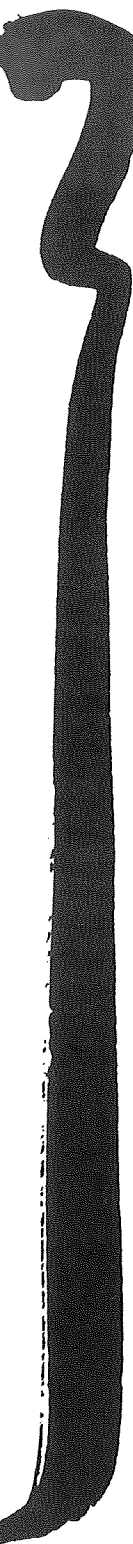


ZEN NOTES



From ZEN BRUSH STROKES by VANESSA COWARD

THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHING

Chapter IV,2

When you attain enlightenment by your own efforts, your practice does not depend upon debate. If you debate upon the sequence of samadhi and wisdom (jnana) you are just the same as any deluded being. By disputing always with others, you will increase your ego and you cannot free yourself from the four formulas.

Worthy scholars, what do samadhi and wisdom resemble? They resemble a candle flame and the light. When there is a candle flame, there will be light. If there is no flame, there will be a dark place. The candle flame is the body of the light, and the light is the faculty of the candle flame. There are two names but the body is originally one. The relation of meditation to wisdom is like the relation of the candle to the light.

The Master preached to the multitude: "Virtuous friends, what is the samadhi of singleness of mind? In your going, standing, sitting, or lying--in whatever place or whatever time--if you practice the singleness and straightness of mind, it is called the samadhi of singleness of mind."

Vimalakirti said: "Straightness of mind is the place in which you practice your Dharma and it is the Pure Land. Do not let your mind be syco-phantic!"

COMMENTARY SOKEI-AN SAYS

This is the final part of the discussion of samadhi and wisdom, together with the discussion on single-mindedness.

In the last lecture, I explained to you the meaning of samadhi and wisdom, but I shall explain it once more because many were missing at the last meeting.

Samadhi, intense meditation, means to be absorbed in the depths of Reality. It is different from sleep, in the abandonment of your mind, when you are absorbed in the chaos of darkness. In samadhi, you are absorbed in Reality.

When you are in the sleeping state or in avidya (darkness), intrinsic wisdom, (jnana) is latent, dormant. When you come forth into this world,

you are using this intrinsic wisdom unconsciously, as, in the deep sea, the fish do not know that they have a wonderful lantern, but use it unconsciously. When you recognize this wisdom, you use it consciously. This conscious, awakened wisdom is called prajna. With this prajna, you will observe Reality in profound absorption once more. This is Nirvana. When our wisdom becomes our own. Without the attainment of Nirvana, when you die, you will go into chaos, the darkness of the infinite, with your sleeping wisdom--no enlightenment, only eternal darkness. We call it endless hell.

In this profound meditation, when you abandon all conceptions, you will come to it, be one with it, and you will realize that intrinsic wisdom is there. It is just as when a pond is very quiet and from the center a little ripple will appear without any stone having been thrown. It is a very quiet motion. When this intrinsic wisdom upheaves and all of a sudden--"Ah, this is that!"--it is eternal. It is as if one stands under a crystal bell in a tower; without any breeze, one hears it. It is as if many angels are singing sutras in the distance, though it is very near you.

The Sixth Patriarch is talking about this; that samadhi and wisdom appear at the same time. There is no sequence of time between them. Samadhi is in wisdom and wisdom is in samadhi. When you attain enlightenment by your own effort of intense meditation, you all of a sudden realize your intrinsic wisdom.

When you attain enlightenment by your own efforts, your practice does not depend upon debate. Almost all religions depend upon debate; they talk and argue like drunkards, and they call it religion. In the Zen school, we do not talk about anything and there is no debate. Enlightenment does not come from debating. Each individual will take his own seat, and upon this seat he will enlighten himself.

In the Northern school, they placed emphasis upon intense meditation, sitting all day; when eating and working, they are in Zen, but in the Sixth Patriarch's school, he placed the emphasis on this intrinsic wisdom. In one second--realize and become aware--"Ah!" That is the end of it. So in any place,

any circumstances--"Ah!"--and it is over. At any second, while you are working at your desk, in a factory, or depositing a coin in the subway turnstile, you get a glimpse --"Ah!"--and it is all over.

