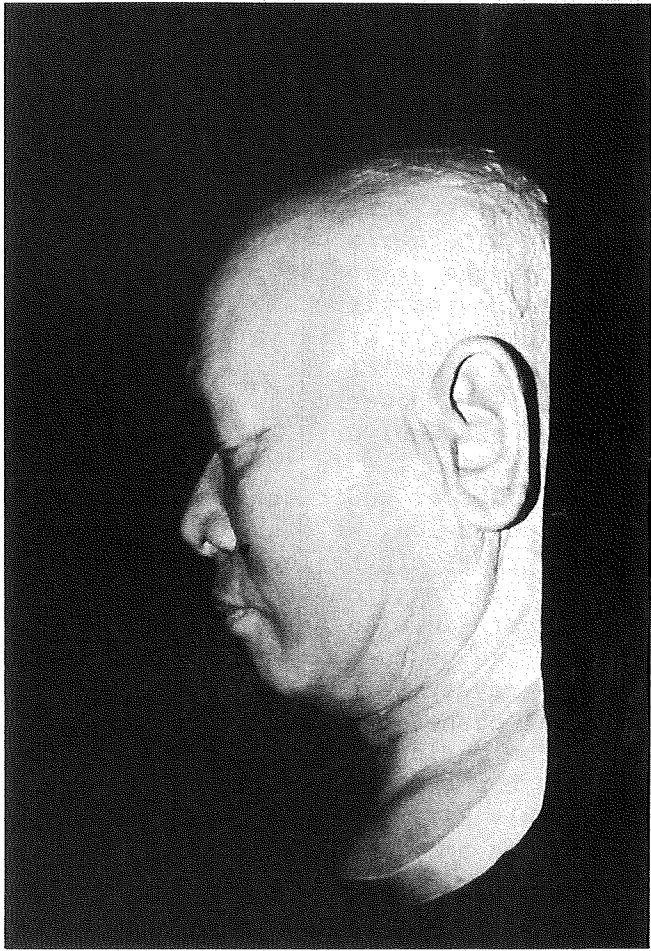


ZEN NOTES



SOKEI-AN (1882-1945)

THE SOKEI-AN MEMORIAL

It was a warm and humid morning as members of the Institute gathered at Woodlawn Cemetery for the annual memorial service for Sokei-an Sasaki, founder of FZI.

Sokei-an died on May 17, 1945. Ever since, his followers, members of the Institute and friends have been making this pilgrimage to his gravesite. This wandering Japanese monk is buried here among more than 250,000 of New York's past great and humble, including industrial and business leaders, four Confederate generals and that American poet of wanderers, Herman Melville.

This year we were greeted at the entrance by a yellow-and-white striped tent and rows of chairs set up for a Mother's Day concert. Undeterred, we set off for the gravesite led by Stanley Mulfeld, who was entrusted with Mary Farkas's map of the 400-acre cemetery. At first we passed through an impressive and choice section where, as in life, the wealthy and powerful have the best sites: members of the Woolworth, Juilliard, Borden and Belmont families lie in imposing Greek temples and Egyptian tombs or under obelisks among flowering dogwood and azalea. We continued on, now walking past the graves of the less prosperous, which are marked by ordinary tombstones--including one for former Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.

Mulfeld led us to a small path which wound between a row of graves. Here the soaring shade trees and ornamental bushes--junipers, arbor vitae, yews--were full of the music of song sparrows, cardinals, blackbirds and the cawing of crows. We passed the remains of a freshly killed rabbit, his bones cleanly stripped of flesh and his bloodied fur bright with flies--indicating the presence of a fox? Soon we discovered what we had come for: a granite rock with an indented square full of Japanese characters that marks the grave of the first Japanese Zen roshi ever buried in this country--in accordance with his wish.

"This rock is part of Japan, part of Zen, part of us all. The bones of some of our dearest friends are here contributing to this earth," Mary said.

