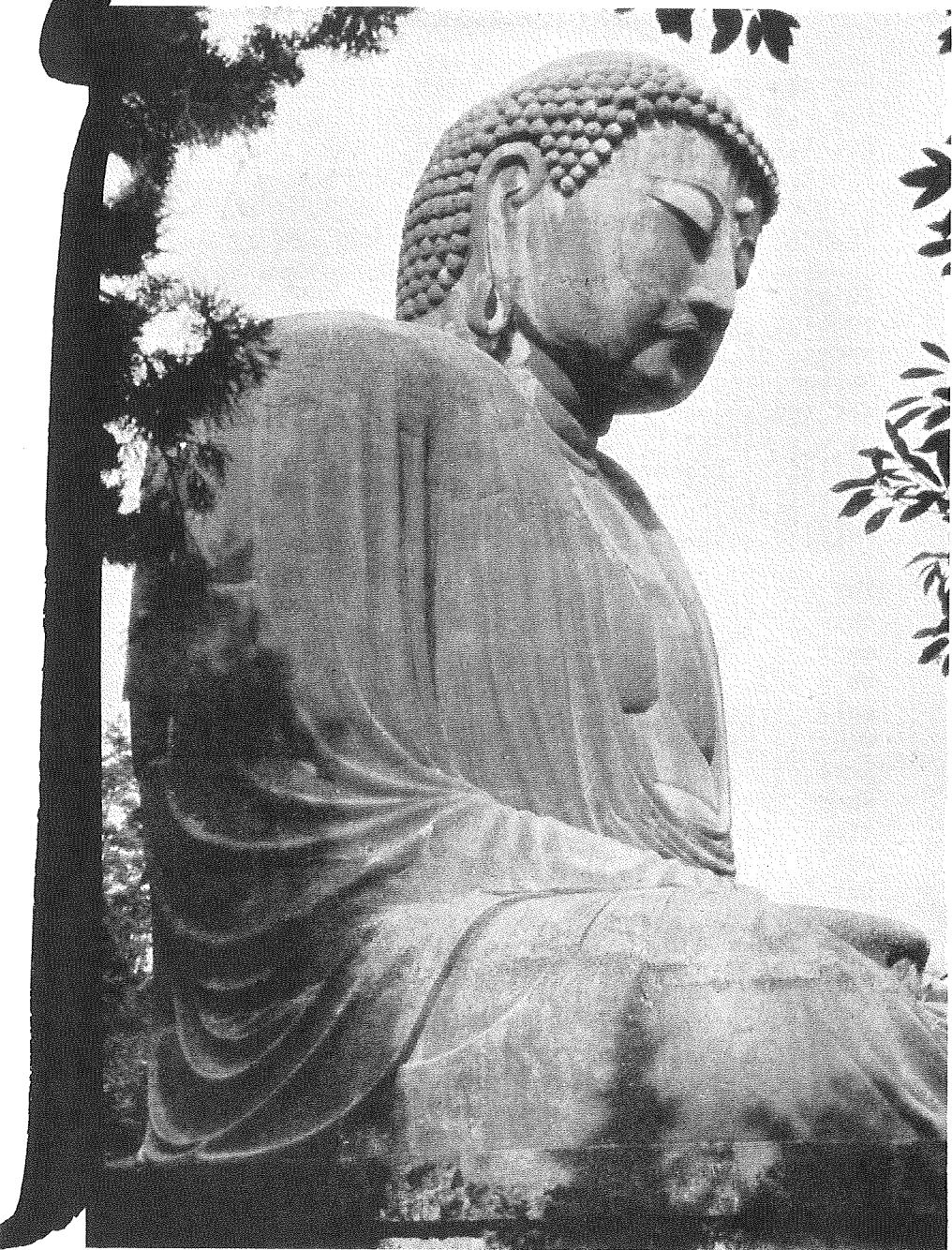


ZEN notes



JOSHU SASAKI ROSHI SAYS
BUDDHA'S PEACE MOVEMENT

During the 2500 years that have passed since the birth of Buddhism, it has never engaged in a political peace movement. These are difficult times. Anti-war and peace movements are very popular. But those of us who practice Buddhism do not need to engage in political movements.

To play up the horrors of past wars such as the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is not the approach of practicing Buddhists. When I travel to Germany and Austria, I see the relics of European war and a deep feeling of the futility and cruelty of war naturally arises, but my main concern as a religious teacher is not to gather people together to tell them that war must be prevented. This is morally fine, but it is not religion.

The state of the world being what it is, I think this political phenomenon, the world peace movement, will become increasingly active. Citizens of this country are certainly entitled to be politically active. It is natural for human beings to want to protect themselves, to further their own interests. This tendency is universal. It is also where struggle between people begins. There are times when the thought that one must support one's country, or one's class, inevitably arises. But Shakyamuni's thought was that one must not be overly attached to one's station in life, or even to one's human existence.

