

ZEN NOTES

SOKEI-AN SAYS (ZN 1/1)

In China or Japan, monasteries are built on a mountain...In winter, when the valley is covered with snow, you feel you are in a world of silver...In the valley it is so quiet...When the monks are meditating, if there is any sound in the temple it will be only that of a mouse or a rat.



THE FZI RATCATCHER'S REPORT by Long Arm

Two adult males over 35 years of age were terrorized at the FZI during unexpected encounters with representatives of *Mus musculus* (house mice). Robert Schaefer, a hefty one hundred ninety-five pound member of the human species, former aikido and boxing devotee as well as a fan of wrestling matches at the Garden, fled recently from his new apartment on the third floor.

He bellowed at full throat for the resident rat catcher to come to his aid. Said exterminator hastened to the venue where baby mouse hurried behind some clothes and oddities for protection. When the last item was removed and the cul de sac was completely exposed the little guy ran. With a sorrowing heart the ratcatcher smacked it with a board. The little mouse trembled, stiffened and was still.

Peter Haskel, a 20-years long student of arcane Buddhist texts on calming the mind, was trudging up one of the many narrow flights of stairs leading to his room when another mouse, of uncertain age and disposition, appeared underfoot.

In his later report, Haskel said: "I was so angry! I shouted and flung my arms about!" The mouse, made nervous by these proceedings, dodged beneath the carpeted stair runner into a hitherto unsuspected crevice and vanished. Safely, for the nonce.

These sightings have stirred Farkas into one of her repeated declarations that members should let slip, so to speak, the cats of war. "We must beef up the attack before the rat, or mouse year ends and the ox year starts."

House residents although not surprised by this Napoleonic declaration have their own thoughts as to the reality of making their old temple completely free from rodents and roaches.

Valeria Vasilevski, who espied two mice caught and killed in snap traps paid no heed to Stanley Mulfeld's cry of disgust.

"Poor thing," she said, kneeling down, "perhaps you'll be reborn as a butterfly." She made a shroud of paper toweling and a coffin out of a milk carton and then removed them for proper burial.

FZI males were surprised and impressed. Farkas put it this way: "She's a poet."

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SAYS
CA. 1967

...I think I'll talk a little on Zen. Since I am a Zen teacher, all I have said so far is on Zen. I suppose you here at Long Beach State have enough curiosity at least to understand the outward appearance of Zen. A Zen master intensely dislikes teaching people of that type.

While you were listening, where was your true nature? After the Buddha had his enlightenment experience, it is said his first statement was that all of this world has Buddha nature. Even now, as you are sitting here, you are sitting in your own true nature. You are all one with God or Buddha. All the time you are one with your self. So why and where are you searching? It is because you do not understand that you are at rest and at home. You are at this very moment truly with truth.

Just where is this true nature? Are you sitting on it? Is it above you? You simply do not grasp the fact that you are there, with true nature. You are with the creator at all times, listening to

the sound of true nature. If I ask you to demonstrate true nature and you cannot do that--you are far from Zen.

All of you have true nature, singular nature; none of you have two minds. Mind cannot see itself. Though you cannot hold it or grasp it or see it, you can manifest it. When you manifest it you are not conscious of it. What were you thinking about when I shook your hand? You did not have time to think of anything else. It must surprise you to think you had no thought. We as human beings are always thinking of past or future; we are thinking of it objectively. In my act of greeting I did not have time to objectify. At that moment my true nature manifested itself. During that act there was no way and no need to explain. That state is the state of being separate from subject and object.

Now you understand a little how foolish it is to try to explain Zen.

SESSHIN WITH JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI IS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 22-28.

THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHING

Chapter VI, 2

Everyone knelt down. The Master said: "The first is the incense of discipline (shila) skandha. When you possess neither the false nor the evil, neither jealousy nor anger nor malice within your mind, it is called the incense of discipline within your mind.

"The second is the incense of samadhi skandha. When your mind is not agitated by observing all the appearances of the outside, good or bad, it is called the incense of samadhi.

