

ZEN notes



the zen

SOKEI-AN SAYS

ANAPANASATI, Part 2--This is a very advanced part of Buddhism. Maybe someone in the future will be benefited by this lecture. I think no one who will come from any other quarter of the world will give a commentary on this part of the Icchanangala Sutra, which I am translating, so while I am still in the skin of a human being, I shall comment on these lines.

In the last part of the previous lecture, the Buddha said that Anapanasmrti--mindful breathing--can be an additional strength by which you will attain complete awakening. By expiration and inspiration, breathing out and breathing in, you will think that your self has been completely annihilated. Then the Buddha was explaining the four stages of contemplation: from coarse, rough contemplation to fine contemplation, and from fine contemplation to still finer contemplation. The Buddha himself stayed in that very fine contemplation a long, long time. That still finer contemplation, so to speak, was the third stage of meditation, the so-called third dhyana-loka.

When you experience meditation and all those successive stages, you will finally realize that those stages of meditation are not objective stages: it is your strength of *jnana*, consciousness. The words dhyana and *jnana* must be written in Sanskrit. If you write them in English there will be some confusion, for *jnana* has two meanings. It is sometimes "wisdom" and it is sometimes "consciousness." *Jnana*--wisdom-- is this active *prajna*; and *jnana* is sometimes passive consciousness. In both cases they use *jnana*. *Vijnana* and *prajna* are the two meanings of *jnana* but these are usually included in just one word, *jnana*.

The strength of *jnana*, as I said, shows these four stages. When you meditate and hold your non-ego by your power of will, you are in the first stage. When you relax your will, relinquish your attention and abandon your thoughts, it is the second stage of meditation.

To compare with horseback riding: the first stage is that you are on the horse and you control the horse; the second stage, you do not control the horse, the horse controls you--the horse walks the path without your attention. This is the

same as finer contemplation. In the first stage you think; in the second stage your mind thinks for you; and in the third stage this coarse mind activity has been annihilated and for the first time you realize that there is no man upon the horse and no horse beneath the man. The horse and you are in perfect yoga: no one is controlling the horse and no one is controlled by the horse.

This is so-called *siddha-yoga*, "accomplished yoga." Your yoga is complete. You feel satisfied, you feel bliss, pleasure, joy, delight. It is your first religious feeling. I think you will experience that, too, when you are singing hymns with everyone in a big church, and everyone's mind is exalted, and you are ready to accept the solicitation of the pastor asking you to donate money or to be baptized. It is some kind of--what do you say?--exalted ecstasy. It is as when you take sanzen and pass your koan and cannot hide your smiling face when you come out. This is something like the feeling--your body feels light.

And then you will come into the fourth stage of Zen--bliss. It is called *sukha*. *Sukha* is the antonym of *dukha*. *Dukha* is translated as "agony," or "suffering." When you live, agony stays always with you, always *dukha* is within you. Today it is a headache, tomorrow it is a backache, next day it is a stomachache, next a tooth-ache, then a broken arm, then no money. When there is no pain, then the rent must be paid. Or, as on a snow evening--it is snowing and you cannot get out, so at last you settle yourself down to relax and have a quiet evening. Very

nice! And then you have no cigarettes in the house. *Dukha*! Always something.

Sukha is no agony at all, absolutely no agony. English scholars translate *sukha* sometimes as "delight" or "joy." Joy can never exist without *dukha*, agony. Agony is conquered, therefore delight comes. When you have neither agony nor delight you have this relaxation. So I translate this as "relaxation." It may be wrong--this may not be the best word and later we may change it--but for the present I use it. Or "ease," as in "to be easy," "at ease," as you say "ease your mind." Your body and mind are eased. You use this as a measure of the fourth stage of meditation when you reach there, the fourth *dhyana-loka*.

