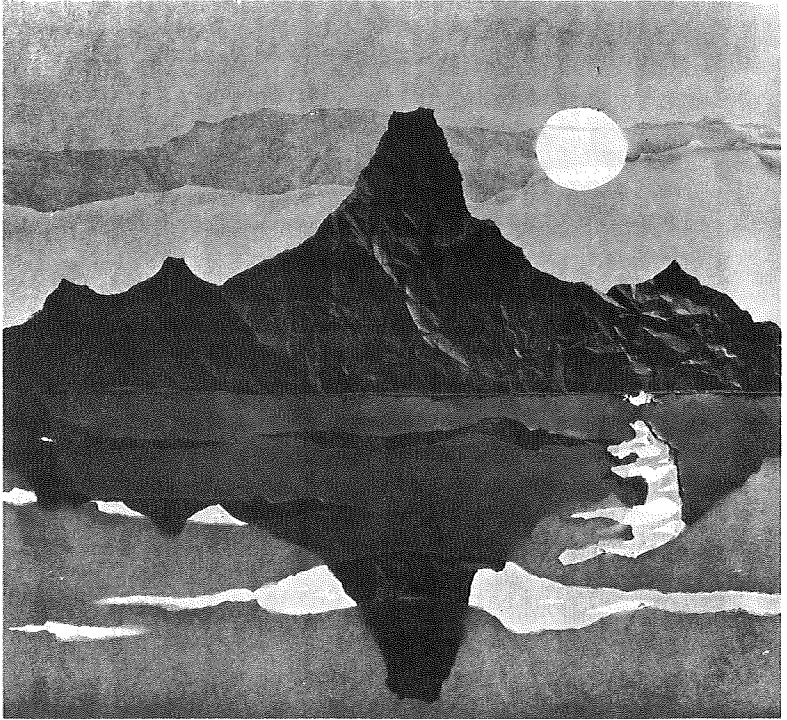


ZEN NOTES



THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHING
Chapter VI,9

If you take refuge in the true law of your own mind, you will entertain no erroneous view. You will therefore pay no tribute to the arrogance, thirst and lust of your own ego. This is called the Buddha who has renounced worldly life.

If you take refuge in the pureness of your own mind, by merit of your unstained original nature, you may deliver yourself from the world of affliction, of thirst and of lust. This is called the Buddha who is most honorable among the pure.

If you can practice thus, you will take refuge in yourself. Common-minded men do not understand this. Though they take refuge in the three treasures from morning to evening, they do not know where this Buddha treasure in which they are taking refuge dwells. If they cannot see the Buddha, in what should they take their refuge? Their making the vows becomes false.

Virtuous scholars, contemplate and do not allow your mind to commit an error!

SOKEI-AN SAYS

I am translating the Record of Zen which was spoken by the Sixth Patriarch of the Zen School of Buddhism in China during the Tang dynasty. This was once translated by a Chinese priest, and Dr. Suzuki translated the first part of it. But I think this part of the Record has not yet been translated into any other language.

The Three Treasures are: the Buddha treasure, the Dharma treasure and the Sangha treasure. Last time I spoke about the first of these. Now I shall speak about Dharma and Sangha. Dharma is the teaching of the law, and Sangha is the community of monks, nuns and laymen. The Buddha's Sangha consisted of seven different groups: monks and nuns (observers of all the commandments), novices (observers of six commandments), male and female observers of the minor commandments, male and female observers of five commandments. These are the seven groups of the Buddhist Sangha. The last two live at home.

The so-called Bodhisattvas are in the group of lay brothers taking part in the ceremonies. In your terms, this is really in the sense of priest. The lay priests who were called Bodhisattvas lived in their own homes but came to the monastery where they would stay with the monks. Later there were Bodhisattvas who did not have their own homes. Today these Bodhisattvas, with or without homes, are called *koji*. *Bhikshus* are homeless brothers.

If you take refuge. To take refuge is the translation of going into the teaching. In Ceylon, *gacchami* is "to take refuge." If I translate from the Chinese, the meaning is "I am converted into the Buddha's teachings." I do not know who originated this translation "to take refuge," but, borrowing from English, I use this phrase.

In the true law of your mind. This means the construction of your own mind, that is, to realize the consciousness of your own existence. Buddhism is a religion based upon the consciousness of sentient beings--not only human beings, but all beings.

