

# ZEN notes



SOKEI-AN SAYS

#### THE FOUR WISDOMS

When you attain the highest wisdom, your consciousness becomes Wisdom itself. The consciousness that was previously in the state of leakage (meaning it discharges interior disturbances through the five skandhas as you perspire through the pores of your skin) turns into Wisdom, into no-leakage. The all-wisdom of Buddha (*sarva-jnana*) is in the state called *anashrava*, which, temporarily, I have translated as no-leakage. (*Ashrava* is leakage; *anashrava* is no-leakage; *an* is a negative prefix.)

The secret of enlightenment is this hairpin turn, as I always call it. It is like a turn in the road. It is as if you enter the North Pole star and turn yourself to the south, and control all the zodiac at once. If you don't understand this hairpin turn you don't understand Buddhism.

The four wisdoms (*jnana*) together are Buddha's Wisdom; Buddha's Wisdom has these four natures:

1. Mirrorlike wisdom (*adarsha-jnana*)--the wisdom that is like a perfect mirror.

2. Undiscerning wisdom (*samata-jnana*) is usually translated as "sameness" or "equality," but, from its meaning here, it must be translated "undiscerning wisdom." With its positive function, it discerns sentient and insentient beings without discrimination--as the surface of a pond reflects flowers, rocks, dogs and human beings at the same time, without making any discrimination. In an-

other sense, this *samata* may be translated as "uniform wisdom"--the wisdom common to all sentient beings.

3. Observing wisdom, or introspecting wisdom. When it observes the things that appear on the outside, including the phenomena that appear in the mind, it is observing wisdom; when it observes the activity of the mind, it is introspecting wisdom.

4. Performing wisdom (*pratyaveksana-jnana*).

The first, mirrorlike wisdom, perceives all the outside and inside in one--as oneness.

The second wisdom perceives all the different forms and existences that appear outside, including the phenomena that appear in the mind, without making any discrimination--without any adherence to or preference for any particular appearance--perceiving everything indifferently. When a donkey peeps into a well, the donkey has adherence; but the well sees the donkey without any adherence to the donkey. In the same way, the second wisdom observes all states, all phases of appearance. In activity, to observe the inside is introspective wisdom; to observe the outside is perspective wisdom. These are the two activities of observation, the third wisdom.

With the third wisdom, Buddha observes every detail of the different states of existence.

He acts with the fourth wisdom (performing wisdom), called "*Krytanusthana-jnana*."

Thus, Wisdom has four different

# Sokei-an's Lives

## WHEN I STUDIED CHRISTIANITY

WHEN I was a child, I met a missionary who shouted at me, "Buddhism is not a true religion--it is Pantheism! Aren't you ashamed to be a Pan-thiest?"

I was frightened and ran home to ask my father, but he could not answer. We surrendered to those blue-eyed, yellow-haired missionaries and Western civilization came into the Orient like a flood. That was Japan when I was seven or eight years old.

You have been sending missionaries to the Orient for many years. Now we must explain to you how we accepted your Christianity.

I WAS ABOUT ELEVEN when we children decided to attend some lectures on Waseda Street... We as children could not ask the minister questions, but there were many young men who asked questions. I still remember those questions and their answers. From the pastor's answers we realized everyone on earth is a sinner... We asked:... "How can we be sinners?" The answer: "Those who do not know God are sinners. Confess your ignorance to God, then God will forgive your sins."

WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG, many Christian missionaries came to my country. It seems to me now that these missionaries must have been born in the United States about the time of the Civil War and that when they came to my country to spread the gospel they were forty or fifty years old. They didn't speak any Asiatic language but used only English. They took young men from our country to America and educated them to speak English. These young men then returned to Japan and acted as interpreters. The sermons of these missionaries were very short, perhaps two hundred words. The teacher would say a word and the interpreter would translate it; then the teacher would say the next word. We listened painstakingly to this new gospel that came from the West.