At the bottom of the boulder is a small bed of ivy. Two markers, one bearing Sokei-an's name and the other with "Eryu"--"Wisdom Dragon", Mrs. Sasaki's Zen name, are at the foot of the plot. Gil-Over-The

Ground, a creeping, ivy-like plant which bears tiny violet flowers the size of a baby's fingernail, has covered much of the plot, intertwining with the grass. There are also cultivated violets, escaped from a nearby grave, which are encroaching on the Sokei-an plot.

Underneath a cobalt sky, streaked with cirrus clouds with cumulus thunderheads boiling up in the near distance and under the outstretched boughs of two giant oak trees, we formed a semi-circle. One by one each laid flowers and burning incense on the graves. There were Lily of the Valley for Mrs. Sasaki and Tiger Lilies and Iris for Sokei-an-- their favorite flowers. Schaefer immediately manifested his rhinoceros nature in a sneezing fit caused by the pollen.

"It is hard to imagine that Sakiko is not here with us today, but of course she is," Mary said. In later years, Sakiko had provided the flowers for the ceremony which she had grown up at her home in Putnam Valley. She died last year only two days after her flowers were used for the last time.

Stanley rang the jiki's bell and Schaefer, back to his everyday self but still red-eyed, led us in the Hannya. Mary then invited everyone to stand before the gravesite to pay their respects, reminding them of the Japanese custom of relating to the dead recent events on earth. Mary led off by telling Sokei-an of the visit to the Institute last month of the Abbot and followers of Miura Roshi's temple in Japan.

One by one we stood silently before the grave or spoke to Sokei-an before bowing and moving aside. Chanting the four vows signaled the end of the memorial ceremony. During the final lines, Stanley's bell was answered with a burst of song by a sparrow in a nearby tree.

Leaving, we saw the first of the crowd coming for the concert. Cars full of people were driving past groups of gravediggers and groundskeepers carrying "On Strike" signs. Shortly after most Institute members had departed, a brief but violent cloudburst scattered the crowd as the rain poured down on the tent, on the cars, on the strikers, on the Greek temples and Egyptian tombs, on the ordinary graves, on Sokei-an's boulder and somewhere, perhaps, on the den of a contented fox.

THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHING
Chapter VI,6

THE FOUR VOWS

Sentient beings, those which abide within my mind, are numberless. I take a vow to enlighten them.

Worldly desires, those which disquiet my mind, are endless. I take a vow to bring them to an end.

The gates of Dharma, the doors of which open within my own nature, are manifold. I take a vow to enter them all.

The goal of Wisdom, through which my mind will awaken to its own nature, is ever beyond. I take a vow to attain it.

Virtuous scholars, have you realized that you have said: "Sentient beings are numberless; I take a vow to enlighten them."

Thus I, Hui-neng, speak: "It is not I who make them enlightened, but you, virtuous scholars, who must enlighten those sentient beings that abide within your mind. These are delusion, arrogance, jealousy, malice and the like. You, every one of you, must convert those sentient beings which are your own nature, to enlightenment by your own mind. This is called 'true conversion.'

SOKEI-AN SAYS

The Sixth Patriarch has recited these four great vows with the multitude. We always recite these four great vows at the end of the lecture, every evening. You will find these vows in the old scriptures of Buddhism, and in the history of the early Chinese Buddhism. They were translated from the original Sanskrit. They are in the Shingon school, the Zen school, the Tendai school; all schools of Buddhism have these four great vows.

The Sixth Patriarch turned these vows into his own terms, expressing them as his own, though he inserted more words between the lines--for instance, "Those which abide within my mind," and "those which disquiet my mind."

Each vow corresponds to a part of the foundation of the Buddhist commandment.

Tonight I shall give you the foundation of knowl-

edge of the Buddhist commandments. This point of the commandments is very important.

Sentient beings: This means the beings that have desire, those that live from morning to night to accomplish their desires.

Those which abide within my mind are numberless. I take a vow to enlighten them. In Buddhism, there is no particular ego within you. You yourself are an aggregation of the elements of beings within you: elements of insects, fish, pigeons, and all varieties of animals; they are the sentient beings. Each individual possesses a city of sentient beings within himself.

