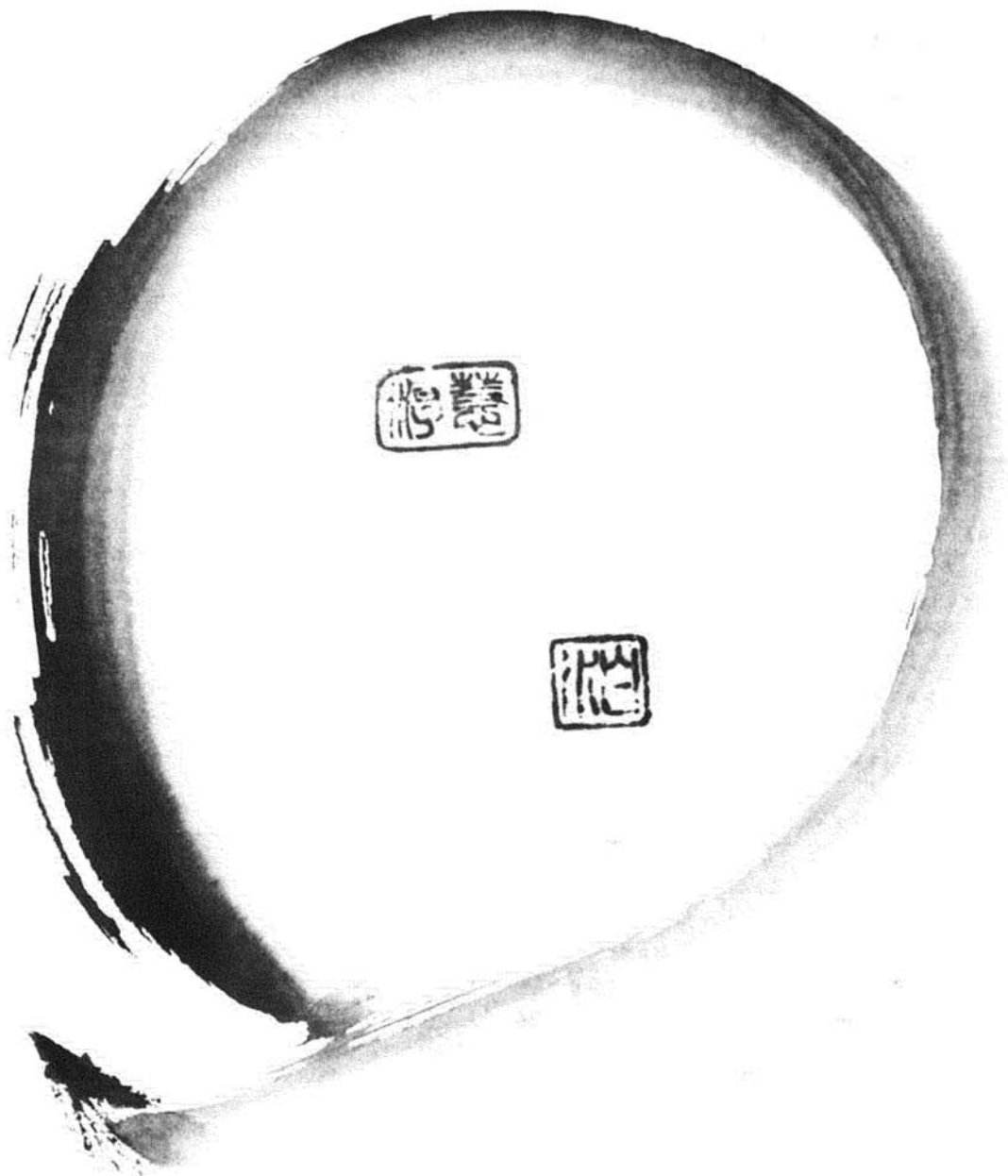


ZEN notes



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ON THE AGAMAS

LIFE AND DEATH, I

Thus have I heard:

Once the Buddha was sojourning in Karanda-venuvana in Rajagriha. Sthavira Mahakashyapa and Sthavira Shariputra were sojourning upon Mount Gridhrakuta. At that time there were many heretic monks. One day some of them visited Shariputra. When they met the Sthavira they saluted him and inquired about his health. Then they withdrew to one side and, having seated themselves, put the following questions to him:

"How think you, O Shariputra, will Tathagata have life-and-death in the future?"