Something one teacher said caused a great sensation among us. He said, "Buddhists worship abstract thought, which is not God. Buddhists say Nirvana, Shunyata, Emptiness, Akasha, Ether; they worship philosophical terms, which are not God. But we Christians worship a personal God." Our young men puzzled very much over what this "personal God" was. We came back and asked our fathers about this; we went to the temple and asked the Buddhist monks about it. They said, "Go back to that Christian teacher and ask him what the "personal God" is. So we went back and asked the meaning of the "personal God." The teacher explained to us: "God is a person like yourself or myself. He is in Heaven, and he knows your names and what you are doing. He keeps His eye open on you and, if you are doing something bad, he punishes you." We came back and medita-

Here I

ted upon this, but we could never believe that a man who is living in the sky is a God. We have a God, but he is different from that.

We left this teacher, Mr. Worrell, and went to another Christian teacher. He said: "This Mr. Worrell comes from Scandinavia and does not understand everything. We are American and think differently. Our God is a person and also God, and Christ is a person and also God. We have faith in this God." This satisfied us a little, and we came back home and talked about this God who is a person.

Then we went to another Christian teacher, who came from Canada, and asked him the same question. He said, "God created you in His image, and you are just like God. Your mind, your thoughts, your sensations, your perceptions, your emotions, your appearance, are copies of God's. Through your appearance and your mind, you understand who God is. Therefore we say, 'God is a person.' God is not a stone or wooden image. He is a living person. God is not empty sky, or fire, or water, or beast, or vegetable; not rock, not emptiness. He is a person." We came back home. Certainly this was a good explanation and we could accept it.

So we young men--I was very young, sixteen or seventeen--all decided to follow this Reverend Klotz. We accepted this meaning of a "personal God," and the statement that our God was only an abstract concept, which is not God. But when we told this to our fathers and the Buddhist monks, they said: "Well, we understand their God, but they don't understand our God."

AFTER I came to this Country I asked many persons about this personal God.

No one has ever given me a clear answer. Someone said, "Don't you know the personal God? The relationship is personal, like that of father and child, you and me. Your god is an impersonal god, the same to everyone. Our God is a personal God; if I love him, he loves me--a very intimate relation."

This has a queer smell. I cannot quite accept this idea. Somehow I don't yet quite know the meaning of this "personal God." If they were to say, "I am a God", then the meaning of personal God would be very clear. But it seems to me that no one thinks that you or I is a god, that this Sokei-an, this Mary, this Mariquita, is a god, "Are you a god?" "No, I am just a girl! I am sinful, I am powerless." "I am not a god, I am just a man. I cannot say I am a god."

Without you yourself then where is this personal God? In the sky or under the earth, in the cathedral or in the church? Where does he live? What is he doing?

You answer, "God is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient. He is everywhere through space and time. He knows everything and He has all power. He is Being. This is not abstract conception; this is real Reality. And He is a man." "Where does He live then?" "I don't know." "A personal God who doesn't live in person? Then where did this concept of 'person' come from?" "It is a great problem and a great word.."

We worship a personal God. It is a wonderful word! It is true! Even Buddhists do not have faith in akasha or shunyata, or in any terms which carry human concepts. God is a person--we accept that. I think about it now, about the Christian teacher who said that Buddhists worship abstract

thoughts, Buddhists do not know a personal God. That Christian certainly misunderstood Buddhism.

I HAVE A FRIEND who is a Quaker. She said to me: "Buddhists talk about annihilation, about Nirodha, Nirvana, extinction; they say that when man annihilates all thoughts and sensations he will attain Nirvana. Is it true."

I asked her contrariwise a question: "Do you think that by force of your mind you can annihilate something from existence?" "No." I said, "Of course we cannot annihilate anything. We cannot annihilate even a mote of dust. When we put this grain of incense into the fire and burn it to nothingness, though nothing remains, we cannot annihilate it. As essence, as fundamental existence, it exists forever. You believe in the conservation of energy. We annihilate nothing."

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, a Christian teacher came from the West and taught us that Christian "love" is not that love the other side of which is hatred. Love is absolute. So there is this undualistic view in the West also.