"The third is the incense of wisdom (prajna) skandha. When you create no evil karma with your mind, and observe your original nature always with your wisdom that penetrates all obstacles; and when, though practicing all virtuous deeds, you adhere not to your own merit and pay your respect to your superiors and have compassion for your inferiors and for the poor and for the friendless, it is the incense of wisdom, as it is called, in your mind.

"The fourth is the incense of liberation (Vimukti) skandha. When your mind practices no more reasoning, as the wisteria climbs upon the tree, and judges nothing in terms of good and bad, it is called the incense of liberation in your mind.

"The fifth is the incense of liberation from opinions (vimukti-jnana-darshana) skandha. When your mind practices no more reasoning in terms of good and bad, you must not retain the quiescence of your mind nor be submerged in emptiness; but you must learn more Dharma and acquire further knowledge, realizing your own intrinsic mind. You must attain the enlightenment of all the Buddhas. It is called the incense of liberation from opinions in your mind."

SOKEI-AN SAYS

A long time ago when I was giving you lectures on the technical terms of Buddhism, I explained the meaning of the Five Shadows, that is, the five shadows of unenlightened mind, the Five Skandhas.

But these five shadows of which we are speaking now are the shadows of enlightened mind--the five

shadows of Buddha, the enlightened one.

In the last lecture, the Sixth Patriarch said to the multitude that he would give them the five incenses of the Dharmakaya, the five elements of your own nature.

Then he said, "I will teach you how to make confession according to the form of non-existence." In the lecture today, I cannot make a translation of the confession, but I struggled through to translate these five incenses of Buddha with all the details. Of course I do not believe that these are the words of the Sixth Patriarch because he would not give such details of the five skandhas of Buddha, since he was a great master of the Southern School. I imagine that all these details were written by his disciples and later included in the main lines of the Record. They are included by scholars, but for my part, I do not include them as important. However, to give you the full translation of this Record, I must include these lines, and I will give you a commentary on these not-so-important lines. The Master had asked everyone to kneel down.

Everyone knelt down. The Master said: The first is the incense of discipline skandha. Skandha is "shadow." In Sanskrit, it means "neck," the joint between the head and shoulder. Sometimes it is translated as "shoulder," so the meaning then is aggregation, something heaped up as you pile cushions one upon the other. These shadows of the mind are thus piled up, as the flame of a candle has different shadows piled up. The center is white, then green, then blue, then red, and on the top is some orange. In such a way, one's mind, from the inmost consciousness, is shadows--shadows gradually exposed to the outside. Speaking picturesquely, as an egg--the yellow center, then the white, and then the shell. So our minds from the center to the surface are different shadows, but they are shadows of the enlightened one. This shila is the center of it. Shila means present conscience, like incense that perfumes the character. Intrinsically, you possess it. It is not given to you by a teacher or by Buddha; innately, as a human, you have it. All have it. Even animals have their own conscience. The hungry tiger will not kill another tiger, but the mother will kill one

cub to save the others, and then the others are permitted to eat it. Before this, even in the greatest hunger, they will not eat.

There is a story in Buddhism. A prince, who was a Bodhisattva, was looking down from a cliff and saw a tiger with her starving cubs. The mother tried to kill one cub and the prince, seeing this, went down the cliff and offered himself to the mother tiger. But the mother tiger would not kill him. Even in her grief, about to kill her offspring, she could not kill a human being. Realizing this, the prince went back and threw himself from the cliff. The mother tiger saw him dead, stained in his own blood, and then she ate the prince. You will see this story often, carved on stones or in bronze Bodhisattvas. So this shila is the innate conscience and it is difficult to violate it. It is like the incense of your nature which perfumes your character and permeates your house; if anyone comes in, he feels it. And if you meet anyone who violates his own conscience--run away from him.

When you possess neither the false nor the evil, neither jealousy nor malice within your mind, it is called the incense of discipline within your mind. It is hard not to possess any of these qualities within your mind; but if your soul does not fall into egotism, your nature is not your own; it is the Bodhisattva's--it is universal.