Shariputra answered the heretic monks: "Lokanatha's answer on this point was *avyakrita*."

The monks questioned again: "How think you, O Shariputra, will Tathagata have no life-and-death in the future?"

Shariputra answered the heretic monks: "The Buddha answered *avyakrita*."

Again they asked Shariputra: "Will Tathagata both have life-and-death and no life-and-death in the future?"

Shariputra replied to them: "On this point Lokanatha answered *avyakrita*."

Again they questioned: "Shariputra, will Tathagata have neither life-and-death nor no life-and-death in the future?"

Shariputra answered the heretic monks: "Lokanatha answered *avyakrita*."

Once more the heretic monks questioned Sthavira Shariputra:

"To those questions that were put to the Tathagata--will Tathagata have life-and-death in the future, or will he have no life-and-death in the future, or will he have both life-and-death and no life-and-death in the future, or will he have neither life-and-death nor no life-and-death in the future--to all those questions why was Lokanatha's answer *avyakrita*? O Sthavira, it is like an idiot's or a fool's answer. It decides nothing, it explains nothing. He is like an infant; he has no self-knowledge.

Thus they spoke. Then they rose from their seats and departed.

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SOKEI-AN SAYS: FORM AND MOTION

In Boston recently at the Museum of Fine Arts I saw some of the great masterpieces of Japanese art, then at the Fogg Museum I looked at Italian paintings. This renewed my conception of these two types of art.

I think you must have seen reproductions of pictures made by Sesshu, the old master of Japanese painting. He used only black ink and water and spent no more than two or three minutes to finish a painting. A tree in one of his pictures has the life of a tree--the rhythm of the stroke of ink shows it. The water has the motion of water. Everything in Japanese and Chinese painting is expressed in motion, in rhythm. The motion is in the artist's mind when he tries to copy what he sees outside. He feels the life of the pine tree and, holding the brush in his feeling, carries it onto the paper with the strokes of the brush. His work is completed in a moment. There is no hard, meticulous work in Oriental painting. The Oriental artist sees motion as the spiritual side of existence.

The Italian painters understood motion of course but they cared more for form than for motion. In their paintings the strength of stroke is the same in the figure of the madonna, the child, and the drapery. The mother stands like a pine tree. In Oriental painting, on the other hand, Kwanyin stands in the motion of the willow tree, while the other figures have different motions conforming to the artist's feeling about the subject.