THESE DAYS I am thinking about the Christianity I learned from a Canadian Methodist minister whose name is Wilson. I realize that Christianity and Buddhism are exactly the same religion. We are using different terms... "Good and bad" give an Oriental man an entirely different conception from yours; there is a fundamental difference in how to handle these words "good and bad" or "virtue and evil" between East and West. Our statesmen, our diplomats, our nations blindly argue with Western people about everything be-

cause their concepts of "evil and virtue" are so different. Your statesmen, your diplomats, your churchmen, without knowing how Oriental men think about "evil and virtue," merely attack and blame their attitude and blindly try to promulgate the Western idea of virtue and evil to Oriental men, and when this is rejected you send your army to attack Oriental men. From our standpoint as men who handle thoughts, who deal with thoughts, we harbor many questions. By understanding this fundamental difference in the ideology of virtue and evil we must prevent useless quarrels and fighting in the shower of blood and the rain of iron fire. But before we understand this fundamental difference in the concept of evil and virtue, we cannot find peace without fighting each other. To you, virtue is the first thing. Good is the first attribute of God. There is no evil in the attributes of your God. God is good, God is truth, and God is beauty. But the Hindu always has two sides as attributes: the creative side and the destructive side--good and bad. Perhaps this gives you a strange feeling. Why must God be bad? We have no God in terms of your idea of God. Of course we have our own way of understanding God, but we don't call it by name, and our God is not a person. Our God is the universe. Our God is not a self, our God is the universe. Man's nature is also universal. If man has a nature as a person or as one separated from another person, he is not an ideal man in the Orient. The characteristics of the Oriental man are derived from universal nature, while you think this man on earth is imperfect but that behind this man there must be a perfect man, that this

perfect man appeared on earth as Christ. He is the agency of the perfect attributes of God who is a person.

WHEN I STUDIED Christianity from a Canadian missionary preacher when I was eighteen or nineteen years old, he explained what I have told you just now. I clearly remember his words and I recite it once more, recalling the words I heard. Now I understand that his idea of the attributes of God was influenced by Greek philosophy, Greek idealism.

Naturally your good is good and cannot be bad. But this word "good" should not be translated as "good" in our conception. I think your idea of good is some virtue that is beyond evil, that has a nature beyond the evil and virtue on earth. (We call it "heavenly virtue.") There is no particular word for that in your usage so you just call it good. If I were to make a diagram of this, it would be a circle with good and bad in it. Then this attribute of your God can be explained. God is good, (the whole circle) good and bad are included in this good. When God judges the actions of human beings, he judges them as good and bad--so God admits there must be bad. But God himself is good. Good and bad exist on earth, but in heaven there is only good. If you explain it in such a way, we understand--the Oriental man can understand your idea of good.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, my father was a Shinto priest. Then I followed a Christian teacher whose name was Reverend Bates of Canada, then a Japanese eminent in Japanese Christianity of that period, and then I came to Bud-

dhism.

IN MY AGE (1939), I fold my arms and sit down on my chair and think about it and I understand the fundamental difference between the Western teachings and the Oriental teachings. But this variance can be understood. There is a key to open the mystic box of two different religions, and this key is the Zen sect.

No fundamental difference exists between the East and the West, but our understanding is not mutually penetrating. We are quarrelling and fighting because we are ignorant, especially the statesmen and politicians who handle the thoughts of men in their ignorant way.

Speaking such big words on this small corner of 70th Street is not worthwhile--but my words are true. When the time comes two hundred years from now, someone else will come and speak the same words--and you will listen--and your statesmen and clergymen will listen.

THERE IS an old Chinese proverb that says: "To polish the jade of this mountain, the jade of another mountain must be used." Jade can be polished only by jade but never by that of the same mountain; we must use, instead, the jade from a different mountain.

WHEN WE OF THE EAST study Christianity, we realize that it aids us in opening our eyes to our own Buddhism.



natures.

Mirrorlike wisdom is immobile, like earth, and the other three wisdoms depend upon it. It corresponds to alaya-consciousness in the eight stages of consciousness system. Alaya-consciousness, the so-called eighth consciousness, is in the nature of leakage (*ashrava*), but when it is enlightened, it becomes mirrorlike wisdom.

The seventh consciousness (*mano-vijnana*) is in the state of leakage also. When it becomes enlightened, it becomes undiscerning wisdom, the second of the four wisdoms.

The sixth consciousness, this present consciousness, corresponds to observing wisdom. It observes the differentiation of inside and outside existence.

The fifth consciousness, including the five senses, corresponds to the performing consciousness.

Mirrorlike consciousness is the Tathagata's virtue, possessed in his body and dominion; *Buddhakaya* and *Buddhakshetra* are the mirror consciousness. Everything is perceived on this mirror infinitely through time and space (*sarva-jnana*).

