Zen Notes

the Zen ON THE AGAMAS

THE FOOLISH MONKEY

Thus have I heard. Once, when the Buddha was sojourning in the Karandavenuvana at Rajagriha, he addressed the assembly of monks thus. Among the snow peaks and the icy steeps of the Himalayas there is a place whither monkeys do not come. How much the less do men! The Buddha began his sermon by describing the Himalaya mountains with their ever-frozen icy cliffs and peaks of snow. But do not let your attention be distracted from the real import of this sermon. When the Buddha says there is a place surrounded by icy cliffs which neither ape nor man has ever reached, do you understand where this place is? Do you understand what place it is that is always surrounded by snow peaks and has never been reached by anyone? Those who practice meditation will understand what the Buddha is hinting at.

There is a place in our mind where no knowledge can reach. You may say, "How do you know about that place then?" We cannot talk about it; no name can be given to it; we cannot see it. No one has ever explained the nature of that place. The only way we can explain it in words is, perhaps, to call it the place of the unintelligible. Maybe a scholastic Buddhist will give it the name *amala-vijnana*. This means "immaculate consciousness," "the consciousness not stained by concept or percept." You must know about this place.

In Zen there are many koans that hint at the place no one can reach. For instance, a monk asked the Zen Master Mitsu-an, "What is the pure eye that penetrates to the reality of Dharma?" "A broken earthen pot," answered Mitsu-an. Or there is another koan. A monk asked Gyozan, "Does the Dharmakaya understand your sermon?" Gyozan replied, "I cannot tell you whether the Dharmakaya understands my sermon or not, but there is one who might tell you about it." "Who is it?" asked the monk. Gyozan picked up a wooden pillow and thrust it before the monk, saying: "This one can tell you whether the Dharmakaya understands my sermon or not." So when you hear these words of the Buddha you will find them quite familiar.

It is very easy to use a Western philosophical term such as " absolute Reality" to describe this place, but though everyone can understand the words, no one can understand what the state is. You must reach there.

First, you must meditate; second, you must find your intuition. You must reach that place directly, without making use of experience derived through your five senses. That is the main work for Buddhists. We do not need to know anyone's philosophy. The young priests do not need to follow the philosophical thinking of previous masters, for they, too, had to reach that unintelligible place first. Only then could they describe the way to go there. For the young monks, even the explanation of the way to go is not important. With their young spirit they will go right there. They have no time to read the descriptions, they just walk right into it.

The Buddha said: Likewise, there are mountains where monkeys dwell but whither men come not. Now the Buddha is speaking about a place so high that man cannot reach it, yet he says monkeys go there! What kind of place is this? And what are these monkeys? When you study the sutras you must read what is written between the lines. From your experience in meditation, what do you think this second place is? Our knowledge, men's knowledge, cannot reach there, but something can go there. In your daily life you cannot go there, but at night, on the wings of dreams, perhaps you may stray into that place. Really it is not necessary to wait for the wings of dreams. When you try to go there you cannot, but occasionally you find you are in it.

Our mind is divided into several stages or grades. The " human" mind, which we use every day is called *citta*, or intellectual mind. When by words, or by the meaning of words, or by concepts, we try to get into that "place," it is like a man holding an iron bar, wearing iron shoes, beating against a stone bridge. If you are a poet, when you cannot express in words some feeling so fine that it is tedious to describe--sometimes, all of a sudden, your pen finds the word and runs over the page. You call this " inspiration." Perhaps by inspiration you can go into that secret place.

Manas--mind--has two general divisions: *Klistamanas* and *aklistamanas*. *Klistamanas* is the mind that bears *klesha*, or agony; *aklistamanas* is the mind that does not bear *klesha*, or agony. Just as our tongue bears the agony of taste--though this is not necessarily suffering--but our stomach does not. Your tongue tastes food, but when the food has gone through your throat into your stomach, your stomach does not taste anything. One part of our mind tastes words and the meanings of words, and from these meanings we suffer and enjoy, we weep and laugh. But this taste does not reach to that other place in the mind that is very subtle--that understands all meanings without words, yet bears no agony. It is this place you must pass through first. Then from there you can go to the place to which absolutely no one can reach.