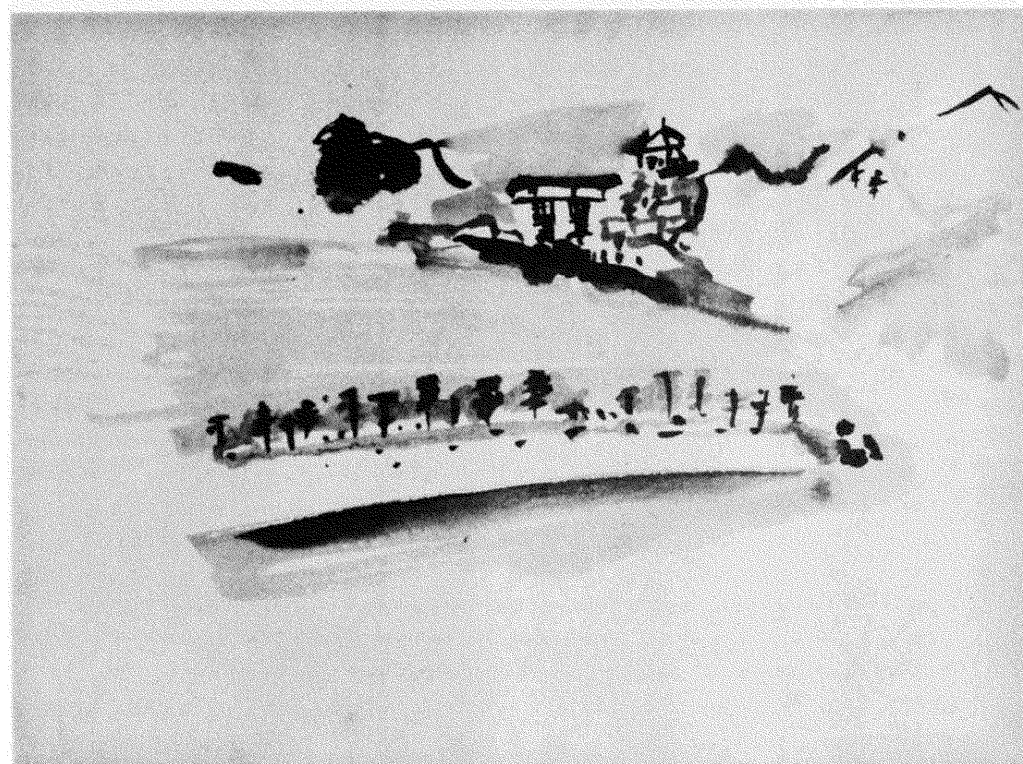
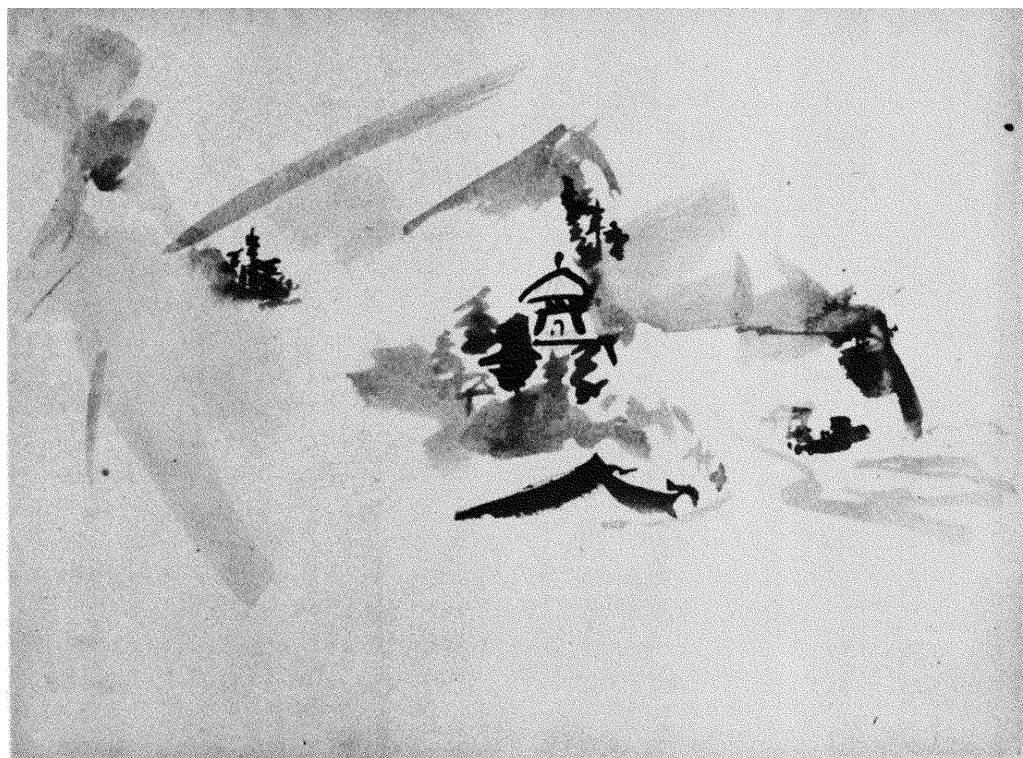
To observe outer existence in form is one thing, in motion another. Motion is the sentient part. When we are speaking of insentient life we say motion; in the case of sentient life we say emotion. When you observe the outside you must really observe in both form and motion at the same time. When you observe any existence in both its form and motion, you will also see the mystery of nature.