Then three devas whose appearance was most beautiful visited me after midnight: The "three devas" are part of the fourth *dhyana-loka*. In it there are two parts: one is *dhyana-loka*, the other is *brahma-loka*. These three devas, called angels or gods, are the gods of the *brahma-loka*, the gods of the consecrated place. European scholars think these parts are nothing but superstition, because "gods" appear and speak to the Buddha. But oh no! This is mind that comes and speaks to the Buddha. These three devas are really the mind of Buddha; the Buddha's own mind is recognized by the Buddha. The Buddha spoke about those finer parts of Buddhist theories in those old-style technical terms. These devas are the names of finer stages of meditation which cannot be described by any meanings or by any philosophical terms. Therefore they are

personified and they have these personified names: Sudarsha--appearance; Sudarshana--beautiful seeming; and Akanistha--complete realization of the phenomenal existence. Sudarsha--appearance--comes first. Sudarshana--"darshana" is "awareness," comes next. There is something already, and then you become aware of it, conscious of it--Oh! When you attain enlightenment, when you have attained the first koan, this stage is there--you are in it already but you are unaware of it. Then one day you become aware of it--"Oh, yes! This is it!"

Sometimes in the morning when I am taking my bath, the water is lukewarm and Chaka, my cat, walks around the edge of the bathtub and then jumps down into the bath. The water is clear and lukewarm, and at first he does not realize, does not know, whether he is in the water or not. He is not aware of the water. After a minute he suddenly realizes that he is in the wet water, becomes aware of it. And then great excitement! He jumps out of the bathtub in great fright. He becomes aware of the water.

Our mind is ready, then suddenly we realize--"Oh yes! So it is!" But Western scholars, English scholars, think there is something strange about enlightenment--some great catastrophe occurs, some light bursts upon you. This is amateur thinking. You are in this great enlightenment--you are already in Nirvana but you are not aware of it. Sudarshana is awareness.

Akanistha is the complete realization of phenomenal existence. "Oh! This is my self! I always

thought this 'I' was something else!" You are in phenomenal existence every day, but when you pass the first koan you realize this.

There is no description of these devas, but from the circumstances, I think they are the gods Sudarsha, Sudarshana and Akanistha.

The first deva spoke as follows:
"Sramana Gautama, the time (to awaken) has come!" When one has passed through the first, second and third dhyana-lokas, and passes into the fourth dhyana-loka, there is no other time than the time to awaken. This "time" as used here is the "time of the sixteen stages," which has no opposite side. (As the top and bottom of a box make one box, so the two "sides" make one yoga.) There are sixteen stages when only mind exists--there are no phenomena, no opposites. This "time" is one of them. Only time, and there is no watch so you cannot know what time it is. "The time has come."

The second deva spoke as follows:
"It is not the time that has come, but he who has reached the time." It means he is not to be awakened from the outside, but his meditation has come to an end, to the proper stage.

The third deva spoke as follows:
"It is neither the time that has come nor he who has reached the time. It is that he who has come is in the state of practice: From the beginning he was in the state of practice. First, he was absolutely in the part of existence--"the time has come." Second, he came to reach the time--he came to awareness. Third, he has come to complete awareness that he has not yet passed into so-called Nirvana, but he is

one who has the will-power to go into Nirvana or to come out of it. So from beginning to end of his anapanasmriti he was always within himself in the state of practice. He was "in the state of practice. "

"That he is in the state of Arhat-Nirvana only: Arhat-Nirvana is different from other Nirvanas. Arhat-Nirvana is that he, the person, completely abandons his own idea of Nirvana, or in other words, Nirvana in the term is completely destroyed. He attains the Nirvana that has no remainder. This is not the stage of death, as the amateur believes. The amateur thinks that Nirvana with no remainder means death and annihilation of the body, even of the ashes of the body. From the beginning we have neither mind nor body; when we become aware of Reality, the true state, there is no mind to be annihilated, no body to be wiped out. But of course you must become the universal self--not your personal ego but the universal ego. Then you are in the absolute Arhat-Nirvana.

Christians say: "Confess all your sins and give up your desires; follow God's will, be absolutely obedient to God's will, give up your will to the will of God." I think the real Christian does that. That is Arhat--you are born again. I think those Christian ministers have attained that place, and then come to teach.

The Buddha spoke to the monks as follows: Now the Buddha came out from the fourth dhyana-loka and came back from the woods and seated himself before the monks and spoke as follows to the monks. Now you will realize it is my knowledge of this

"circumstance" that enables me to translate this "the time has come"--not to eat, not to sleep--"the time (to awaken) has come."