In China, a monk was sweeping with a bamboo broom in the garden. A pebble struck against a bamboo root--"Ah!" Do not think this is a marvel; it is Reality. It is not like a flash in the eye, making the world look different; it is not so foolish. It is a diamond of the mind, the source from which spring all the laws of the universe.

This is the Sixth Patriarch's school of Zen. But, as a foundation, we must practice meditation; it is the foundation of Zen. If you haven't much meditation, you may pass koans and you may attain wisdom, but it shines dimly. But when you find IT, the whole universe shines and you are its master. Only such meditation practice will enable you to discover intrinsic wisdom.

When you study painting, you are not given paints, canvas and brush for a long time. For many years you have only charcoal and a piece of bread in your hand. You make light and shadow, light and shadow, until light and shadow are swallowed in your mind. Later, when your eye is developed, you will see light and shadow in color. When you look at a nude, you will not see this light and shadow, but only the outline of the body.

So in Zen, one must be in Dharmakaya, the first stage. This foundation must be made first. Some of my students have been here for five or six years, and they are still in the same stage. In this omnipresent stage, when you are free, no words bother you. No matter from what angle the teacher comes to you, you say, "Ah!" Then there is a second stage; you are seeing my light and shade, and you will answer yes or no.

In the second grade, you are like a man standing under a cliff. There are three stages.

In Zen, there is no speech and no debate: "Which comes first, samadhi or wisdom?" , talking like a drunken person. You don't need anyone's help to get Zen; you realize this Reality with your intrinsic wisdom.

"If you debate upon the sequence of samadhi

and wisdom, you are just the same as any deluded one. By disputing always with others, you will increase your ego." You will never succeed in getting religion through argument.

"And you cannot free yourself from the four formulas." The four formulas are very interesting. They are: yes or no, yes and no, either yes and no, neither yes nor no. In argument, whatever you say in any category comes into one of these. These four are not true anyway. The first two categories are in everyday use. It is like the diplomat; his yes is not true and his no is not true. Sometimes his yes is no and sometimes his no is yes. He is like an eel that you cannot catch. Buddhist argument is also like an eel. When you try to catch the head, it slips out at the tail, and vice versa. In fact, argument is of no use.

"Worthy scholars, what do samadhi and wisdom resemble? They resemble a candle flame and the light. They are the same thing. Where there is a candle flame there is light." Profound meditation is the candle and has intrinsic wisdom; it is light. Also, in death there is intrinsic wisdom. Original nature is intrinsic wisdom. When you come into the world at birth, you have this wisdom. With this physical body and stuffed mind, you think you are a deluded one and you look around for your original nature. You are originally enlightened but you do not realize it. In truth, you don't need to worry about it; you have nothing to fear from this physical body or the sawdust in your mind. You only have to find the center. "If there is no flame, there will be a dark place. The candle flame is the body of the light and the light is the faculty of the candle flame." The Sixth Patriarch kindly explains this, but we don't need it. Body means substance.

"There are two names, but the body is originally one. The relation of samadhi and wisdom is like the relation of the candle and the light." I repeat that samadhi and wisdom are the foundation of Zen. It is very easy to speak about but hard to attain--especially wisdom.

"The Master preached to the multitude: 'Virtuous friends, what is the samadhi of singleness of mind?' Samadhi is one of the important terms of

Buddhism. It is this: in intrinsic meditation, you become one with the object. Now, when you try to think of your grandmother who is in another country, you cannot see her in the flesh, but you concentrate, and then all of a sudden she appears in your mind, and you can see her as if she were standing before you. At such times you are one with her; you feel as though you had become grandmother herself. This is called samadhi. It is more profound than concentration.

When you think of the koan: "Before father and mother, what were you?", at first you think of it outside yourself. Then, concentrated, you will enter into it.