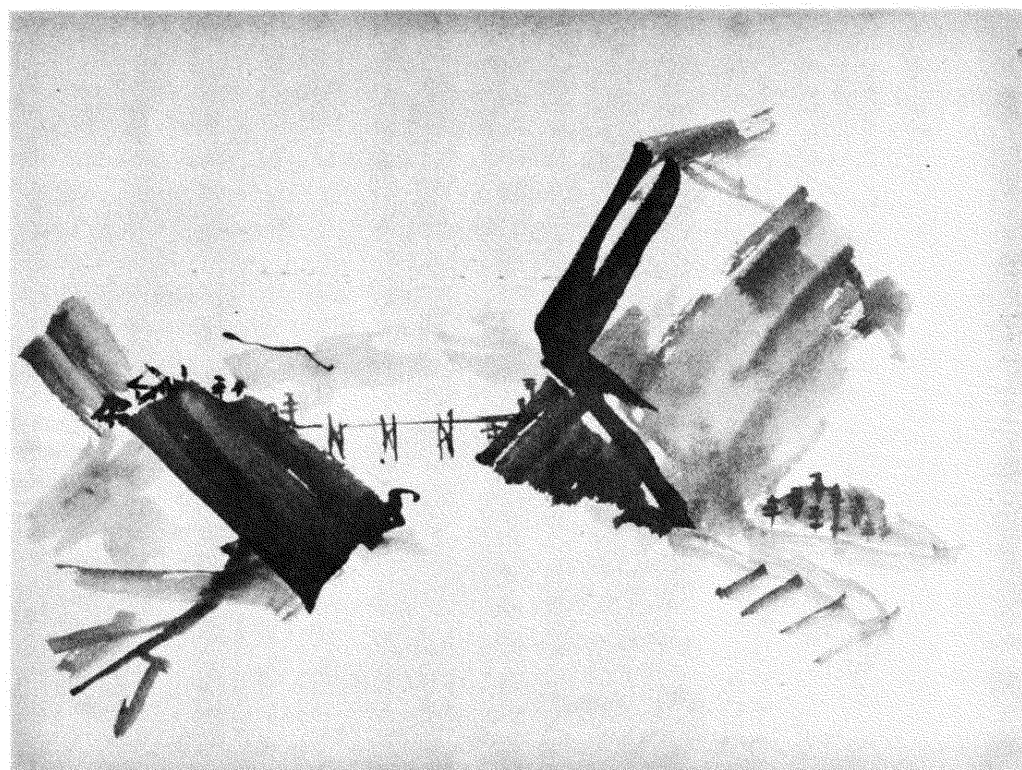
When I am in the country I observe the "motion" of the tree so great and grand. It does not have human emotion, but if you stand beside the tree you can feel the tree's feeling, standing there so carelessly. When a human being stands on the ground, from head to toe, many emotions can be seen in him--he wishes to go to a movie, he wishes to smoke, he wants to go home--these are human emotions. Compare this to the pine tree's emotion, the willow tree's emotion--one is the emotion of the human being, the other is the emotion of nature.

If you are musical, and you observe the "motion" of the tree or even of the huge rock, how can you describe it? With what sound? A violin wouldn't do. Perhaps you might use a resounding drum.

(Continued on page four)

Form and Motion







You look at a sword. How would you describe its "motion" with one stroke of the brush? Or a candle flame? Perhaps a Japanese artist would use very pale ink with plenty of water to express its "motion." But even if a five year old child draws this with one stroke you can feel it as he feels it.

When you watch the deep summer sky you can almost see to the bottom of it. You feel emotion subjectifying this, objectifying this. Then comes a dot of cloud and in a moment all the leaves are rustling--and you hear the rumbling thunder--it is the great emotion of nature. Then you see someone put a newspaper on his head and run--that is human emotion. When you look at the outside you must observe from both viewpoints, motion and form, to feel the mystery of nature.

THE FOUR FORMS OF BIRTH

According to ancient Buddhism, there are four forms of birth: from the egg, the womb, moisture (as with worms and fishes), and metamorphosis. The first three need no explanation.