Our proper task is the perfecting of our own peaceful self. This is the teaching of Buddhism. All of us have our strengths and weaknesses, but every one of us is engaged in the activity of giving form to the whole universe. This is Buddha's peace movement.

TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHISM

By Christmas Humphreys

Gotama, the Buddha, was born in Northern India in 563 B.C., the son of a reigning prince. At the age of thirty, dissatisfied with luxury when life was filled with suffering, he set forth as a wanderer to seek deliverance from suffering for all mankind. After years of spiritual search he attained to self-enlightenment, and was thereafter known as the Buddha, "the All-Enlightened One." For the rest of his life he taught to all who came to him the "Middle Way" which leads to the end of suffering. After his passing his teaching was carried far and wide, until today nearly one third of humanity regards the Buddha as the Guide who, having reached Deliverance, proclaims the means of reaching it to all mankind.

Buddhism today is divided, broadly speaking, into the Southern School, the Hinayana, or Thera Vada, "the teaching of the Elders," including Ceylon, Burma, Siam and parts of India (which is not, however, any longer a Buddhist country), and the Northern School, or Mahayana, which covers Tibet, South Mongolia and millions of the population of China and Japan. These schools, completely tolerant towards each other, are the complementary aspects of one whole.

Buddhism is called the Religion of Peace because there has never been a Buddhist war, nor has any man at any time been persecuted by a Buddhist organisation for his beliefs or the expression of them. The following are some of the basic truths or principles of Buddhism:

(1) Self-salvation is for any man the immediate task. If a man lay wounded by a poisoned arrow he would not delay extraction by demanding details of the man who shot it, or the length and make of the arrow. There will be time for ever-increasing understanding of the Teaching during the treading of the Way. Meanwhile, begin now by facing life as it is, learning always by direct and personal experience.

(2) The first fact of existence is the law

of change or impermanence. All that exists, from a mole to a mountain, from a thought to an empire, passes through the same cycle of existence--i.e., birth, growth, decay and death. Life alone is eternal, ever seeking self-expression in new forms. Life is a bridge, say the Chinese; therefore build no houses on it. Life is a process of flow, and he who clings to any form, however splendid, will suffer by resisting the flow.

(3) The law of change applies equally to the soul. There is no principle in an individual which is immortal and unchanging. Only the "namelessness," the ultimate Reality, is beyond change, and all forms of life, including man, are manifestations of this Reality. No one owns the life which flows in him any more than the electric light bulb owns the current which gives it light.

(4) The universe is the expression of law. All effects have causes, and man's soul or character is the sum total of his previous thoughts and acts. Karma, meaning action-reaction, governs all existence, and man is the sole creator of his circumstances and his reaction to them, his future condition, and his final destiny. By right thought and action he can gradually purify his inner nature, and so by self-realization attain in time liberation from rebirth. The process covers great periods of time, involving life after life on earth, but ultimately every form of life will reach Enlightenment.

(5) Life is one and indivisible, though its ever-changing forms are innumerable and perishable. There is, in truth, no death, though every form must die. From an understanding of life's unity arises compassion, a sense of identity with the life in other forms. Compassion is described as "the Law of laws--eternal harmony," and he who breaks this harmony of life will suffer accordingly and delay his own Enlightenment.

(6) Life being One, the interests of the part should be those of the whole. In his ignorance man thinks he can successfully strive for his own interests, and this wrongly directed energy of selfishness produces suffering. He learns from his suffering to reduce and finally eliminate its

cause. The Buddha taught four Noble Truths: (a) The omnipresence of suffering; (b) its cause, wrongly directed desire; (c) its cure, the removal of the cause; and (d) the Noble Eightfold Path of self-development which leads to the end of suffering.

(7) The Eightfold Path consists in Right (or perfect) Views or preliminary understanding, Right Aims or Motives, Right Speech, Right Acts, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Concentration or mind-development, and, finally, Right Samadhi, leading to full Enlightenment. As Buddhism is a way of living, not merely a theory of life, the treading of this Path is essential to self-deliverance. "Cease to do evil, learn to do good, cleanse your own heart: this is the Teaching of the Buddhas."

(8) Reality is indescribable, and a God with attributes is not the final Reality. But the Buddha, a human being, became the All-Enlightened One, and the purpose of life is the attainment of Enlightenment. This state of Consciousness, Nirvana, the extinction of the limitations of self-hood, is attainable on earth. All men and all other forms of life contain the potentiality of Enlightenment and the process therefore consists in becoming what you are. "Look within: thou art Buddha."

(9) From potential to actual Enlightenment there lies the Middle Way, the Eightfold Way "from desire to peace," a process of self-development between the "opposites," avoiding all extremes. The Buddha trod this Way to the end, and the only faith required in Buddhism is the reasonable belief that where a Guide has trodden it is worth our while to tread. The Way must be trodden by the whole man, not merely the best of him, and heart and mind must be developed equally. The Buddha was the All-Compassionate as well as the All-Enlightened one.

