need your body any more; you live for everyone.

To give is the purpose of our life. This is the attitude of the Buddhist.

The series of talks on Principles of Buddhism was given in the summer of 1933.

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SAYS

TEMPLE PEDAGOGY

Getting in to it

Young Japanese children don't understand the sutras--which are in Chinese. I myself entered the temple at fourteen. That was old. But there were some who came into the temple at seven or eight. Of course they couldn't understand a word they were chanting--yet they learned to chant. If they didn't learn to do it (as I'm doing it now) the teacher would tell them, "You're not there yet." Until the teacher said we were putting enough into it, we had to throw our voices OUT... like this...

Washing your bowl

When you look at a dirty bowl, we were told, you are dirty. You share the dirtiness of the bowl. And as you wash the bowl, a new clean you appears.

Washing the floor

When you are cleaning the floor, with your hands, your head down and your butt sticking up in the air, as you are cleaning that surface of the floor, you are becoming a new clean self as that floor gets clean.

Distilled by Mary Farkas from an excerpt of a talk given August 22 at Jemez Bodhi Mandala, translated by Steve Young, edited by Peter and Di Stander, in a booklet entitled "Trailing Mud and Dripping Water", regrettably unavailable.

DANCING TUDOR'S *CEREUS*

Noted by Clara Maxwell

In April 1981, Antony Tudor's Cereus ("the night-blooming cactus") was beautifully performed by the Julliard Dance Ensemble, seven attractive young dancers, to a musical composition titled Inconsequenza which was performed by a percussive quartet. MF

It was exciting for all of us in the Julliard Dance Division to witness and participate in the evolution and final staging of Antony Tudor's *Cereus*. Since Tudor left the school, there is no longer a ballet major. Consequently the emphasis has been on modern dance repertoire. It was touch and go whether the students could tackle Tudor's demanding choreography. *Cereus* rehearsals for this year's Spring concert began last June.

A special energy went into the preparation of Tudor's work. Understudies and other students not chosen for final casting worked unselfishly up to and during dress rehearsal. Any feelings of competition were forfeited in view of the vast undertaking at hand. Each dancer expressed privately their particular appreciation of the piece during quiet consultations. The atmosphere before the curtain rose on Saturday night was that of a premiere. The rest of the Dance Department was backstage hugging the cast, wishing them well, and cheering them on from the wings during the performance.

The real beauty was witnessing the individual dancers

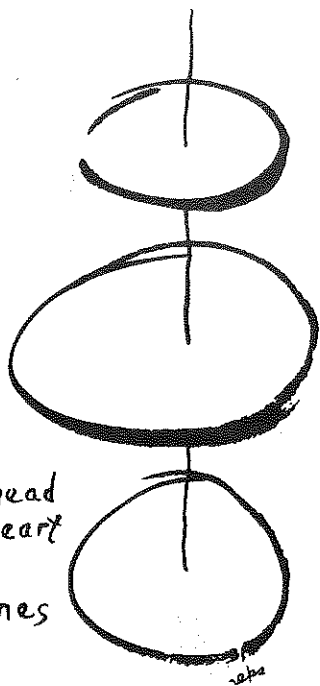
grow in their respective parts, including those not in the final cast. We saw the dance steps become their own mood and gesture in the elevators and hallways. We saw the cast struggle with the coaching, the criticism, and the scrutiny of our ballet teachers. Our teachers' tender and demanding coaching emphasized clearly the responsibilities of completing Tudor's work by making it our own.

Indeed, the choreography seemed tailor made. The piece deals with the first flowering of sexual teasing. For young people whose emotional livelihood is hidden in dance studios, the lack of experience portrayed rang very true to life. Working on *Cereus* could not have been a better opportunity to be ourselves. If you've ever watched this kind of early awakening--men and women tormenting themselves with averted eyeballs, sighs, shrugs, embarrassed rubs and awkward exits--the piece appears more than an abstract ballet containing modern dance vocabulary. The memorable moment when the women rub their ankles together approximated both an insect mating dance as well as shyness, insecurity, and confused instinct.

It was a memorable experience for all dancers at Julliard to savor the burgeoning of *Cereus*.

Editor's Note on Numbering
Sokei-an's third talk on the Principles of Buddhism was not noted by anyone so we have no record of what he said. The fourth may be read in ZN XII/2.

open, head
open, heart
open
bones



In the mail came a handsome folder bearing a subtly reproduced color photo of Paul Reps, brush in hand, presumably inditing one of the "picture-poems" (as he calls them) or messages he has been sending back and forth during sixty-five years of goings and comings. *Letters to a Friend*, which it announces, tastefully printed by Stillgate Publishers, Box 67, Alstead, New Hampshire, 03607, available in two editions, a deluxe for \$60 and a limited edition for \$175, is an elegant scrapbook of forty years of his life. Reps' messages, excerpts from all of his previously published work, almost one hundred picture-poems and twelve true reproductions, two 4-page accordion fold-outs and four tip-ons on Japanese mulberry bark paper are among the attractions it promises. Write the publishers for more details.

But they haven't an equal to the message Reps brought me down at 156 Waverly Place in the Fifties. A huge Halloween pumpkin. He's an original, that Reps.

NEW TO ZEN NOTES?

RENEW ZEN NOTES?

If you received a renew notice with this issue and would like to receive ZEN NOTES for the year starting here, please send US \$3 if living in the US, US \$4 if living outside, with your name and address (be sure to include ZIP), to The First Zen Institute of America, Inc., 113 E. 30th St., New York, NY 10016.

Journal notes

THE RECORD OF BANKEI
Translated by Haskel

Whenever the Layman Gesso got angry, his nose would start to run. He once asked the Master about this. The Master told him: "Is snot any different from tears?"

Thereafter, the Layman did not reveal in his demeanor whether he was pleased or angered.

(The Layman Gesso was the religious name given to Kato Yasuoki, daimyo of Iyo and one of Bankei's most important patrons. Though certainly curious, the Layman's symptom here is not unique and is nearly identical to that reported by Petronius for the Emperor Nero when he was seized by fits of temper. Bankei's question seems to suggest that, for a samurai like Lord Kato, it was as unseemly to give way publicly to anger as to tears.)

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During the thirties, Sokei-an carved a number of small wooden figures that in some way portrayed the members of his society to whom he presented them. "The Vow" was presented to Audrey Kepner.

CONVERSATIONS WITH FARKAS
Noted by Hackney

People ask me, "How is Zen now? Is it as exciting and popular now as it was in the Fifties? What is the story with it now?" Well, of course the story with it now is that it is in the monastic and community era. It is the period when people are coming together and getting into a situation where they can live together with a teacher and they live out of the world. What I like about Zen is another kind of thing. People need to individuate. Zen is perhaps the only thing valuable in getting people to individuate, that is function without depending on anything (my favorite motto!). They must manifest themselves like the infant yelling. At that moment the infant has perfect confidence. People must get into the state of mind where they are not afraid that they are NOT going to get what they want unless they hang on or clutch or yell or do something to get it from someone else. Even though theoretically that someone else is just part of them. They are trying to cling and stay with mommy--not that they think of it that way. The current generation feels that others should take care of things for them. The problem in the monastic movement is that people are dependent or want to be.

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