ZEN NOTES

SOKEI-AN SAYS THE THREE WORLDS, III

The four stages of meditation, called the four dhyanas, are entirely in the sphere of aesthetics--that is, the sphere of sensation, the rupadhatu. No meditation is based upon the realm of desire, the kamadhatu. In some sects of Buddhism, the samadhi of desire--the samadhi of kamadhatu--is accepted as a kind of dhyana or meditation, but the duration of this samadhi is very short. It is as when someone takes liquor and a drop of fire touches his tongue and burns, and in that moment he says, "Oh ecstasy!" In that moment he is in samadhi. But this is so ephemeral that it cannot be called a true stage of meditation. It is called the samadhi of kamadhatu. It is widely known in the theory of meditation, so I mention it here.

The first stage of meditation in the rupadhatu makes use of the present reason. With your definite intention, through your conscious effort, you concentrate your brain power to operate on some problem. When this effort becomes very feeble, then the brain itself continues to carry on its function without your conscious intention--"inspiration."

For instance, when a poet, endeavoring to write a poem, is concentrating upon one stanza all day long and all night long until he is completely exhausted, and he has written this one stanza a hundred times without getting his thought into words, then, throwing his pencil on the table, in an agony of despair he casts himself on his couch, his face hidden in his arms--in that moment a line flashes through his brain. "Wonderful line. I have worked for this for months!" He seizes his pen and hastily writes it down--and cannot write another. He starts to dash off the second line, but somehow it will not follow naturally. And the third line becomes artificial. In the first line he has written the whole poem, and he will never write a second line.

The second stage of meditation in rupadhatu appears in your mind as a dream. Your mind functions without your aid. This is called the non-intentional state of dhyana. It appears in the first part of the second stage when the meditator relinquishes all words and then all images. We reason by means of words. Words are the instruments of reasoning. We dream by mental images. We relinquish both words and images in this meditation and we feel our body becomes quite light, as though we were in midair · Our brain stops operating and reasoning. Then the body starts to quiver, convulsions come here and there, our eyelids twitch, our lips move by themselves, and often our knees start to shake.

Sometimes people become frightened of this queer physical condition and get up and stop meditation. This is a sign that conscious intention is fading and the force of nature is taking its place. Our body is supported by our intention. Holding our mind by our own conscious intention, we are concentrating to attain our desire. But when this desire and this intention are abandoned, then nature will take over our body. Our own egoistic intention will disappear. In that moment we feel those physical disturbances, we feel twitches all over the body, and our heart beats in a rhythm we cannot stop. We are as if possessed by an evil spirit. We try to lift our hand but it is so heavy we cannot lift it. Our tongue becomes so big, and we hear sounds as if at a distance. These are the usual signs of the second stage. But this is not a true stage at all, and these are only passing phenomena.

In the third stage we come to tranquillity.

And then we enter the fourth stage of dhyana. We forget ourselves. We are not sleepy, but we are completely relaxed and abandoned, embraced by Nature, by universal force. We are fused with the universe and our consciousness is all-pervading, universal consciousness. Our individual self, individual consciousness, is completely wiped out, and Nature operates the functions of our mind, of which we are conscious. In just that moment, one who has trained himself for a long time in Buddhism will attain enlightenment. So it is very important. I call this the "hairpin" turn. As, in the Catskills, I come to a road and go to the peak, then turn, and return from the peak. When we forget ourselves and abandon ourselves entirely to Nature, the great force of Nature operates our functions, our sense perceptions. Our performance in that moment is not our own. Our self is completely wiped out. We are submerged, absorbed in the bosom of Nature. So-called enlightenment comes at this moment. But some people will miss that moment. They will come back again from it and drink their tea, or go out and eat their breakfast. It is as if you went into a dragon's cave and came out without ever having met the dragon.

This is the outline of the four stages of meditation. Now I shall explain the fourth stage in more detail.

In the fourth stage, the fourth dhyana, there are eight sub-divisions. The first of these is called "without clouds in the sky," "the cloudless heaven," or "the pure dominion." The meditator ascends to the heaven where there is no cloud, from the standpoint of legend. But empirically speaking, the experience of the meditator is that he is completely abandoned by the clouds of desire. In meditation all the clouds produced by fire do not reach to this heaven.

