

ZEN NOTES



LATE NEWS

In April we celebrate birthdays. First, the Buddha's. Well, we all know about that. Enough said. Except. Since In America we celebrate birthdays with cake and candles we celebrate Buddha's this way too. But it really is the Buddha baby's birth we celebrate at this time, hopefully with a new human baby. This year we have a charming baby girl in our midst. She has been with us unseen, unheard, unborn, for the usual nine months, and made her first public appearance this year. She is also the first baby to live in the Institute at 113 East 30th Street. Phyllis Jumanna Bahi, 33 days old April 6th. Congratulations to her mother, formerly known as Dr. Frances Tsakonas, and her father, George Bahi (from Lebanon).

That brings us to Antony Tudor, shown dancing across the twentieth century. April 5th, he reached the three-quarter mark of his personal century. (Does the pose of this delightful Martha Swope photo remind you of anything? A delicate hint: one hand pointing to heaven, the other to earth.)

Joshu Sasaki Roshi's 76th birthday, almost any day in April, we actually celebrated March 26th... Sakiko Farago... April 4th ...we see only in May.

CONVERSATIONS WITH FARKAS

When Rage Rises

There was a beautiful French woman who came to me to let off steam, often when rage against her American husband at his too-slow French rose from her center, up through the neck, face, forehead; then she'd blow her top of blonde chrysanthemum hair or get a headache.

I told her: "Practice cooling it before it gets going (it occurred daily when she telephoned him from my office). Then you'll be able to get your dearest wish.

Once she understood my slow French she quickly caught on and was soon able to catch herself every time she telephoned under my eye.

One day she showed me the proof of my prediction--in the form of a check for \$50,000 signed by her husband--her dearest wish realized.

Did she keep it up?

I don't know. I never saw her again.

THE RECORD OF LIN-CHI June 1935 THE FOUR MEASURES

In the afternoon gathering, Lin-chi addressed the multitude: "In some instances I take you away from the surroundings; in another instance I take away the surroundings from you; in yet another instance I take both away, you and the surroundings; and in still another instance I take away neither you nor the surroundings."

A monk questioned Lin-chi: "What do you mean by 'taking you away from the surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "When the spring sun rises, flowers brocade the earth. A child's hair hangs down like white silk tassels."

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking the surroundings away from you?'"

Lin-chi answered: "The King's command has been spread throughout the land and the war Lord has laid the dust of battle in the dominions outside the wall."

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking both away, you and the surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "Ping and Fen have severed their connection with the 'land' and have held themselves aloof."

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking away neither you nor your surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "The King ascends his throne in the jeweled palace; the old peasants in the fields rejoice, singing his praises."

SOKEI-AN SAYS (6/1935)

This part is not easy to translate into a foreign language, for the meaning here is somewhat obscure. Even a Chinese scholar could not understand the technical Zen meaning that does not appear on the surface. If one has not mastered Zen, it is almost impossible to grasp the idea of Lin-chi, his Zen view.

In the lecture of last Wednesday (ZN XXX/3) I spoke about the monk's first question.

"What do you mean by 'taking you away from the surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "When the spring sun rises, flowers brocade the earth. A child's hair hangs down like white silk tassels."

Lin-chi's first idea is to take man's mind away from his surroundings and leave the surroundings. It is like a doctor who operates; for him there is no man or woman--only the disease. When he walks the street he does not look at anyone's face--ignores all the souls he passes--walks as though in a desert. To him there is no human in the city.

Sometimes a man will suppress his ego, thinking there is no "himself," no you, nor any mortal being called human--nothing but the great potency of God! When he walks, when he speaks, when he eats--all is the potency of God. There is such a standpoint in all religions. It is one part of truth, like one aspect or dimension of the whole. However, one who attaches to such a view thinks it is the only true standpoint of the universe.

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking the surroundings away from you?'"

Lin-chi answered: "The King's command has been spread throughout the land and the War Lord has laid the dust of battle in the dominions outside the wall."

When a soldier is fighting for his king, there is no river, mountain, bridge--nothing but the king. When a wife is with her husband who has a contagious disease, to her there is no disease, just her husband. Though his arm or leg may be cut off, to her he is still her perfect husband. If you are told that your house is burning, running through the streets, you never see the street, nor any human. To an artist at work there is no world, no God. He is alone in the universe. It is not God that gave him an inspiration. It is he, himself, working. And when a Zen student meditates, there is neither God nor the universe, only his meditation in infinite space. From this standpoint, I am the universe. I am God. I exist--that is all. This is not small egotism, it is the great Self. So, really, the great Self and no self are the same thing.

I have given you the two standpoints that can be taken. Both are true. But if you take one, I will take the other--or vice versa. If you say, "There is no self--only God exists," I will say, "There is no God--only self exists." Both

are true, both are the same.

Then we come to the third standpoint.

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking both away--you and your surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "Ping and Fen have severed their connection with the inland and have held themselves aloof." There is neither God nor man--you cannot speak a word! Some Zen student asked this question of his master: "If neither God nor man exists, what is existing?" The master said: "A donkey peeps into the well." A very deep well! The Zen student thought this a marvelous answer and told it to another Zen master who said: "I would rather say that the well peeps at the donkey!" What do you say? Nothing can be said! There is a Chinese expression: "The carpet and the table legs are saluting each other." It means neither you nor your surroundings. Such expressions are used because there is no way to say it.