This accords with the theories that have already been formulated. The Buddha formulated, made, his theories gradually as things arose. The Buddha spoke many times about one subject, then slowly he gave names, and thus formulated the theories. I think in the Buddha's time this Buddhist theory had already been greatly developed, and Shariputra and Kashyapa added many theological teachings, but I think in the Buddha's time all these names may have been invented.

Abiding by the state of aryavihara: "Aryavihara" is called "sacred dwelling." The monk will first attain *shrota-appana*. He will sail up against the stream, not follow the stream of desire. He will turn his heel upon everyday life, turn from the easy downstream. Just as if you go down Broadway and you stop in front of a shop for eating. You look in the window where there is a great roast of beef turning on the spit. You watch it turning and turning, and your hunger rises, and if you follow desire you will go in and get that sizzling roast. But no! You turn on your heel, and you go home and meditate. Not on the roast beef, however. Aryavihara is this. The monk dwells in aryavihara, stays in the first dhyana meditation with his will-power.

Of devavihara: Why devavihara? Deva is from the second dhyana-loka, through all those dhyana-lokas called deva-lokas.

Of brahmavihara: This is brahma-

loka. And there are three lower stages so-called, the three devas Sudarsha, Sudarshana and Akanistha, the three lower stages. This is really the end of meditation.

Of shikshavihara: This is the dwelling of those monks who must study commandment according to the commandments that have been established. Today we go to school and read books; but ancient education had nothing to do with books, it had to do with behavior. Men were educated by behavior, by the place of their mind. How to carry out their desire--when to eat, how to eat, how much to eat--must be taught. In conclusion, Buddhism teaches us that this body is Buddha. The Buddha said how to eat, so we have to say, "Don't eat too much." And the monks had to learn that, had to study the two hundred and fifty pratimokshas one by one.

Of ashaikshavihara: One who has attained arhatship doesn't need to observe the commandment because in the body of the arhat abide all commandments, all commandments are written. All physical and mental capacities are adjusted according to universal law. There is nothing to learn. Then you have ashaikshavihara.

And of Tathagatavihara. Finally the Buddha's dwelling-place, Buddha's vihara. There is a koan: "What is Buddhavihara?" Everyone comes and prepares some queer answer. I think the Zen master must have a hard job to keep from laughing. What is Buddhavihara? What is the Buddha's real psychology and real behavior?

Abiding by these stages one by one, *You who are learning will attain that which you have not yet*

attained, will reach the place that you have not yet reached, will prove what you have not yet proven. First you attain the idea, then you realize that idea, and then you come to realization. Then with your prajna, with your highest wisdom, the decision comes. This is to "prove." It is proven--absolute decision! It is not only to think in your mind. You must see to prove; you must touch, you must pinch, you must feel the hurt--that is proving. When Christ appeared before his disciples and showed his hands with wounds to his disciples they felt his wounds, felt his living body, and cried: "Lord, I believe!" Therefore the Bible is very interesting to us. But those students who go into the Zen master's room not only touch, but the Zen master will hit them with his stick, and then still they don't believe. What brains they have!

Even this short sutra, if you read it carefully, is significant, and it was translated wonderfully by Gunabhadra.

He who needs no more learning abides by the relaxation of present existence. He has attained arhat. His Brahmacharya is accomplished and his ego is absolutely wiped out. But he doesn't take, therefore, reincarnation. He is in the state of "relaxation of present existence." In Chinese it is written "present Dharma" but I have translated it "present existence."

This is the state of Anapanasati. This is the conclusion. What state do you wish to take? Buddhism is completely annihilated. You have certainly reached the other shore. "Anapanasati" is the conclusion. In

one word, no more running, complete "relaxation of present existence."

This is the true theory. Why? Because Anapanasati embraces arya-vihara, devavihara, brahmavihara, and so on; it embraces the state of no more learning and the relaxation of the present existence." In Buddhism there is no Hinayana and no Mahayana. How can anyone say that the Agamas are Hinayana sutras? How can anyone say that the monks of the Buddha's times practiced just Hinayana? No. Anyone who says this is ignorant of Buddhism. All Buddhism is described in this ICCHANANGALA-SUTRA.

BUDDHISM IN CEYLON

The First two Hundred Years

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Buddhism was introduced into Ceylon about two hundred and fifty years after the Buddha's death and became the national religion of the Sinhalese.