According to modern psychological theory, there are three stages of consciousness: the unconscious, the subconscious and the conscious. If you are aware of the present existence as the conscious state of your self, then you are not quite aware of your conscious state but your consciousness performs your life subconsciously, and the unconscious part of your life is unaware. You can observe this by objectifying it. According to the Buddhist theory, consciousness evolves from the unconscious to the present consciousness, and this evolution is divided into five or eight different stages. Starting from the bottom:

1. *Amara* (pure) consciousness--which is not "embalmed," that is, perfumed, by influences from the outside.

2. *Alaya* consciousness--which means everlasting consciousness. It is the consciousness that is common to all sentient beings, awakening consciousness. *Amara* consciousness is not awakened; it is elemental as in fire, water and so forth.

3. *Mana* consciousness is the subconscious. This has two states--lower and higher. The higher is the present consciousness and is called *aklishtamana*;

the lower is called *klishtamana*.

4. From this *aklishtamana*, the consciousness branches out. These branches are our five sense organs. They are included in one consciousness which is, in Buddhist terms, *Bodhi* or Knowledge.

The Buddha enlightened himself under the *Bodhi* tree. This was told allegorically. We will all enlighten ourselves under the *Bodhi* tree, the tree of knowledge. We are not studying these consciousnesses as a theory; in meditation, we realize these stages one by one, from top to bottom and from bottom to top. This was the original theory. And then, to popularize this theory, they gave it an elaborate philosophy in order to explain it. But all this philosophy is not important because Buddhism is really a very primitive religion. In this sense, Buddhism is very peculiar. You do not need to read anything or go to church; all you need to do to understand Buddhism is to sit down on your cushion and meditate upon your original consciousness. It is the only way to understand Buddhism because it is the true law of your own mind.

If you take refuge in the true law of your mind, you will not entertain any erroneous view. When you sit down, make a sit-down strike against all notions, all this outside, and contemplate your own consciousness. Then your erroneous views will cease.

Without entertaining any erroneous view you will therefore pay no tribute to the arrogance, thirst and lust of your own ego. Buddhism is the religion of non-ego. We do not believe in one's individual soul. We do not believe that souls are created one by one by God--some made favorably, some not, some made for Fifth Avenue, some to be sold on Second Avenue.

An Indian questioner asked Nagarjuna: "You say that all souls are the same. Is my soul the same as that of the worm on top of the dung heap?"

Nagarjuna answered: "That worm which is eaten by the sparrow has a soul that is the same as yours." This is the Buddhistic viewpoint.

The Buddha said to his disciples: "There are no castes in sentient beings; all are the same." Buddhists do not believe that white men are created by God and that yellow men come from the devil. Ego

makes this arrogance. This kind of ego takes the attitude of attachment.

This is called the Buddha who has renounced worldly life. If you take refuge in the pureness of your own mind (and all mind is pure originally when in the state of original consciousness), by the merit of your unstained original nature, you may deliver yourself from the world of affliction, thirst and lust. Mental afflictions or physical difficulties are really nothing but waves fluctuating on the surface of the ocean. If you do not take an egoistic attitude, it is not "you" that suffers; it is your karma following the law of causation and giving you the circumstances that carry you into difficulties and laziness. When you are in your ego and do not understand the law, you will say: "Oh, I don't want to go there because everyone gives me the cold shoulder," or "I won't go there because the air is so icy." If you do not change such an attitude, you will suffer; you cannot take this attitude and live happily.

This is called the Buddha who is most honorable among the pure. If you practice thus, you will take refuge in yourself. We say: "Take refuge in Buddha, in Dharmakaya," but it means that you are taking refuge in your own consciousness. This is your own shrine of Buddha, and Buddha is in the shrine.

The common-minded men do not understand this. Though they take refuge in the three treasures from morning to evening (as you come here and we recite this chant), they do not know where this Buddha treasure, in which they are taking refuge, dwells. It is just the same as the Japanese Christians kneeling down on the sand by the sea and praying, "Oh, God!" Where is God? Somewhere in the sky? Is this pure God in Heaven? You do not know.

The Buddhist takes refuge in the three treasures. Where is your Buddha?

If they cannot see the Buddha, in what should they take their refuge? Cannot see the Buddha? The Buddhist is quite particular and very exact about this. He will say: "I saw Buddha with my physical eye." When you take sanzen, I will say: "Show it

to me. I have listened to your words and I understand your abstract theory, but I come from Missouri --you have got to show it to me!"

Their making the vows becomes false. You join hands to God in heaven. Are you quite sure God is in heaven? Where? At night the heaven above is the heaven beneath. In what part of heaven does God exist? If you do not know, the idea becomes false.

Virtuous scholars, contemplate and do not allow your mind to commit error.