The commandments that were established on the soil of desire are called, in Sanskrit, the "Paramitas."

Worldly desires, those which disquiet my mind, are endless. I take a vow to bring them to an end. How can one bring those disturbing qualities in his mind to an end? The Buddhist thinks it can be done by meditation; some commandments are established on this ground. This ground is called "jnana." In meditation, your aim is that all desires should cease and that then pure jnana must appear in your mind, but the outside is still with you. This state is called "rupadhatu." These commandments are founded on rupadhatu.

The gates of Dharma, the doors of which open within my own nature, are manifold. I take a vow to enter them all. Through these gates, you enter the state of arupadhatu, and so there are commandments established upon arupadhatu. In Buddhism, there are three states, and commandments are established on each: kamadhatu, rupadhatu and arupadhatu.

The goal of wisdom, through which my mind shall awaken to its own nature, is ever beyond. I take a vow to attain it. With this, at the conclusion, you will attain Buddhahood, and no commandment is needed in this state. Standing upon this state, you will make the commandments yourself. I shall illustrate how you establish the commandment in this arupadhatu state.

When the kalpa fire wipes out all existences of

the mind and brings them to emptiness, the universe is not dead. This is rather fictitious, but hypothetically you can imagine a fire sweeping the universe and not leaving even a mote of ashes existing. From this emptiness, all will be created again. So if anyone has the notion that the whole universe is really a place of annihilation, he does not think that any original power that created the universe or God or Buddha exists. Therefore, he believes that there is no law of causation; that the result is not the consequence of the cause. Then he does not fear the whip of karma, for there is no law, no morality; neither good nor evil exists. If anyone makes this hypothetical conclusion, he is violating the commandment of the Buddha.

The second commandment, which was established on the ground of jnana, is your own consciousness. When you come back to your own consciousness, your original state, the law is written in this original consciousness. If anyone tries to kill it, you must realize that you cannot kill atman. This is so-called "natural morality." The other is absolute morality. The monks, while in their training, will refuse to be disturbed by visits from their families. This commandment was established upon this mind. You must not see women, must not marry, and so on. It was quite natural for the monks to observe this.

The third commandment was established on the ground of everyday life and activity, which is not "natural" but determined by conditions. For instance, when you swim, you must put on a bathing suit--but you cannot go into a church wearing a bathing suit. I am not quite sure about this last, but in New York I am sure that you cannot. And here, the Japanese do not like to see a Japanese walk in the street with an American woman; this is taboo.

You must understand that these are three laws of morality which really belong to the nature of man and to the present--as if by order of a king. In some factories, no one is permitted to smoke; it is ruled by the king of the factory.

In early Buddhism, while all the weak worked in

the fields and all the strong went to battle, the brainy ones refused to fight. They must sit in their caves and think, think, without producing anything. The father of such a one would not give him anything, and his mother would say: "Live in the cave outside of town and come in the evening, stand under the eaves, and I will give you food." Marriage was not permitted him because he had no power to support himself. Those who were just thinking of finding out about some spiritual power must accept the celibate life. Today, this brain-work is more important than manual labor, so we cannot apply the twenty-five hundred year old law to monks of our time.

Laymen observe three laws: natural, conditional and imposed law.

The monks observe two commandments: natural law and conditional law.

THE RHINOCEROS

Excerpts from the Rhinoceros Discourse appear in an anthology, *World of the Buddha*, edited by Lucien Stryk, NY: Anchor, 1969. The rhinoceros, according to an editorial note, represents the "supposed position of the Theravada school on such matters as independence, a position disdained by Mahayanists for its selfishness." Recommendations are offered for monks seeking to achieve the ideal of non-attachment. Samples follow.

6. Whilst resting, standing, going, traveling, leave must be obtained by one living in the midst of friends; let one, observing solitude, walk alone like a rhinoceros.