When the Buddha speaks he speaks from upside down. He begins with the highest, then goes to the next highest. When you read the sutras in this fashion, even in the short sutras you will find many meanings. If you practice meditation first, then study the sutras,

BOOKS NOTED by

Soeis

THE PLATFORM SUTRA OF THE SIXTH PATRIARCH: the Text of the Tun-Huang Manuscript with Translation, Introduction, and Notes by Philip B. Yampolsky with an Editor's Foreword by William Theodore De Bary, Number LXXVI of the Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies, Columbia University Press New York, 1967, xiv+ 216 +30 pp. Price: $8.50.

THE appearance of *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* on October 30, 1967 has marked a new level of sophistication and scholarship in the many attempts at translating this major Zen text. Philip B. Yampolsky, the translator, is presently Lecturer in Japanese at Columbia and was formerly the Chief of Research at the First Zen Institute of America in Japan. While in that position Dr. Yampolsky came under the influence of Mrs. Sasaki and under the tutelage of Professor Yoshitaka Iriya. Mrs. Sasaki is well known to us all but Prof. Iriya, who is one of the few masters of T'ang poetry, Yüan drama and more importantly, mediaeval colloquial Chinese, is not as well known as he should be. Dr. Yampolsky has benefited from study with the few experts of colloquial mediaeval Chinese Zen texts, and it is in this book that he has distinguished himself and provided for Americans a new level of sinological scholarship. We are very pleased to state that Dr. Yampolsky has produced the best English translation of this text together with the most comprehensive introduction in a Western language of the early development of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism.

There are few people in the English-speaking world who could be qualified to undertake the translation of a T'ang Zen text especially since there do not yet exist any guides to the colloquial language of that period. Added to the unbelievable linguistic obstacles is the need for personal experience in the practice of Zen Buddhism. Dr. Yampolsky has had the advantage of the interdisciplinary methods of Ryōsen-an under the amazingly critical eye of Ruth Fuller Sasaki, its former Director, and it is his scholarly ability which is demonstrated in this work.

The *Platform Sutra* translated by Dr. Yampolsky has aimed at providing the scholarly community with not only a translation but the best *explication de texte* of a Zen work since the appearance of Mrs. Sasaki's *Zen Dust*. The introduction which comprises some one-hundred and twenty pages is without doubt the best statement in English of the Chinese Ch'an world of the eighth century. The introduction is divided into four sections in which the student of Chinese Buddhism may delve into the *Formation of the Legend*, (pp. 1-57) which deals with the history of Zen in the eighth century as it has been traditionally accepted by contemporary interpreters and the critical scholarly activities since the

availability of the Tun-huang manuscript. The first sub-section is entitled "The Lankavatara School," (pp. 3-23) which is an examination of several important sources which present us with the earliest accounts of the Indian Patriarchs in the establishment of the patriarchal legitimacy of their Chinese successors. The discussion of the oldest Ch'an historical source, the *Ch'uan fa-pao chi* compiled before 706 presents English readers with the only account of these most formative years in the growth of eighth century Zen. Prior to this discussion there is still scant attention paid to the Bodhidharma legend and no mention of Father Dumoulin's important article "Bodhidharma und die Anfänge des Ch'an Buddhismus," which appeared in *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. VII (1951), pp. 67-83.

One already notes the abundance of Chinese titles and the complete lack of any English translations for those works thus making any reader not very familiar with Zen sources painfully aware of the difficulties facing him in this introduction. The discussion of sources presented by Dr. Yampolsky is quite thorough but written for the specialist rather than the student; this feature somewhat detracts from the usefulness of the book for reference.

The discussion of "Shen-hui," (pp. 23-57), is still not completely satisfactory. Dr. Yampolsky comments that "...although we hear of several disciples none achieved particular renown with the exception of Tsung-mi (780-841)..." and the reference is to Ui Hakuju, *Zenshūshi Kenkyū, vol. 1, pp. 195-268*. It is almost impossible to say that "none of (Shen-hui's) school achieved particular renown..." Nevertheless the large chapter mentioned in Ui's pre-eminent work, which by the way we take to be chapter five, *The Rise and Fall of the Katakushū* (Ho-Tse-Tsung), pp. 195-268, lists thirty-two heirs in the second generation (ca. 816); eleven in the third generation (ca. 821); five in the fourth generation (ca. 838); twenty in the fifth generation (ca. 841) and one each for the sixth and seventh generations. That gives a total of seventy persons! Once again Dr. Yampolsky's accounts of conflicts of Southern and Northern Ch'an are pathfinding. Students must still be familiar with chapter six, "The Personalities and Doctrines of Northern Zen," (pp. 269-375) in Ui's abovementioned work.