In the moment when intrinsic wisdom penetrates through the universe, your enlightenment is there. It is like a cat watching a rat--intrinsic concentration. Both cat and rat are in samadhi. When the rat moves, the cat moves too. When the cat's concentration becomes weak, the rat runs away; the samadhi is lost. Samadhi is a wonderful moment; you can observe it in the swordsman. But the samadhi of the Sixth Patriarch must not have any weak moment. It is like an artist at work. When you watch a Japanese artist drawing a plum branch, he does it in just one stroke from top to bottom and he shows the exact motion of the branch. The plum tree is living.

"In your going, standing, sitting or lying, in whatever place at whatever time, if you practice the singleness and straightness of mind, it is called the samadhi of singleness of mind." This means that you act with just one thing in mind. We have the four postures, the four dignities, and that is all we can do after all.

"Vimalakirti said: 'Straightness of mind is the place in which you practice your Dharma and it is the Pure Land. Do not let your mind be sycho-phantic.'" You do not need to be frightened, affected; you need not dramatize yourself or try to make yourself attractive. Just be yourself!

THE BUILDERS of our 21-storey neighbor assure us there will be a surcease from noise the beginning of November when Joshu Sasaki Roshi says he may come.

II A COMPARISON OF FREUD- IAN AND BUDDHIST THOUGHT

by H.Pashenz,PH.D.

One of the significant insights of Freudian psychology is that our conscious thoughts and feelings are only a small part of mental functioning. Through Freud's study of hypnosis, dreams, psychopathology and the material uncovered during the process of psychoanalysis, he was able to outline a hitherto unknown vast area of the mind that followed its own primitive logic and directly influenced conscious thought and behavior. The analogy of the iceberg, which is 9/10ths below the surface of the water, was Freud's view of the relationship between limited conscious awareness and the realm of the unconscious.

Freud further discovered that the lack of awareness and control over unconscious processes leads to maladaptive behavior of a neurotic and/or psychotic nature. He went on to devise a detailed procedure whereby the unconscious could be made conscious: psychoanalysis. It would seem that Freud viewed "ig-

norance" of the total mind (unconscious aspects) as the cause of psychological suffering; a position that bears a great deal of similarity to the Buddhist understanding of the causation of suffering. Buddhism believes that suffering results from ignorance of the true nature of the self; of one's innate perfection that is concealed behind conceptual thinking and the belief in the reality of a conceptualized self. Both Freudian Psychology and Zen Buddhism have developed methods of expanding the limitations of the conscious self; they are the practices of psychoanalysis and meditation. They also share the common belief that a deeper understanding of the functioning of the mind, developed through experiential self-observation, (as opposed to only intellectual understanding) is necessary in order to alleviate human suffering. Freud, however, believed in the basic reality of the self and developed techniques that would allow it to function at an optimal level; as anxiety-free as possible while engaging in

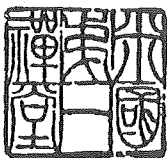
productive and loving activities. Buddhism's goals are more revolutionary and far-reaching; the complete elimination of human suffering through the development of the capacity to dissolve the conceptualizing self that categorizes immediate experience as either painful or pleasurable, good or bad, inside or outside, etc. Buddhism does not deny the functions of the self such as seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and thinking but does question the presence of a fixed entity such as an "I", or personalized ego, that is conducting and directing the above-mentioned processes.

Put another way, Freud accepted the reality of the split between subject and object and then brilliantly explored the inner dynamics of the subject and its relation to both external and internalized objects. Zen Buddhism would hold that everything is subjective since the objective can only be experienced, or sensed, through the senses (of a subject). Thus arises the Zen doctrine of "mind only" which is quite different from the

materialist position that accepts a real material world experienced by a real self. The tragedy of the materialist position, maintaining there is a basic difference between the categories of "self" and "other," is that there must be an almost continuous conflict between the two with no final resolution possible except the inevitable defeat of the self culminating in death. Buddhism and Freudian Psychology would consider themselves realists, accepting the observation that life involves much human suffering. Freud, however, could see only many "holding actions" delaying a final and complete defeat as long as possible. Buddhism, on the other hand, is quite optimistic since it not only predicted, but actually called for, the death of the "limited self" from the very beginning. It is a death that permits the rebirth of a total complete self that cannot "suffer" since to suffer requires an incomplete dualistic subject that is acted upon by something apart from itself in the objective realm that causes the subject to categorize an experience as suffering.

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