(10) Buddhism lays great stress on the need of inward concentration and meditation, which leads in time to the development of the inner spiritual faculties. The subjective life is as important as the daily round, and periods of

quietude for inner activity are essential for a balanced life. The Buddhist should at all times be "mindful and self-possessed," refraining from mental and emotional attachment to "the passing show." This increasingly watchful attitude to circumstances, which he knows to be his own creation, helps him to keep his reaction to it always under control.

(11) The Buddha said: "Work out your own salvation with diligence." Buddhism knows no authority for truth save the intuition of the individual, and that is authority for himself alone. Each man suffers the consequences of his own acts, and learns thereby, while helping his fellow men to the same deliverance; nor will prayer to the Buddha or to any God prevent an effect from following its cause. Buddhist monks are teachers and exemplars, and in no sense intermediaries between Reality and the individual. The utmost tolerance is practised towards all other religions and philosophies, for no man has the right to interfere in his neighbour's journey to the Goal.

(12) Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor "escapist," nor does it deny the existence of God or soul, though it places its own meaning on these terms. It is, on the contrary, a system of thought, a religion, a spiritual science and a way of life, which is reasonable, practical and all-embracing. For over two thousand years it has satisfied the spiritual needs of nearly one third of mankind. It appeals to the West because it has no dogmas, satisfies the reason and the heart alike, insists on self-reliance coupled with tolerance for other points of view, embraces science, religion, philosophy, psychology, ethics and art, and points to man alone as the creator of his present life and sole designer of his destiny.

Peace to all Beings.

From *Via Tokyo*

The photo on the cover seems to have been taken by Mr. Humphreys. It appeared as the frontispiece of *Via Tokyo*.

BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST

- (1) The truths must be presented in a form acceptable to the West. The Buddha's teaching has a universal message but its form must be digestible by those to whom it is given.
- (2) We must teach principles, and let people apply them for themselves. The West wants food for thought; ideas, principles, laws of life.
- (3) Religion and Science must somehow be harmonised, religion here meaning the yearning of the heart for That which is beyond phenomena, and science the laws of nature in their broadest sense. The West must understand the existence of a unifying principle which includes both.
- (4) It must be presented as a philosophy, which appeals to the reason and not to the voice of authority. "Here is a doctrine," we must say, "which is not a dogma. Think it out and apply it for yourselves."
- (5) Whatever we teach must be proffered with humility and tolerance, yet as provably true, as tested by thousands of years of experience.

MORE ON MR. HUMPHREYS

by Mary Farkas

I think it must have been in the middle fifties that Mr. Humphreys noted in the Middle Way the First Zen Institute's efforts to share with the world its own encounter with the eastward-moving force of Zen. Mr. Humphreys' observations at that time meant a lot to me personally. His interest in Zen Notes and getting out Sokei-an's message continued through the years, as may be noted from the ensuing bits of correspondence. Ever since I received the letter of 2/25/78, though I am still not numbering the pages, I always staple them if there are more than two sheets. And every time I do so, I think of Mr. Humphreys. I'm sorry we missed meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MF
By Christmas Humphreys

November 19, 1973

I love reading Sokei-an Sasaki's articles when they appear each month, and I am wondering how far you have got towards publishing a volume of these collected extracts. From time to time I note one so valuable that I underline and mark it, but that is not the same thing as having a book

in which one can make notes at the end. Has this ever been done, or are you on your way to it?

October 7, 1977

I am in process of collecting articles by the late Dr. D.T. Suzuki from various odd magazines, and while doing so thought of Sokei-an Sasaki. I have of course The Cat's Yawn, but that was 1947. Have you published any more of his material from your Zen Notes, or has anyone? I feel that these great men are so few and so important that we should do what we can to make their writing known as widely as possible.

Jan. 10, 1978

I like your idea of samplers. If one wants Sokei-an on this or that one does not want to buy or even wade through many volumes. I look forward to having some of these small volumes separately on sale on our Bookstall, where we sell an ever-increasing quantity of Buddhist literature. I share your disease of overwork but at close on 77 I find it suits me! Sorry we did not meet when I was in

New York in 1946 and dined with Ruth, but we shall meet, I expect, somewhere in some life on the same old way!

February 25, 1978

When I wrote to you in January 10 about our missing copies of Zen Notes I said that we had not received the last three of 1977, but that they would probably be coming. They have arrived, and I think the issue for December 1977 is one of the finest ever produced.

I have one criticism, as to its form. The pages are not numbered and the whole issue is not clipped. Result: when it falls off my bed I have much to do to reassemble it before continuing my study! Could you number the pages? It is easier also for noting a passage for reference or quotation.

July 4, 1983

Dear Mr. Humphreys:

I'm sorry it's taking me so long to get Sokei-an's words into print. At last I'm able to say a book is coming out soon. Unfortunately, you wouldn't be able to read it comfortably even if you were here--it's in German. Anyway, it's a beginning.

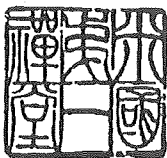
Zen notes

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Mary Farkas, Editor
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