Dr. Yampolsky takes his analysis of history of the Ch'an sects from the major historical sources, their authors, their points of view, especially the way in which they legitimized their founders by connecting their teachings with those of the Indian Patriarchs. The analysis of the provenience and significance of the *Pao-lin chuan* given on pp. 47-49, 51-53 once again acquaints the English reader with a very important work of a Zen sect from "...far-off Kiangsi and Hunan...its origins are obscure, but the legends it passed along and created were destined to persist to this day, (p. 47)." The English reader is urged to use the bibliographical notes provided by Mrs. Ruth F. Sasaki in her *Zen Dust* for further clarification of the many Chinese terms and names found in Dr. Yampolsky's work.

The next chapter of the "introduction," is entitled "The Birth of a Patriarch: Biography of Hui-neng," (pp. 58-88), and it is the only full

discussion of this subject in English and stands as the most interesting part of the introduction. We note one point that sent us to the library. Dr. Yampolsky states that " Sung Chih-wen paid a call on Hui-neng and wrote a long piece on it," (p.78). He then gives a footnote No.73 to the effect that this " long piece" is not preserved. It seems that the well-known T'ang poet, Sung Chih-wen, remarked on the pre-eminent significance of Hui-neng among the Buddhist monks in Nam-Viet when he called on him. This visit is described in *Ch'uan T'ang shih*, han 1, ts'e 10, ch. 1, p. 5a. There has been little mention of the importance of Hui-neng among the peoples of Nam-Viet and this opens an avenue for further research. The importance of Hui-neng for the Ch'an sect of later times glosses over the peculiar place which Shao-chou was for the world of the T'ang. This was the place from which almost all exiles went to Annam. We mention the above remarks only because of the extraordinary reputation of the monk Hui-neng. Dr. Yampolsky has rightly demonstrated that a real biography of the Sixth Patriarch is practically impossible. In fact, such a biography "...is no more than the development of a legend, one part of the story of the gradual rise of Ch'an in the eighth century," (p.88).

Section three of the " Introduction," is entitled, " The Making of a Book: *The Platform Sutra*," (pp.89-110).

Concerning the Tun-Huang manuscript, Dr. Yampolsky immediately points out its problems "...it is highly corrupt, filled with errors, miscopyings, lacunae, superfluous passages and repetitions, inconsistencies, almost every conceivable kind of mistake. The manuscript itself, then, must be a copy, written hurriedly, perhaps even taken down by ear, of an earlier, probably itself imperfect version of the *Platform Sutra*," (p.89). The requirement of comparing the Tun-Huang text (ca.830-860 A.D.) with the " Gozan" copy of the Sung text...discovered at Kōshōji in Kyoto ..." and "...a manuscript copy, also based on a Sung edition...found at the Daijōji in Kaga," (p.90), is executed extremely well by the translator. The remainder of the chapter is useful for scholars interested in the possible textual history of the many forms which the *Platform Sutra* has taken. This section is useful only to those very fluent in colloquial T'ang-Sung Ch'an Chinese and not to others.

The last chapter before the translation itself is entitled, " Content Analysis," (pp.111-121), and presents the events and ideas in the *Sutra*. This section also points out that possession of a copy of the *Platform Sutra* was itself visible "...proof of the transmission," (p.113).

As to the actual program of religious training advocated in the *Platform Sutra*, Dr. Yampolsky says that "...Meditation, of the type advocated by this work, was undoubtedly the major feature of the training but the details are never spelled out."(p.114). However, "...the method of teaching... consisted primarily of sermons, given before both large audiences and small groups," (p.114).

The remainder of this section deals with the more well-known Ch'an characteristics of the work. " The identity of *prajna* and meditation...is described as basic to Hui-neng's teaching," (p.115). Other important features of the *Sutra's* point of view such as the

"Formless Precepts," "The Doctrine of No-thought," "sitting in meditation," and a criticism of the "...Pure Land of a Western Paradise," (pp.118-119), are examined.