Metamorphosed beings are called devas. Devas are disembodied beings, like our mind. We think our mind is a being dwelling within us, that thoughts come and go as beings separate from us. When I speak to you, thought becomes sound. The sound is the body of a being that goes out through my lips. It leaves my mind and goes to live in yours. Such a being may penetrate into many minds and can live for thou-

sands of years. What I am saying now has lived since the Buddha's time. It is a deva, a metamorphosed being. Many human beings have no devas living within them: they have pretas and dragons, but no devas. There are many invisible beings living within us. The deva multiplies without generating like an animal. It is in a higher stage than man.

The Buddha is a teacher for devas as well as men. His wisdom emancipates from all four stages of life.

For instance, as an ego, I think, I do. What place has this I in myself? My body is animal, my mind is the body of the deva. There is no place that can be abstracted as ego.

Our first attachment is to ego, the second to the human being. As human beings, we have a group consciousness. But why should we cling to this consciousness; it is merely a vegetable consciousness occupied with circulation and digestion. Our third attachment is to sentient beings.

All are merely stages in the evolutionary process. When we think of the tree in us, the animals in us, the devas in us, we begin to understand that all these just come and go. No particular form remains; there is just one stream of life. Is this the true life? No, for this is a conception based upon time and space so it must be abandoned also.

**MEDITATIONS ON SESSHU--CENTERFOLD
INK PAINTINGS BY PEETER LAMP**

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SOKEI-AN SAYS

In the four Agamas, there are many descriptions of the answer made by the Buddha to questions about his future life-and-death. Some heretic monks asked the Buddha this question directly. The Buddha's answer was SILENCE.

The way his answer is indicated is with the word *avyakṛita*. Temporarily I translate this "no-word." Literally, the Buddha "said nothing." But it is not sufficient to say "he remained silent," to translate his answer *avyakṛita* as "silence." To adopt his silent attitude is not to remain silent, because his attitude of silence is not mere silence. The Chinese used a word to express this SILENCE--"mute thunder." Such an important principle of Buddhism cannot be explained with words. Of course there are many words with which it is talked about--akasha, state of ether, shunyata, emptiness. Temporarily I explain this emptiness as solid emptiness. When you look at a glass of water, there is nothing in it, so it is empty, but it is solid emptiness. Of course you can use a Buddhist term, Dharmakaya. And you can say Buddha's Dharmakaya is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient. Or you can apply a Western philosophical term, Reality, or Absolute Nothingness.

In the beginning, when I was giving lectures in New York, when I sat in SILENCE, the audience thought, "Reverend has forgotten a word and is sitting thinking about it." But it is not that. I meant that there were no words to speak about it with. Then some of my audience would say, "Reverend, do you need a dictionary?" No, I don't need a dictionary. This is not written in a dictionary. The human being cannot explain THIS. I said THIS.

I didn't say "this attitude" or "this silence." I said THIS. Human beings cannot explain THIS.

In Sanskrit this attitude or state is called *Tatha*. *Tatha* means nothing but "This" or "That." You cannot explain it with words. It is the absolute truth of the state of Reality. It is undemonstrable; it is unintelligible; the human intellect fails to intellectualize it. You might say: "God has no name." But there is an accurate word to express this, an absolute word to convey this meaning. This word is SILENCE. This word covers all the universe and penetrates from the beginningless beginning to the endless end. And it is an existence. Think that there is no human being in the universe, think that throughout the universe there is nothing but this *Tatha* existing. In your word "God exists, God is." In Sanskrit, this *Bhutataṭhata* ("Thus existing") means *Isness*. The universe was not created by someone, but the universe is an existence from the beginningless beginning to the endless end. The Buddha came from there and goes back to there. Therefore we call Buddha *Tathagata*. *Gata* means "come." He has come from nowhere, he will go nowhere. "Thus he has come and thus he will go." He came to earth, transfiguring himself into the human shape with two legs, exactly as "THAT"--*Bhutataṭhata*. It is foolish to ask any question such as "Has *Tathagata* a future life?" The answer is SILENCE. "Has he no future life?" SILENCE. "Shariputra's answer to the heretic monks, *avyakṛita*, is accurate and clear. If the heretic monks' eyes could see this solid emptiness, the heretic monks would understand this answer without

saying a word. There is no need to say yes or no. This is the very pivot of Buddhism. Of course, if we want to describe this answer on paper, we cannot just leave an empty space, so we use the word *avyakrita*. When you record notes of music the blank space is *avyakrita*. *Avyakrita* is a word, but it is used here as the symbol of SILENCE.