37. Like a lion, which fears not noises, unobstructed like the wind whirling through a net, not touching anything like the lotus-leaf untouched by water, let one walk alone like a rhinoceros.

18. There are cold, heat, hunger, thirst, wind, sun, gadflies, snakes; having overcome all these various things, let a man walk alone like a rhinoceros.

WE TAKE PLEASURE
IN ANNOUNCING:

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--published by Rinzai-
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on the Sutras; accounts
by 9 Rinzai-ji centers
and an interview with
some prisoners in NY
State Prison.

Also available at the
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NOTED BY MF in CG

Teisho, p.37, by Sasaki Roshi

"Tathagata Zen, the Zen
we study...is that which
transcends all teachings,
which manifests itself
to us as truth, sheer and
simple.

"When we speak of the
teachings of Zen...there
is no need to determine
whether they accord with
Mohammed or Christ or
Buddha, because if we
realize the teachings
utterly, we will find
ourselves before and
beyond the form of any
tradition...

"The utterances of
an awakened person are

Buddhism. Buddhism has no
fixed form. Tathagata Zen,
Zen in its pure form, is
...Buddhism. It is the Zen
of the enlightened man."

A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR
note is struck in our un-
published ms. of *Zen, the
Living Buddhism of Japan*,
by Ohasama-Faust, Stuttgart,
1926, translated by G.B.
Fowler from the German.

"Zen is truth itself,
not the word, but the
spirit of truth...Indeed
truth is unborn and un-
dying...This sea is time-
less and spaceless, un-
attainable to and im-
measureable by the in-
tellect. But this largest
thing is simultaneously
also the tiniest, and the
tiniest is the largest...
It remains beyond all
contraries, and yet these
very contraries express
that which is beyond the
contraries...

"...the Zen of the
great vehicle...is genu-
ine Zen. This Zen was
first called 'The Zen of
the One Who is Real,' but
since the time of the
Patriarch Kyozan (805-
890) it has been called
'The Zen of the Patri-
archs.' According to him,
one distinguishes between
the two kinds of Zen as
follows:

"The Zen of the 'One' is the pure contemplation of absolute equality expressed in the teaching of the Buddha. However, by the 'Zen of the Patriarchs' is understood the direct *experience* of truth itself, exalted above all equality and inequality. This Zen must actually be genuine and living Zen, and it can be attained only through direct transmission from mind to mind, not by indirect teaching...It is at once contemplative and active...All men are of the same mind, and by means of this mind every individual is able to bring about his own salvation and that of his fellow men."

BOOK NOTED
by John Storm

Among the arts associated with Zen in China and Japan over the last 1,500 years, none is more immediately accessible to the Western sensibility than Sumi-e painting, the art of painting with black ink. The powerful simplicity, the open-ended expressiveness, of the few per-

fectly placed brush strokes in a Sumi-e painting are as captivating in their overall impact as a haiku--as captivating and, in many cases, as revelatory of Zen meaning. For from early on, this technique has been used as a vehicle for both manifesting and appreciating the unhesitating action-from-the-abdomen that is demanded in Zen training.

Anyone interested in the subject (and willing to pay \$34.95 to pursue it) will be pleased to know that Kodansha International Ltd. has recently published a comprehensive guide to Sumi-e. The book, "The Art of Sumi-e: Appreciation, Techniques, and Application," by Shozo Sato, reproduces 75 paintings and provides as well an extensive explanation of how they were done and of how the method evolved over the centuries. Altogether, it is quite a handsome package, a good example of the high-quality products Japanese book publishers consistently turn out despite "bottom-line" pressures that have cheapened the work of so many of their competitors elsewhere.

LATE RAT NEWS by Long Arm

Not so long ago Mary Farkas said: "We don't give koans here, we give problems." As some readers may be all too well aware by now, my own assigned problem has been the unexpected and usually unrelenting surge in our resident rodent population. In the mail comes evidence that monastic and household rat-catchers around the world have thoughts on this matter as well.