According to the early chronicles a prince named Vijaya and his followers who came from India and landed in Ceylon on the day of the Parinibbana (death) of the Buddha were the first human inhabitants of this island, previously said to have been occupied by "Yakkhas" (sprites, de-

mons) and "Nagas." This is taken by modern historians as a poetic expression of the actual Aryanization of Ceylon in about the sixth century B.C.

Before the introduction of Buddhism during the reign of King Devanampuja Tissa (250-210 B.C.) there was no national religion. Each individual seems to have freely observed his own religion, usually mixtures of the aboriginal cults and the beliefs of the Aryans. Tree worship was part of their cult.

Tissa was a friend of Asoka even before he became king, though they had not met. The first thing he did when he became king was to send envoys to Asoka, bearing presents. When they returned, they brought the following message from Asoka (crowned 268 B.C.) who, according to the Ceylon chronicles, had been converted by a young Buddhist novice named Nigrodha. "I have taken refuge in the Buddha, his Doctrine and his Order. I have declared myself a lay-disciple in the religion of the Shakya son; seek then ever thou, O best of men, converting thy mind with believing heart, refuge in these best of gems (the three refuges--Buddha, Dharma, Sangha).

Asoka's son, Mahinda, who had adopted the religious life at the age of twenty, mastered the doctrines and attained Arahantship, was selected, at thirty-two, by the Third Buddhist Council held by a thousand elders, at which the Pali canon of the Theravada was finally redacted as it exists today, to "Establish in the delightful land of Lanka the delightful religion of the Vanquisher."

The chronicles of Ceylon describe how on the full-moon day of the month of Jettha in the year 250 B.C. Mahinda and his companions rose up in the air and alighted on a hill eight miles east of Anuradhapura. It was a day of national festival. The king with a large party was hunting. When he met the elders with shaven heads dressed in yellow robes he was greatly impressed with their dignified appearance. After greetings had been exchanged, Mahinda preached "The Lesser Discourse on the Elephant Footprint Simile," after which the King and his retinue of forty thousand embraced the new faith.

Shortly after, the King established the Mahavihara, which became the earliest celebrated center of the Buddhist religion and the Cetiya-giri-vihara, another great monastic institution. As many women wished to enter the order of disciples, Mahinda's sister came to help them.

A rooted branch of the Bodhi Tree under which the Buddha had attained enlightenment was sent by Emperor Asoka with sixty-four families as attendants. This tree is still flourishing as one of the most sacred objects of veneration and worship by the laity.

During the two hundred years following its acceptance, Buddhism flourished in Ceylon. A large number of men and women entered the religious orders. Some viharas (monasteries) had thousands living in them. Many also practiced meditation in the forests and rock caves. They were well supported by the laity. There were four classes of disciples: novices (samanera), Bhikkhus (fully ordained), theras (elders) and maha

theras (chief elders). No Sangharajas (heads of the entire Sangha) are mentioned in early chronicles. The affairs of the Sangha were managed by the monks themselves under well-established rules of the Vinaya. There appear to have been large numbers of disciples who had attained to the state of Arahant. In addition practically every man or woman was an upasaka or upasika, a devotee who regularly performed religious duties. The Bhikkhus lived in their viharas during the rainy season and at any other seasons traveled far and wide in the country, visiting villages, other viharas, and as pilgrims worshipping at shrines. Some walked to Gaya to visit the birthplace of the Buddha (this took about six months).

Many Bhikkhus memorized the canonized scriptures or parts of them, preserving the tradition by frequent rehearsal, as these had not yet been committed to writing. The art of writing is thought to have been developed after the introduction of Buddhism, as no pre-Buddhist writing has been identified.

The Bhikkhus were the instructors of the people. The Dhamma was expounded on every occasion and sermons to congregations were also given from time to time. Each temple in a district sometimes took its turn once a year to preach the Ariyavamsa Sutta, which was continued each time for seven days; the gatherings (which included Bhikkhus and laity) on these occasions appear to have been very large. Many had to stand outside the hall all night to hear. Lay preachers were employed by the king at halls of preaching.

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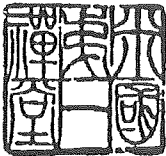
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