That is the outline of the sutra. The heretic monks were disappointed: "O Sthavira, it is like an idiot's or a fool's answer. It explains nothing. He is like an infant; he has no self-knowledge." Thus they spoke. Then they rose from their seats and departed.

Pigs don't understand the value of a diamond. Shariputra made a wonderful answer. His speech was loud as thunder, but deaf-mutes could not hear a word of what he said.

In another sutra, this type of teaching takes a different turn.

The Buddha was meditating on the roadside. A thunderbolt struck a huge tree, split the tree in half, and killed nine oxen. A pedestrian found the Buddha on the roadside meditating. "O Buddha, did you hear that terrific thunder?" The Buddha answered: "No." "Your meditation was so profound you did not hear the thunder? The thunderbolt crashed through a great tree and split the tree in two. Didn't you hear the crash?" The Buddha kept silent. "It killed nine oxen. Did you know that?" "No." The pedestrian extolled the Buddha's profound and bottomless samadhi. "Buddha, you are wonderful. You did not hear that terrific thunder!"

When people read this sutra they think the Buddha really did not hear the thunder. Can you understand Buddhism if you translate this sutra thus, understand it in such a way? How foolish! How can a human being in meditation make his present consciousness so numb that he could not hear a thunderbolt that split a tree and killed nine oxen? Such Buddhism is trash! Of course, in meditation the Buddha knew quite well the sound of the thunderbolt that crashed, saw the lightning, saw the tree fall on two sides and kill nine oxen. But the Buddha observed this phenomenon from the standpoint of Bhutatathata, the standpoint of the essential existence of the universe and he expressed it--there was no sound, no light, no tree; neither thunder nor oxen, neither space nor time, neither past nor present nor future. It is absolute, it is infinite.

But the Buddha did not speak in such a way. His attitude was different from that of the usual religious

teacher. He simply said nothing. And his disciples described it exactly. But blind men cannot read that sutra. Their minds must be enlightened to read it.

This is one of the sutras that speaks of the profound principle that is the pivot of Buddhism--SILENCE. In Christianity, what is the pivot of the teaching? God. In Buddhism THIS is the pivot of our teaching. Someone said, "Oh, Osho, don't make that funny face. I can't help but laugh when you do that." I am very sorry, but I am not making any funny face. I am only sitting here in SILENCE. But there is no other way to express it. At the beginning of my lecture I always sit thus a little while. It is the beginning of my lecture.

The heretic monks mentioned were Brahmins and Jains, monks who did not belong to the Buddha's Sangha. They believed in ego, that after death there is an ego, a soul that goes somewhere like an airplane and stays there. Buddhists do not believe in an ego. Our ego is so tremendously boundless it is the whole universe. It has no core--like a peach, or an apple. This whole universe is oneness, is consciousness, is soul, is ego. We don't need to put little egos in it, like little spots. The entire universe is myself; ego is the universe. So the heretic monks thought: We are going to catch the Buddha. If he says that he exists after death, then we will ask him: "Where do you exist?" and catch him. There was a trick in this question.

The questions of the monks were in the usual form or construction of the logic of India. (1) Has he? (2) Has he not? (3) Does he both have and have not? (4) Does he neither have nor have not?

European scholars often avoid all such forms as trash, but for the Buddhist these forms must be observed.

This type of sutra is difficult to read and difficult to understand. If you just buy a book and read it, it is hard to grasp the point. You cannot grasp it. But once you have heard it explained with the Buddhist's traditional knowledge, you will not forget. You will remember always.



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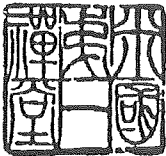
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Mary Farber, Editor
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