When one attains undiscerning wisdom, he realizes he has no ego. He attains the awareness that his consciousness is not an ego but is the consciousness common to all sentient beings. By this understanding he will awaken to great compassion. Great compassion means he will perform without any partiality. He acts compassionately toward those who have relation to him and toward those who have no relation to him.

With observing wisdom, Buddha

observes all the different outside existences -- all the different phases of the outside. With it he eradicates others' mortifications and destroys others' doubts. He observes this human body in each sense perception and in each successive stage of consciousness; he may make the analysis into the eighteen dhatu. Buddha gives knowledge with which one may reach emancipation from doubt and mortification.

With performing wisdom, Buddha transforms himself into many different figures, building beautiful temples, playing lovely music, painting wonderful frescoes, using many different terms, printing in gold on blue linen. He promulgates his teachings and converts the people in the stages of shravakas and pratyeka-buddhas. To Bodhisattvas, he doesn't use tricks, but to the sentient beings who have no nature of Bodhisattva, he uses many devices (*upayas*). With laymen he uses business -- buying, selling, exchanging, giving and receiving.

Sentient beings, not only the Buddhas, must have these four wisdoms when they are enlightened.

In the Mantrayana or Shingon sect of Buddhism, they add one more wisdom to the mirrorlike wisdom; pure wisdom, the wisdom of the pure nature of the entire universe (*dharma-dhatu-svabha-vidya*).

This pure wisdom corresponds to amala consciousness; alaya consciousness is sentient consciousness. Amala consciousness is insentient consciousness. Fire, water, and so forth, have this pure

consciousness, which carries no seed of karma. Thus they count five wisdoms. This pure consciousness corresponds to earth. Undiscerning wisdom corresponds to water. Observing consciousness corresponds to fire, as it consumes everything into its own wisdom. And performing consciousness corresponds to the wind; as it moves, it shakes everything on earth.

Corresponding to each of the five wisdoms there are five Buddhas:

1. Pure wisdom -- Vairochana Buddha, the Great Sun Buddha.

2. Mirrorlike wisdom--Aksobhya Buddha, the Buddha that exists in the Eastern sky, the beginning of all movement.

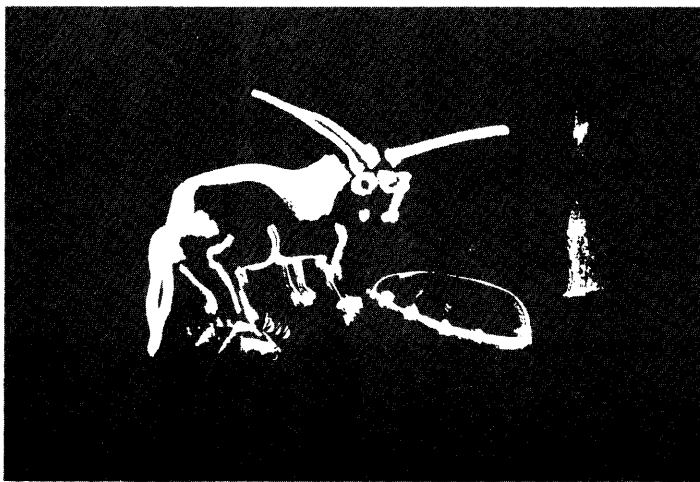
3. Undiscerning wisdom--Ratna-

sambhava Buddha, the Buddha who produces jewels, the Buddha of the Southern sky, the Buddha of productive power.

4. Observing wisdom--Amitabha Buddha, the Buddha of everlasting age, the Buddha of the setting sun, of the Western sky. In the light of the setting sun, everything becomes bright and clear, as the Buddha observes.

5. Performing wisdom--Shakya-muni Buddha, the Buddha of the Northern sky. In the Shingon sect he is named Amoghasiddhi Buddha.

Vairochana Buddha is in the center and in the four corners--East, West, North, South--are the other Buddhas. All manifest their Wisdom. In the Mantrayana school, they do not use the philosophical manner of speaking.



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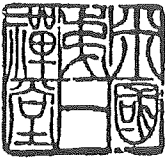
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Mary Farkas, Editor  
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First Zen Institute of America  
113 E30 Street  
New York, New York 10016  
(212-686-2520)

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