The translation itself is not smooth flowing but closely follows the original Chinese; since the work is not supposed to be read as literature but as religious language we can gain much from the careful and very accurate translation. The translation of the "Four Great Vows," (*Ssu hung-shih-yuan*) given on page one hundred and forty-three is as follows:

"...I vow to save all sentient beings everywhere.
I vow to cut off all the pasions everywhere.
I vow to study all the Buddhist teachings everywhere.
I vow to achieve the unsurpassed Buddha Way..."

Let us just place Sokei-an's translation below Dr. Yampolsky's to illustrate the difference in style.

"Sentient beings are numberless. I take a vow to enlighten them all.
Worldly desires are endless. I take a vow to uproot them all.
The gates of Dharma are manifold. I take a vow to enter them all.
The goal of Wisdom is ever beyond.
I take a vow to attain it." (*Zen Notes*, vol.88, No.6, June, 1955).

The translation is weighed-down with annotations, footnotes and untranslated Chinese. The work is brilliant beyond anything found in any earlier translation but it is still difficult for any but experts to use. It is a work for a graduate seminar of at least a years' duration; in short, this will become the basic reference work for early Ch'an Buddhism in English for quite some time. Its completeness is further enhanced by a very legible glossary of romanizations together with the original Chinese characters (pp.185-190). There is also the best bibliography of the large *Platform Sutra* literature, (pp.191-204). The bibliography does not translate any Chinese or Japanese sources into English. An excellent index is followed by a page and a half note about the Chinese text which has been reconstructed with all the variants established by Dr. Yampolsky from the Tunhuang manuscript and further supplementary editions. The Chinese text is excellently printed making the difficult job of reading the text somewhat easier. The reviewer strongly urges all those who are interested in the history of Zen to have some familiarity with the mine of information contained in this number of the "Columbia College Program of Translations from the Oriental Classics."

The front cover contains a beautiful reproduction of the sumi painting of Liang K'ai of Hui-neng owned by Mr. Takayuki Masaki of Osaka.

Year of the Monkey

People born in the year of the monkey (1908, 1920, 1932, 1944 1956, 1968) are erratic geniuses, inventive and original, successful and practical, says *The Japanese Fortune Calendar*, a delightful little book by Reiko Chiba published by Charles E. Tuttle and Co. They are able to solve the most difficult problems, though they give up easily if they can't start at once.

you will have the same experience as when, after having been to some place without knowing its geographical location, you open your map and discover it there. "Ah, there is the place!" You are overjoyed to find it again. Meditation comes first, of course, but you must study the sutras as well.

The Buddha continued: *And there are other mountains where men and monkeys both resort.* That is the place in which we always are. We are in the place in our mind where men and apes can both go. Sometimes that place is icy, but usually it is not so cold. Sometimes it is warm.

Thither come the monkeys, and thither also come the hunters and smear lime upon the grass. The ape hunters come there and put bird-lime on the grass. I am not sure whether this English word can be used or not. It is a glutinous sticky substance such as is smeared on branches to catch birds.

The wise monkeys keep at a distance. It is nice to look at, the distant grass, especially from the icy rocks. The wise monkeys look at the green grass only from a distance.

But the foolish monkeys cannot stay away. Certainly the Buddha was talking to the young monks. There are many things that ensnare the monks, many viscous substances even in their minds, such as nice, beautiful words. The struggling young monk who wishes to attain Emptiness, for instance: "Zero proves one, one proves zero! Both are numbers; they are not Emptiness. Real Emptiness is neither zero nor one. Nice! Now I understand what the first place in meditation is." He is caught, stuck to the words, snared by the words, and cannot move. The word "emptiness" is always in his mind. As long as he carries it in his mind he cannot go into true Emptiness. That viscous substance, words, has caught him.

The Buddha used this metaphor very cleverly. The Buddha merely said: *"The hunters come and smear lime upon the grass. The wise monkeys keep at a distance. But the foolish monkey cannot stay away. He stretches out his hand just to touch it, and instantly his hand is stuck fast. He puts out the other hand, seeking to release the first; immediately his second hand is caught. He bites the grass with his mouth, and his mouth is stuck. Five places are caught fast, and he falls over upon the ground.* His five senses are caught and fixed. How can he now, by means of meditation, transcend himself and find true Emptiness?