VALERIA WRITES:

A Chinese doctor came as our guest to NYC. The purpose: an update on Western medical procedures. It was his first time out of China. Many doctors appeared to welcome him and show him our super high tech equipment: multi-channel blood analysers, CT scanners, ultra-sonic EKGs, computerized medical data bases, X-ray digitizers and disposable thermometers. Chinese doctor was thrilled.

The sight-seeing-through-science was briefly interrupted by the Chief's 50th birthday party. Everyone--aides to professor types--squeezed into a small conference room. They kissed the Chief, teased him, soothed his bald spot and tweaked his midriff. Then things got serious. Champagne and chocolate cake. Chinese doctor said nothing.

Then the pace resumed: laser endoscope, mobile CCUs, impedance plethysmography and all!

At his farewell dinner Chinese doctor was asked to comment on the most distinctive part of his visit. Chinese doctor waited a long time, then answered--the Chief's birthday party. "Because you could not distinguish who is the worker and who is the boss, who is professor and who answers the phone, who is the leader and who follows . . . "

So Mary, I thought of you. Love, Valeria & Jonathan

A NOTE from the Editor

Thanks to your generous response to our request for a little extra in the reminders we send you once a year, we are going to end 1985 with a balance that will enable us to continue sending you ZN at the same low price that covers our minimalist production.

More Senzaki--how wonderful! The inimitable pioneer of Zen in America is already well represented in the works of Eido Roshi (in particular, "Like A Dream, Like A Fantasy," Japan Publications, 1978) and in the recollections of Mr. Money in this publication. But more Senzaki is always welcome, and in "The Iron Flute" (Charles E. Tuttle, 1964 and 1985, \$17.50), his trenchant Zen lights up almost every page.

"The Iron Flute" is a collection of 100 koans compiled and commented upon by Genro, an 18th century Soto teacher, with further comments added by his successor, Fugai. Senzaki made a translation and provided his own commentary, starting in 1939, for use in instructing his students.

At one point, Senzaki says: "If you have no attachment for a thing you may see, it will simply reflect on your eyes and be gone without leaving a trace on your mind mirror. If you pay no particular attention to what you may hear, no sound will stay with you. Yesterday you may have thought this is right and that is wrong, but today you have not carried the same mind picture from the past to the present. There is nothing to see unless you create your own image. There is no sound to hear unless you make your own record. There is no form of thought unless you build it yourself."

Elsewhere, there is a koan in which a misguided monk asks Yueh-shan to solve his problem. The master calls the monk before the assembly and says: "Look here, monks, this fellow has a problem." Then Yueh-shan pushes the monk aside and leaves without another word. Senzaki says: "What a rice bag! What a splendid lecture! I wonder how many monks of the audience understood it? Some time ago a priest from Japan visited me in this Zendo. 'What is Zen?' he asked. I put my finger to my lips and whispered, 'We do not speak in the meditation room.' As he followed me into the library, he was about to ask the same question again, so I put my finger once more to my lips and said, 'We read books here in silence.' When we reached the kitchen, I did not give him time to ask a question, but said, 'We cook here without a word and eat without speaking.' As I opened the door and shook hands with him, he gasped, 'What is Zen?' and went away."

JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SAYS Noted by Mary Farkas
Sexual Encounters of an Animal Kind

Birds and butterflies have no illnesses because they never do imperfect breathing. When you breathe imperfectly, you manifest imperfect self. You get sick, thinking about many things. With perfect breathing you will become enlightened. Then there will be no reason for your thoughts to be taken up with God or Buddha or the Devil. Do not try to think of things like God or Buddha or Absolute Being. This is a manifestation of imperfect breathing.

Humans are the animals that think. Animals lie down with their mates without any embarrassment. You probably haven't seen this but I have. On ranches where animals are kept, there is a place where the male and females are brought together for the purpose of mating. Two men come out and grab the male by the nose and hold the female and throw the male on top. I'd never seen anything like it! But the animals are not at all embarrassed. They aren't thinking: "Oh, I'm in love with you," or, "Oh, I'm not in love with you." It's only human beings who have such thoughts.

If you make a temporary relationship of a sexual nature, you're always wondering: "How long will it last?" It's then you get sick. If you marry and lead your love life day by day, without thinking this way, you're better off. Some call me a match-maker but it's only because I don't want you to get sick that I tell you to get married.

In Buddhism, we look upon the married state as a life of mutuality. That's why unthinking couples, who have ten children, though they may be poor, don't get sick, while someone like Rockefeller, who has unlimited money, is always thinking about these matters and may end up marrying three or four times and getting sick.

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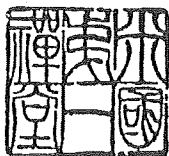
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