This name is probably derived from some legend such as the following. It is not quite certain, but I remember to have once heard from some old monk the legend of the final destruction of the world. The fire comes up to the second heaven, and this cloud comes up higher and higher, and reaches the third heaven but will never reach the fourth heaven. When this cloud approaches the edge of the fourth heaven it meets with the cold wind of the fourth heaven, and the cloud becomes rain and the rain falls to the lower heaven. The size of the raindrops is

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Sokei-an's Lives

MY FATHER WAS A SHINTO PRIEST

As a child, I had faith in the Shinto God. The Shinto God has no physical body--is omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. He exists everywhere and is not localized in any particular place.

To my childish mind, "Kami" was wonderful and infinite. According to the Shinto faith, the Shinto God protects us in every way. A Shintoist has no idea of a God who punishes; he believes only that if he commits any errors God will feel sorry about it.

Neither father nor I ever thought of Kami in human form or as having the nature of a human being. It came to my mind, I don't know when, maybe when I was five years old, "God is universal--vast space, infinite time and infinite power." Oh yes, it has a name, Amaterasu, the Goddess of the Sun, but we don't think of the Sun as the shining solar sun.

In Shintoism all the family, before dawn, stand on the shore of the sea waiting for the sun to come up. And when the sun comes up we clap our hands and say, "AH!" It is true the object is there, but to us it is only a symbol; the real object is not that rising sun; the real object is vast space and timeless time--the vast boundless universe.

Shinto means "Way of God." In the deepest part of the Shinto shrine, in the sanctuary, is the place of Kami. And in that place is a mirror made of iron. That is the symbol of our soul. When the priest goes near this mirror, he covers his mouth with a triangular-shaped folded paper in fear that his breath might mark the mirror, defiling it. Once the mirror is carried to the sanctuary, no one will touch it for two or three hundred years. So finally it gathers dust and rust; it becomes red, then green, but no one will touch it because it is a sacred object. Actually, Shinto teaches that the mirror is our own soul in which God enshrines; so we must take away the dust and keep it pure always.

When I was a child, I wanted to see for myself who was God, so one day in my father's absence I went inside the sanctuary in the Shinto Shrine. I found the mirror--and in that moment I understood what was God.

The Shintoist washes his hands about fifty times a day. My father--I was observing him all the time when I was a child--before he would speak some important thing, would go into the kitchen and wash his mouth. Before he ate, he washed his hands; before going to the shrine he washed his whole body. Once every year he would go into the shrine and blow--and all his sins would be blown off; and then he would wipe his body with a paper shaped like a man. Similar papers were distributed to everyone in the town. People wipe their bodies with these and bring them to the shrine. With great ceremony the priest recites incantations and throws the paper figures into the river. The river carries them to the sea, the sea carries them to the ocean, and the ocean forgets all

about them. A very primitive religion! I asked my father a certain question. He said, "Wipe your lips!" "Is my sin clean?" I asked. "Yes." I didn't think so. But this is Shinto faith; they cleanse their filth with water.

Primitive Shinto is very simple. You like a bath before dinner--we call that Shinto feeling. The Japanese are still using this very primitive religion. Of course many things have come into it from Buddhism, but pure Shinto is not so elaborate.

The Shinto God was there when I came to myself with my own soul and mind. I never had any doubt. I was with God always. I never put anything between me and God.

When I was fifteen years old, my father was very ill. Another Shinto priest told me to go to the shrine and bring back holy water to sprinkle on my father's face. The moment I opened the shrine I felt a great wall between God and myself. Should I offer a prayer for my father's life? I realized that I was not with Kami. I tried to tear down the wall, to enter the bosom of God, but it was in vain. I could not penetrate to that God. He was not in the shrine and he wasn't in Heaven. I could not pray to him. So I came back empty-handed.

The priest said to me, "Why didn't you bring back the holy water?" I said, "No use." To that day I had believed the water was sacred--but that day, No! It was old stale water with many dusts in it.

Now, when I really needed God, I found a wall between him and me, a wall which I could not penetrate. It gave me a very big question.

My father's body was buried very near to the town.

I came back from the funeral and passed through the temple yard covered by pine trees. Childishly, I wondered--"Where is my father now?" I could not believe that his soul was existing anywhere on the earth or under it. I looked at the sky and thought, "My father's soul is scattered all over, like heat or light."