Just as those men who, wishing to be Buddhists, spend their lives reading sutras and never know what Buddhism is. Their minds stick to the words and never know freedom. They have forgotten their own minds and their own virtues. They become the worms or moths you find in the pages of the sutras. You will become such a worm if you forget your own precious nature. Such people know many things. They read sutras from morning to evening, but never put their minds into the real stages of meditation. There are many people, not only Buddhists, like that.

Then the hunters come. They string him on their pole and carry him away upon their shoulders. The monkey will be carried off to a strange place. He will be caged, live in a palace or a castle, eat strange food, and live unhappily.

The Buddha said: "O monks, you must understand the meaning of this

story of the foolish monkey who, forsaking his own fields and the dwelling of his father and mother to wander in the fields of others, brings this misery and suffering upon himself. What is the father and the mother? The Buddha explains later what the father and mother of the meditator is.

Such as he, O monks, is the ordinary foolish one among you who lives in dependence upon the places to which men resort. In the morning, wearing the robe and holding the bowl, he enters the village to beg alms. He does not protect his body with care, nor does he guard the gates of his senses well. The "gates of the sense" means the eyes, ears, nose, and so forth. "Good smell! What is it? It must be beefsteak. What is this nice odor? Ah, this is the perfume of a woman." And he walks right into the limed grass.

His eye sees color and attachment arises. His ears hear sound, his nose smells odors, his tongue tastes savors. his body feels contact; all these produce attachment. Those who are meditating to find Buddha's first law cannot spend time on rouged lips and painted faces. Though there are no young monks in this country to whom this sutra applies, still for the first seven or eight years young students have no time to go around smelling beefsteak or tasting wine. Their senses will be caught.

O foolish monks, your five senses and your five sense-organs have been roped and you follow wheresoever Mara leads. Wherefore, O monks, you must earnestly practice. Depend upon your own dwelling places and the fields of your father and mother; in them take up your abode. Do not wander into the domains of others or into their fields.

What, O monks, is your own dwelling place and what are the fields of your father and mother? They are the four smritis: the body and contemplation upon the body; the senses and contemplation upon the senses; the mind and contemplation upon the mind; and Dharma and contemplation upon Dharma.

Neither smriti nor samadhi exist in your life, so your scholars cannot translate these words exactly. When you see the statues of ancient Egypt, those symmetrical statues sitting so upright, you sense something unusual in them. That is samadhi. Samadhi is to be absorbed from citta mind into hridaya mind. Smriti is to penetrate from citta mind into hridaya mind. Hridaya mind is the mind that digests our food and pumps our blood. Hridaya mind is very broad. Weeds and trees and growing things are living without our citta mind. In samadhi we are absorbed from citta into hridaya. Smriti is: at this moment, with your keen, concentrated mind, which is not your daily frivolous mind, you penetrate into hridaya.

You must practice the Four Smriti. First, you meditate upon your body; second, you meditate upon your sense perception (vedana); third, you meditate on this citta (intellect, or intellectual mind, this keen concentrated mind); fourth, you meditate upon Dharma (basic Emptiness which has been united with this citta mind). Dharma is difficult to find. By smriti you will find it.

In the first place we observe this body (*rupa*). What is body? The body is an agglomeration of the four elements: earth, water, fire, air. The body is impure. What is impurity? And so on.

Then we meditate upon vedana--seeing, hearing, and so forth--what are these abilities? Who gives them to us? Do we have them, or are we merely agents? There are many questions for the meditator.

Meditation on citta mind means meditation upon samjna, the thinking mind, the mind that conceives its own representations, creates concepts, gives names to everything, and develops knowledge.

Thus meditating through many stages you reach Dharma, the place where no monkey can reach.

These Four Smritis are your parents. Do not go away from your parents.

When the Buddha had preached this sermon, all the monks who had heard his words, rejoiced and vowed to uphold the teaching.

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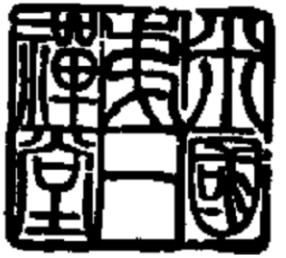

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