

# ZEN NOTES

見<sub>レ</sub>五蘊皆<sub>ナ</sub>空<sub>ヲ</sub>度<sub>トス</sub>一切<sub>ノ</sub>苦厄<sub>ヲ</sub>舍利子。色不  
異<sub>レ</sub>空。空不<sub>レ</sub>異<sub>レ</sub>色。色即<sub>チ</sub>是<sub>レ</sub>空。空即<sub>チ</sub>是<sub>レ</sub>色。受

In the early 1740's, Hakuin, lecturing on the Heart Sutra, concerning the phrase, "Form is not different from emptiness," said:

A bowl of delicious soup is ruined by two lumps of rat shit.

Quoted from

*Penetrating Laughter*

BOOK NOTED by John Storm

Hakuin, the 18th century renovator of Rinzai Zen, was a most prolific writer, painter and calligrapher, turning out work after work right up to the end at age 83. It's no wonder, then, that as Zen has assumed a more or less settled role in Western life, translations of Hakuin have become increasingly common. The latest to show up at book stores is *Penetrating Laughter, Hakuin's Zen & Art*, by Kazuaki Tanahashi, The Overlook Press, 1984, \$16.95.

Tanahashi, an artist and writer associated with the Zen Center in San Francisco, provides a fascinating collection of Hakuin's paintings in which the old teacher, celebrated as a disciplinarian and organizer, shows himself to have been at the same time a sensitive and humorous artist. Indeed, many of Hakuin's works are really cartoons, with a moral inscribed alongside in his inimitable calligraphy.

Hakuin also emerges as responsive to all kinds of popular deity cults, more so, perhaps, than we would expect of

such a Zen exemplar. He was always determined, however, to communicate with ordinary people, and at the end of the book Tanahashi gives us translations of the Master's two "street chants," efforts to popularize Buddhist doctrine using abundant slang expressions and rhythms. There is also a new translation of "In Praise of Zazen," Hakuin's great paean to meditation.

RE: RATS (MICE). I had hoped against hope that their year of dominance would end promptly with the advent of the ox, but such is not the case. In New York, the NYT notes, the percentage of rental households troubled by vermin has increased from 22% to 29%, roughly one in three. An article, noted by Bob Schaefer in *International Wildlife* (1,2/85) "Oh, Rats!" by Paul Spencer Wachtel and Jeffrey A. McNealy, updates us on the world rat scene, giving some numbers that are not encouraging.

The U.S. is frequently speculated to have a rat-io of one to every person, according to the World Health Organization (India is es-

timated to have ten), while China's anti-rat campaign, after 1.5 billion dead, just scratched the surface.

Theoretically, a pair can produce 20 million descendants in three years. Unknown to Europe until the time of the Crusades, rats accompanied the Crusaders on their return by ship from Asia Minor. By Shakespeare's time, days of prayer were set for protection against their ravages and rat catchers were important officials. They are said to have reached the east coast of America in 1775 and California in the 1850s.

Vegetarians had better note that "rats eat or destroy some five percent of the world's production of grain after harvest, enough to feed 130 million people, according to a United Nations meeting of experts...in the tropics...rats gobble up a third of the food production...they not only eat food, they foul it... the U.S. has reluctantly set standards for rat droppings (in our approved food)."

A Brazilian nutritionist proposes eating them (at least the warehouse type that live on cereals). Stewed in stroganoff is

recommended. He adds as an unexpected incentive, "Rat meat is impregnated with the hormone testosterone, a chemical substance that can stimulate the libido in cases of sexual dysfunction. This helps to explain their rapid reproduction rate."

The farmers in Thailand's Pathum Thani are way ahead. A weekend hunt netted 70,000, which they barbecued for a party of 2,000 villagers. A Thai guest says that some country people swallow small ones alive.

Rats seem to be immune to nuclear bombing, having survived 43 bomb tests in Eniwetok, although thoroughly contaminated with radioactivity.

Our efforts here over a year exterminated two we know of. I saw one entering from the NW corner of the yard from a rubbish area behind the attractive fence put up by our neighbors. We protested to them after the fact. As for the mice, our count of downed is 29, but the war is by no means over. They, too, have been with us only since the spring Sesshin of a year ago. This month is the anniversary of their arrival. MF

SESSHIN WITH JOSHU SASAKI  
ROSHI IS SCHEDULED FOR  
5/22-28.

## THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHING

### Chapter VI,3

*Virtuous scholars, these incenses perfume your mind within. Do not seek them without! Now I shall teach you how to make confession according to the form which is non-existence. By this confession, the sins which you have committed through past incarnations will be expiated, and I promise you that the three karmas which you are creating shall become pure.*

*Virtuous scholars, every one of you must repeat the words at once, following that which I shall now pronounce. "We, your disciples, have realized that our minds, throughout the past, present and future, are not stained by the delusions which are the result of our ignorance of the law. We now confess those evil karmas which have created the offences which we have committed because of our ignorance. May we be emancipated from them at once and may we not commit the same error again! We, your disciples, have realized that our minds, throughout the past, present and future, are not stained by the delusions which are the result of our pride and arrogance. We now confess those evil karmas which we have created and the offences which we have committed because of our pride and arrogance. May we be emancipated from them at once and may we not commit the same error again throughout the everlasting future!"*

### SOKEI-AN SAYS

In the last lecture, the Sixth Patriarch spoke to his disciples of the five kinds of incense that perfume your mind. In this chapter, he speaks about confession which is according to the form of non-existence. I shall explain this term. We have realized that everything we see on the outside can be reduced to original essence. Of course, from all different angles, each speaks about it differently and gives its name in his own terms--but after all, it is essential oneness. In that state of existence, all discriminations cease to exist. Our mind really came from that state originally, so if anyone goes back to that state of realization, the sins which he has committed in some period or some country, or

in some different situation, will be reduced to nothingness. Of course, the sins that he committed will be forgotten by the one who attains oneness. Those who do not realize original oneness by their own wisdom must suffer for what they have committed. The real confession is not just confessing whatever sins you have committed, but you must attain original oneness in your own mind. It is easy to speak about original oneness, but difficult to realize; you must criticize yourself from morning to evening. The day you are born into that original oneness, you will be pure and can accept yourself. This is a religious mystery. You must struggle hard many, many years for this oneness which is incomparable. If the *oneness* can be compared with anything, it is not absolute. It is not real nothingness.

It was in the T'ang dynasty that the Sixth Patriarch of the Southern Zen school in China was giving this form of confession to his disciples.

"The five incenses" mean the five shadows of unenlightened mind for those pure shadows perfume your mind within. This idea of "perfuming" plays a very important part in Buddhism. When you do something, it always perfumes, or fumigates your mind, just as smoke fumigates your sleeves; and it permeates your inmost mind, perfumes the seed of your consciousness, and carries your karma to your next incarnation. Do not seek the five shadows on the outside.

*Virtuous scholars, these incenses perfume your mind within. Do not seek them without! Now I shall teach you how to make confession according to the form which is non-existence. By this confession, the sins which you have committed through past incarnations will be expiated. Old karmas will be expiated. In Buddhism, this expiation is absolute salvation. When you realize it once, then from that day you are not yourself; you are part of the great universe. You are not performing your life according to your own ideas. From that day, life will be bestowed upon you. You are emancipated; the pain and agony is no longer yours.*

*And I promise you that the three karmas which you are creating shall become pure. These three karmas are created by body, mind and speech. From that moment, all your deeds will be pure deeds. They will*

be just the same as before, but your consciousness will accept them differently. This world is nothing but your mind, you know--so if your mind permits your deeds, they are pure. It is absolute permission --but your mind cannot do this before it is one with absolute oneness. This state cannot be spoken of in words, so temporarily I use the term "absolute oneness."