And then, as I stumbled over the root of a pine tree--"If my father is everywhere, he will be in this pine tree root, on the tip of my tongue and the tip of my toe!"

I returned home without tears.

Today I realize that that fifteen-year-old boy was not quite a fool! He had gathered all his philosophy at the grammar school--and come to that conclusion.--Quite reasonable, wasn't it?

In my Buddhism today, I should say that it has not developed much beyond that fifteen-year-old boy! Of course, being the child of a Shinto priest, I had heard about the "soul" every day; it was, to me, a big question.

Perhaps it was because of this that when I reached the age of twenty, I came to Zen.

A friend of mine told me that Buddhism had existed for 2500 years and is a religion that covers half the Eastern world, saying: "There must be something in it, don't you think?" I said, "Perhaps there is." "Well," he said, "Perhaps your nature tends more to Buddhism than your father's faith. Perhaps it will give you the answer."

I became a Buddhist. My knowledge was growing and I, a sceptic, must

conquer my doubt. I suffered--and entered into Buddhism in order to conquer this doubt philosophically.

In the Zen school I was given the koan: "Before father and mother, what was your original aspect?" When I answered this question and got into this "original aspect" I met God and at last destroyed the question that had bothered me for years. This was a very long time ago--this first step--this entrance into Zen Buddhism. When I was 22 years old--in that spring--once more I entered into the bosom of Kami.

Once my father was sick and sent me down to close up the shrine--to put out the candles. It was difficult for me to blow those high things out, so I took them down and put the candle flame into water. Next morning he tried to light the candles. They were wet and would not light. He was so angry he would not speak to me for two weeks. I was sent away from home to my uncle.

Rachel: Why was he so angry, Osho?

Osho: (after a rather surprised pause) My father lost his temper at particular times and on particular things. One--when anyone stepped on his robe. Another--when I cut the weeds with his samurai sword. I know those things, and I step on it. And when I insult his position --it was sacred to him.

Osho: Why he blamed me? He lost his temper before God and I was the cause--I was sent to my uncle for two weeks.

Rachel: Did you have a nice time?

Osho: My uncle hit me, but I had a good vacation. How old? I was thirteen years old then. My uncle listened to how I came to come--Then he hit me here (jaw). Grummph! Then I had to think seriously--for one whole day I was in a bad humor. My aunt realized it was under my skin. "How can you, Yeita?" she said. "You are a shame to the whole family of Shinto." You see I was a modern child-no reverence.

Reber: Was it a clash between your young faith and his old faith?

Osho: I was Shinto and didn't know it. Shinto isn't a faith--it is nature. You are a woman--you don't need have faith in your womanhood, do you. You ARE woman. But when an actor takes a woman's role --he must have faith that he IS woman--must walk, talk, think like woman--till his blood runs like a woman's--it is true. When I first came to this country, my first statement was I don't try to change a Christian to a Buddhist. If you study Buddhism you wake in Christianity. I studied Buddhism and I awoke in pure Shinto. In my faith if you are really converted to any religion, the name vanishes.

like the wheel of a cart, and they completely destroy the lower heaven. Such is the legend.

The second stage of the fourth dhyana is the "heaven of the new birth of fortune." The ingrained habits or anxieties of the lower stages are completely destroyed here, and one is released, emancipated completely, from the lower heavens and is reborn in a new state of spirit. So it is called "the heaven of the new birth of fortune."

The third stage of the fourth dhyana is "the great results" or "great fruits." This is the stage that all sentient beings, those who are not sages, can be born in through their own endeavors. So those sentient beings who are not of the kind called sage will reach here as their ultimate reaching point, their ultimate attainment.

There are five more stages above these three. These five remaining stages of the fourth dhyana are called, as a whole, "the pure abode," or "the purified residence." When you reach the third stage of the fourth dhyana, you reach the bottom of meditation. Then you will come back again, will turn yourself quickly, as a diver whose fingertips touch the bottom of the sea, and he comes back again to the surface. But it is usually without attaining Nirvana, Enlightenment--without seeing the dragon of the Dragon Cave--that men come back.

The fourth is the heaven where there is no disturbance. It means there is no disturbance of reasoning here and no disturbance of desire, no disturbance of either vedana or samjna. All disturbances that come from the senses and all thoughts are wiped out.