One correspondent, whose sensitivities on the topic are such that she requested an identity-less depiction of her particular ZC, wrote as follows:

Dear Mary,

The reason for this rush letter--it's about the rat news. The woman in charge of such matters is suffering a lot about it--demands from one school of thought that the rats be exterminated immediately. Equally heavy demands from the no-kill school to not kill them at all. This poor girl is harrassed and I think she is embarrassed that the place has rats. Whatever she does she is going to feel that her decision is wrong.

I do know that the rats are still not being killed. Talk about how many are being caught in the humane trap has died down and it's not a commonplace topic of conversation. It's interesting that large amounts of some kind of poison is sprinkled around the kitchen for cockroaches. I have no idea how they reconcile the two. They also use 'roach motels.' On the other hand, I have seen a worker in the front office carry a roach out gently on a Kleenex and place it gently outdoors.

March 23, 1985

Dear Zen Notes,

As a long time reader & appreciator of Zen Notes it made me very sad to see the article by "Long Arm" in the March issue so 'humorously' relating the killing of mice at the Zen Center. As the most technically skillful of sentient beings on this planet, we do have an advantage over other animals, especially the little beings, but they are equally

our brothers with their own unique spiritual journey & karma. I feel our stewardship of the earth, of which we are currently not doing such a good job, should reflect a deep reverence for the life of all sentient beings and, as Buddhists, the vow to treat all beings equally with compassion & to lead them to liberation.

I myself struggle with roaches and the problem they present and have as yet found no answer that lets me breathe freely. But I do know there is a mousetrap like a cage which entices the mouse inside without harming him. He can then be removed to the country to live, without any harm. Your Zen Notes are a wonderful contribution to the world. Please think about the message conveyed in the article as it was presented.

With Gassho in the Dharma,
A Buddhist Friend

From overseas came a handwritten missive from a Buddhist monastery, lay community and meditation center. To wit:

Wat Buddha Dhamma
Ten Mile Hollow
Wisemans Ferry
N.S.W. Australia
19.6.85

Greetings, James Shapiro

Five years at this forest monastery. I have much in common with your rat predicament--though here the rodents are field rats and mice. Poisoning the creatures produces poor mind states amongst many of the members; we have two quite excellent non-traumatic rodent catchers, one catches up to 15 mice in a revolving cylinder at one setting.

Our communal pantry is redolent of rodents--we attempt to cover and secure foodstuffs--but they chew through heavy plastic buckets. This realm is sure a realm of suffering. I liked your article, admire your courage in declaring the stand you took.

May you go well on your path--

Cynthia Rees

Princeton, N.J.
June 25, 1985

zen notes

Dear James Shapiro:

...I have read with considerable interest the accounts of your difficulties with rodents, and I have struggled with my conscience over the same problem. When I lived in Brooklyn, some mice got into our apartment building and I was able to deal with them by trapping them in a "Have-a-Heart" trap and releasing them in a distant vacant lot. But rats are much wilier.

A Hindu neighbor of mine had a rat invasion and was appalled at the thought of killing sentient creatures, but the health of his family was endangered and, furthermore, rats are quite destructive; they will gnaw holes in priceless paintings and rare books. So my friend ended up using one of the commercial concoctions containing the rodenticide warfarin. One brand name is, appropriately, "Dead End." I can guarantee you would have 100% success with it.

If I ever have the problem again, I think I will be inclined to try one of the ultrasonic devices which merely drive the beasties away. I understand that's what the grain elevator people do.

Regards,
G.M. Smith

June 24, 1985

Dear Friends,

...For Long Arm, here are some suggestions for mouse control, which probably won't work either.

1. Stuff all entrances and exits (for mice) with steel wool.
2. Hire 100 cats.
3. Become less affluent than the nearest church. The mice will hie there. The saying will then become "poor as a Zen mouse."

Happy mousing,
Betty Barnett

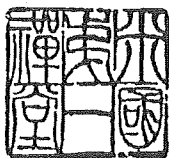
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