*Virtuous scholars, every one of you must repeat the words at once, following that which I shall now pronounce: "We, your disciples, have realized that our minds, throughout the past, present and future, are not stained by the delusions which are the result of our ignorance of the law. When in the autumn we go to the woods and see a pool of water, the water seems stained by autumn leaves--red, yellow--but when we take the water in our hands, it is pure. Defiled mind is your delusion. The pool is your mind, and when you return to original consciousness, you know that your mind is not stained. There is no more reward and no more punishment, for it is complete emancipation and you as an individual cease to exist. You go back to the bosom of great consciousness. You will ask the question: "How, if the individual ego ceases to exist, can the Buddhist maintain the idea of reincarnation?" Well, reincarnation to the Buddhist means no particular body and no particular soul, but original oneness with the universe. When you realize this, you know that your delusion came from your own ignorance.*

*We now confess those evil karmas which we have created and the offences which we have committed because of our own ignorance. These lines are the origin of the forms we use once a year to celebrate the Buddha's Day of Enlightenment.*

*We, your disciples, have realized that our minds, throughout the past, present, and future are not stained by the delusions which are the result of our pride and arrogance. This part is just the same as before except for the two words, "pride" and "arrogance." This "pride" is really an obstacle to coming into religion. You cannot enter the gate of religion through philosophy or science. There is just one avenue.*

When I was young, about nineteen, and studying

art, I studied sculpture from Egyptian to Greek Renaissance, to Roman, to modern French. Then I went back to Oriental art, and finally came to modern art with living models. I was sketching outside, carrying my canvas under my arm. How I adored nature! I surrendered absolutely; the farmers thought I was crazy to join my hands and kneel down before a brook or tree or a little flower. I came into religion through art. There is another way, through daily life, but from that humility before nature, I came to the gate of Buddhism. If you have no pride or arrogance in your mind, to enter the gate is quite simple.

TWO ENCOUNTERS  
by Mary Reinhart

On the last morning of Labor Day sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in about 1975, the rainy day had turned into a cloudy one. Just before leaving, I was outside chatting with Soen Roshi. Suddenly a ray of sunlight fell between us.

"Shunko," Roshi said to me, smiling. I looked at him expectantly, for Shunko was the Dharma name he had given me.

"Shunko--Spring Light," he said.

"Spring Light!" I laughed, thinking of Labor Day weekend as the herald of autumn.

"Spring Light--all

year," Roshi replied.

During a sesshin at Beecher Lake, before there was Dai Bosatsu Zendo, I told Soen Roshi that I'd brought with me a paper I'd written on Zen for a psychology course--hoping of course that he'd want to read it. Instead, he asked me to bring it to the zendo at a specified time. When we met there, Roshi took the paper from me and laid it on the altar in front of the Buddha. He then placed his hands in gassho. Automatically, I did the same.

The paper remained there throughout the sesshin.

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SAY:  
MY ZEN 1/2/69

...The truth of Zen is that at all times we are manifesting our true selves.

Everybody stand up. Put your hands on your hips. Now, laugh out loud. While you were laughing, were you thinking about yourself? You probably forgot to be concerned about yourself. However, the one who laughed was you... no one else. So you were manifesting and realizing yourself while you were laughing. But, since you do not recognize the fact that you are realizing and manifesting yourself at all times, you seek, subjectively or objectively, to find yourself elsewhere.

...If you ask me what is Zen, my answer will be to laugh as you laughed a while ago. That is Zen, my Zen.

...When you wake up tomorrow morning, first thing, stand up, put your hands on your hips, and laugh five or ten times. That will cure you of much of your ills...and is even better for you than a long period of meditative sitting...This is

really the best beginning of Zen.

CONVERSATION AMONG BUDDHIST MINISTERS HAVING PRE-DINNER COCKTAILS  
From the Buddhist Temple of Chicago Bulletin 4/85

Q: What is the Buddhist attitude toward drinking?  
M1: Buddhism teaches the Middle Path..

M2: Yes, avoid the extreme of intoxication.

M1: Drinking in moderation is okay.

M3: Alcohol is prajna (wisdom) water; it can help one to...

M4: The precepts do not prohibit drinking but say to avoid intoxication.

M3: Historically, Buddhist monks, especially Zen monks, were noted for being drinkers.

Sensei: Buddhism usually does not take rigid stands on ethical matters. The typical Buddhist attitude is to handle things in terms

of actual individual situations. For example, if a shy teetotaler at a party asks, "Is it okay if I have a drink?" the advice might be, "Of course, relax and have a good time." On the other hand, to a boozier whose drinking is causing many problems, the advice might be, "Abstain--dry out and get your life together."

*gon notes*

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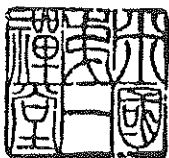
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