The fifth, "no heat," is the heaven without heat. In this stage the meditator does not desire to enter arupadhatu, for in his mind there is no heat of desire, either secular or sacred.

These two states, the fourth and fifth, are called the stages of asamjna, of the complete annihilation of thought. Here you are already embraced in the bosom of God and your sight has been kindled so that you see all the phenomena of heaven. Heaven is a very queer word here, a mysterious word. You see the phenomena of a higher stage than the world. This means that you revive and see the world from its roots. This world you usually see from the top only, as a cat sees a mouse--from the entrance to the hole of the mouse. But when the mouse sees the cat, it is a different thing. The mouse sees the cat from a different angle. When you see the whole world from the bottom of it, naturally you will attain the penetrating eye.

The sixth, the next stage, means "eye," "fine eye," the "eye of Dharma." The world which is seen by the eye of Dharma is the marvelously manifested, kaleidoscopic world.

The seventh, the next stage, is the eye itself that sees the wonderful manifestation of phenomena.

And the eighth, the last of the eight stages of the fourth dhyana, is the "ultimate heaven" of the rupadhatu--of the manifested world.

These are the details of the fourth dhyana. The terms that I have translated for you are to be found in the wenty-two volumes of the authentic discourse of the Abhidharmakosha-shastra.

A monk once complained that Shakya-

muni Buddha had told him a lie. While he was dying he realized that there was no Nirvana and he cried, "Buddha said there was Nirvana, but through my own experience I know that no such thing as Nirvana exists." And he died without entering Nirvana. He died in what is known as the "intermediate existence." In Christianity it is called Purgatory, the state between heaven and hell. In that last moment, his mind did not enter Nirvana but died in this intermediate existence. This intermediate existence comes in the fourth dhyana at the point of the "hairpin turn." If, at that moment, at the "hairpin turn" point--you have no penetrating intellectual force with which to reach Nirvana, there is no other force which can break the film of avidya (original darkness) into Nirvana. Without grasping Nirvana, you are therefore pushed by the power of Nature back into this world.

A Zen monk, after meditating four or five years, may become discouraged. "Oh, those Zen masters fooled me!" And he weeps, all discouraged. Zen monks usually begin their meditation at about eighteen, or nineteen, or twenty-one or twenty-two. After meditating about three years, some will push through that film and grasp Nirvana. But others will come back and open their eyes and say that this is the same place as before. "Same world! Father is the same, mother is the same; the trees, flowers--everything is just the same. There is no Nirvana, there is no Enlightenment!" And clasping the hands of their friends, they weep sadly.

This old monk said, "I am an Arhat. I have attained Arhathood, but I have come back here again. There is no Nirvana. Buddha lied to me!"

When Shakyamuni Buddha left his castle, he went to a sage whose name was Arada Kalama. This sage said to him, "No-dwelling place in arupadhatu is the ultimate reaching point. There Nirvana is to be attained." Then Shakyamuni studied under him and attained to the third stage of arupadhatu. Having reached there, he realized that Nirvana was not to be attained there.

So he left Arada Kalama and went to Udraka Ramaputra. This ascetic said to the Buddha, "In the fourth stage of arupadhatu, Nirvana is to be attained." The Buddha studied under Udraka and realized that Nirvana was not to be entered in the meditation of the fourth stage of arupadhatu. So the Buddha left Udraka and went to the woods of Uruvilva, and there he meditated alone for six years. And under the Bodhi tree he attained enlightenment. The Buddha entered Nirvana while he was seated upon the lion throne on the ground under the Bodhi tree. Seeing this world, with his eyes open to the morning star, surrounded by the trees and mountains of the great earth, he instantly entered.

All other meditators turned their eyes *from* the world to heaven and tried to attain enlightenment there. This is the fundamental distinction between Buddhist meditation and the heretical meditations. But this heretics' measure of meditation was accepted and practiced by Buddhists of that period.

Arada Kalama was a sage of the Samkhya school, so some people have said that perhaps these measures of meditation were introduced from the Samkhya school.

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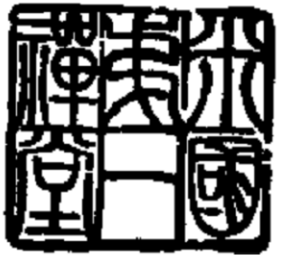

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