The second is the incense of samadhi skandha. *When your mind is not agitated by observing all the appearances of the outside, good or bad, it is called the incense of samadhi.* By this quietude, tranquillity, this conscience dwells. It is like a beautiful aquamarine in the bottom of the sea; it forms a shining blue crystallization. If your mind is always fluctuating, you will not find this conscience at the bottom of your mind. There is no reason for this fluctuation. When you see something good, a particular good for you, it carries your own desire and may be bad for someone else. Why do you have to call a thing good or bad?

The third is the incense of wisdom skandha. Prajna means intrinsic wisdom, diamond wisdom. If you do not have it, how can you keep your mind quiet? When a child is left alone by its parents,

it will cry because it is annoyed by the outside. How can you conquer such disturbance? Only with your own transcendental wisdom. So prajna is the shadow of that wisdom.

When you create no evil karma with your own mind, and observe your original nature always with your wisdom which penetrates all obstacles. Original mind is your own dharmakaya, your own alaya consciousness. You will observe it with your prajna, your transcendental wisdom, and then you will understand the bottom of your own mind which connects you to universal consciousness. You are originally connected but you are isolated from it by your attitude--your own ignorance. So by your own wisdom you must recognize this original state. Only religion gives you the key to make you one with the universe.

And when, though practicing all virtuous deeds... "Deeds" are the Six Paramitas. There is no time to explain this now, but I think you know the paramitas. These are the deeds of a Bodhisattva who will take no reward.

You adhere not to your own merit and pay your respect to your superiors and have compassion for your inferiors and for the poor and for the friendless, it is the incense of wisdom, as it is called, in your mind. The fourth is the incense of liberation (vimukti) skandha. Emancipation. If you are not emancipated from superstitions, you cannot attain transcendental wisdom. So the vesture of emancipation will keep this diamond in your bosom. Emancipation is like a robe you are wearing, freedom from superstitions. For instance, your horoscope says that it is a clear day, but you see that it is raining. Or a friend says that there is a job for you--go get it. But the horoscope says no--go north today--and you cannot go for the job on Seventh Avenue; you must go to the Bronx. You must free yourself from all these things, not only such things, but from philosophies and sciences that are told by terms. You must find the thing that is not interpreted by the human being, for you cannot interpret enough from the human standpoint.

When your mind practices no more reasoning as the wisteria climbs upon the tree, and judges nothing in terms of good or bad, it is called the incense of liberation in your mind. Wisteria, the vine that climbs

up, finds its way naturally. It is a terrible way you are thinking, trying to understand by your reasoning.

The fifth is the incense of liberation from opinions (vimukti-jnana-darshana) skandha. You can emancipate yourself by your own attainment but if you do not have the knowledge of your own emancipation, you cannot emancipate another. The Buddha told how he found his own emancipation by his own method, so he knew how to help others, and we are still using his way.

Darshana means "view," and jnana is "to know." With these two, you can observe another who is entangled and you can see how to save him.

Vimukti is "eye." Good and bad here means all relative existence. You must give up this dualistic view and attain to the one view, the single eye. Finally, you will also have to relinquish this oneness of the universe.

When your mind practices no more reasoning in terms of good and bad, you must not retain the quiescence of your mind nor be submerged in emptiness. When you attain unity with the universe, you will fear to lose it. This is the Hinayana attitude. You fall into the trap of emptiness. It is like stopping a bottle; nothing comes out. You must throw the stopper away and realize that things cannot manifest themselves by their own knowledge. Then you will really touch something intangible and ungraspable--and you will understand. To take the stopper off and get into real emptiness, this is the secret of Buddhism.

When I was young, I asked my teacher: "Is it true that the most truthful moment of mind is when I am asleep?" "Yes, it is," he answered. "And it seems that when I go home and talk to my mother, that this is the true time."

So I realized that from morning to evening I am true; there is no false time.

The koan, "Depending upon nothing, manifest your own mind," is a trick to cut through to quick realization, and then every moment is a true moment.

Zen is not really difficult. You must touch the magnetism of the dharmakaya and then--"AH!"--you will realize your self.

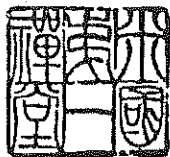
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