When one meditates in the stage of arupadhatu he realizes there is nothing but infinite space; in that infinite space he finds duration. The space is time. Space is height, breadth, depth, plus duration. Space plus time. We call this the 4th dimension. Though you find multifold directions--if you do not count time, it is three-dimensional.

But in meditation, you are in the center of this multifold space. It is like Kannon--Avalokiteshvara with 1000 arms, like the sun. Then you feel duration. It has no directions, north, south, east or west. You are in the same place, but duration is there. Therefore, multifold space and duration is fourth dimensional space. I speak from the Zen standpoint. And modern science speaks so, too, I think.

When you feel duration you feel consciousness. Then the entire universe is consciousness. There is no space.

In the beginning when the surroundings are taken away, you feel the infinite space surrounding you.

Second, there is duration and consciousness. Consciousness can be proved by perception, but in arupadhatu there is nothing to perceive, so though there is consciousness, you cannot prove conscious-

ness. Space and consciousness cannot prove each other, so both are annihilated. You come into absolute nothingness.

"Take both away"--There is no way to express this in daily words, so rather say donkey and well, well and donkey. This is an important standpoint in Zen, this third point of Lin-chi.

When you stay there, there is no space, no consciousness, but, strangely, you suddenly will understand everything is there. This is an experience. I cannot speak much about this. You prove absolute existence. You come once more to look at the whole universe, but a universe that is new to you. This is a very important point I speak about. Christians call this resurrection. Once more you will come to see entire existence. You wouldn't call this matter and spirit. It is this and that.

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking away neither you nor your surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "The King ascends his throne in the jeweled palace; the old peasants in the field rejoice, singing his praises." You and your surroundings are there untouched.

First--nothing but matter, no spirit; second--spirit, no matter; third--neither spirit nor matter; fourth--both spirit and matter. If you have attained these four standpoints, you have really attained all standpoints.

I wish to explain Lin-chi's words more clearly. To the first question: "What do you mean by 'taking you away from the surroundings?'" Lin-chi answered: "When the spring sun rises, flowers brocade the earth. A child's hair hangs down like white tassels."

Here, in the entire surroundings, there is no man, no soul. But Lin-chi, instead of denying a soul, says: "A child's hair hangs down like white silk tassels"--like an old man. There is no such thing. He is hinting to you that there is no soul. There is no man--all is just surroundings.

There are many ways to understand this poem and many monks have given their interpretation. But I follow my teacher Sokatsu as he followed his teacher Soyen. His teacher followed Hakuin--

the 9th generation before me. I am very grateful to have had an authentic teacher of Zen!

The second question: "What do you mean by 'taking the surroundings away from you?'" Lin-chi answered: "The King's command has been spread throughout the 'land' and the War Lord has laid the dust of battle in the dominions outside the wall."

In China, "land" means "inside the wall;" the dominions are outside. In the Tang Dynasty, China was the largest Empire in the world. The "land" was controlled by the Emperor; the dominions outside the wall were controlled by the War Lord (man, myself) civil power and war power. So here, there is no land, no surroundings--just the power of man. "Land" means under the power of God--the dominions are under the power of man.

In meditation, the alaya consciousness is under the power of God and this present consciousness is under the power of my self. Both are my self and both are God--both are power. It is from this second standpoint, taking away the surroundings and leaving the self alone, that Lin-chi gave his wonderful "HO!" I do not give this elucidation twice in my life, so do not forget it.

The monk asked, "What do you mean by 'taking both away--you and the surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "Ping and Fen have severed their connection with the 'land' and hold themselves aloof."

Ping and Fen are two states outside the wall which revolted against the Imperial power and declared their independence. They were entirely shut off from the "land." It is just as though God had no connection with God. It is like a man saying, "Well, goodbye God!" How could a man do this? It means his Zen. For the third standpoint, you will give the answer in sanzen.

The monk asked: "What do you mean by 'taking away neither you nor your surroundings?'"

Lin-chi answered: "The king ascends his throne in the jeweled palace; the old peasants in the fields rejoice, singing his praises."

Here, man recognizes the power of God--and rejoices! He recognizes both powers.

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When we observe the entire universe, we feel some greater power, deeper than our own consciousness. Then we come back to our own consciousness and feel it has some relation with it. It is so active. Everlasting life can flow out from this consciousness. Then there is no struggle to decide what to do in this human life.

You must acquaint yourselves with all these four standpoints, and you must express them in your own experience.

THE RECORD OF BANKEI
Trans. by Peter Haskel

"What all of you have from your parents innately is the Unborn Buddha Mind alone-- there's nothing else you have innately. But, because of self-centeredness, you're always trying to get your own way. The blood rushes to your face, and you set to quarreling with someone, insisting: 'I wasn't mad to start with, but what that fellow said was so unbearably outrageous it made me mad!' Then, attaching to what he said, getting involved with it, you go along like that until you end up changing your own precious Unborn Buddha Mind for a fighting demon. Brooding over senseless things, going over and over them,

blindly piling thought on thought, on and on, without stopping, you don't realize in your foolishness that even if you did get your way, it would all be worthless in the end. Since foolishness is the cause of becoming a beast, you go along like that until, inside, you end up changing the Precious One Buddha Mind for a first-rate beast.
Copr. 1983 by Peter Haskel

CITY SIGHTS Noted by Storm
The fountain doesn't know it's raining.

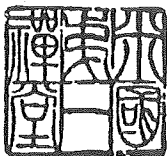
New version of old Chinese image: four glass skyscrapers on each corner of an intersection, reflecting one another.

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