

ZEN BOW

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Living, as we do, in a time and place so confused and where so many roads appear to end in a slough of unquiet desperation, a new generation of youth is asking us the question, WHERE NOW? Though their own answers often take the form of escape into nihilism and drugs, this phase of our national life is not, necessarily, unhealthy. It is, rather, part of a search for meaning by intelligent students throughout the college campuses of the nation. In this, our third issue, ZEN BOW features the address given by Philip Kapleau to the students of Florida State University last October on the occasion of the 1967-68 lecture series of the Department of Religion entitled "The Search for God." The talk printed below was one of four: "The Search for God: Hinduism," "The Search for God: Zen Buddhism," (Philip Kapleau's talk), "The Search for God: Islam," and "The Search for God: American Religion."

"THE SEARCH FOR GOD"

The Department of Religion has asked me in connection with its series "The Search for God" to talk to you on Zen Buddhism. I have come because I believe the Buddha's Dharma, as Buddhists call his teaching, has a therapeutic relevance to the Vietnam war, the civil rights struggle, acid taking, pill gulping, liquor guzzling and many other ills of our contemporary society.

Recently the nation was shocked by the brutal killings of Linda Fitzpatrick and Groovy Hutchinson, two so-called hippies living in New York's East Village. The violent deaths of these two young people created an immediate wave of outrage and indignation from newspapers and magazines which used the slayings as a pretext to upbraid the entire hippie phenomenon. Many of these same magazines and newspapers are staunch supporters of the war America is waging in Vietnam, and seem

to feel there is some inherent difference between large-scale war and individual murder. The point overlooked is that though violence can manifest itself in a variety of forms, its root cause is the same in all cases: a strong sense of the 'me' and 'mine', the desire for power and domination, which in turn gives rise to feelings of fear and alienation so powerful as to make men viciously seek out and destroy other creatures and even themselves.

Later I will have more to say about ego. For the moment let me observe that despite our violence at home and abroad we Americans are still the hope of mankind. During my thirteen years in Japan, besides extensive travel in India, Burma, Ceylon and Thailand, I heard numerous comments by perceptive Asians familiar with the American and

"The mind of the Zen adept is taut—ready like a drawn bow."

European scene that the wave of the future lies, not in Asia or Europe but in America. Did I not myself believe it I would still be in Japan and not back in my own country. We are, without doubt, slowly beginning to turn our immense creative energies inward, and if we can live through our present hell may yet transform America into the biblical land of milk and honey. There is hope for us in Luther's dictum: "He who is bad enough to land in hell is good enough to go to heaven."

Evidence to support this optimistic view of America's spiritual potential is not lacking. It can be found in a lecture series such as this, the sponsors of which are to be congratulated on their initiative and vision in bringing before you representatives of four great world religions. I am honored to be one of these speakers and hope I can present to you a fair picture of the huge structure of thought, feeling and wisdom known as Buddhism. This religion embraces one-third the human race, including the great majority of Asians, and is now projecting itself upon the hearts and minds of numerous men and women in the West.

The assigned topic of this lecture series is "The Search for God" and at once I find myself in a dilemma, for in Buddhism, especially Zen, there is nothing to search for, much less a God. The fundamental problem in Zen is not God but man. Not what is God, but what am I? Why was I born, why must I die? Not finding God but realizing one's original Self, one's link with one's fellow men--this is the primary concern of Zen. The following Zen dialogue pinpoints the problem:

A monk named Etcho asked a Zen master, "What is the meaning of Buddha?" "You are Etcho!" retorted the master.

Dostoevsky in a letter to his brother wrote: "It is terrible to watch a man who has the Incomprehensible within his grasp, does not know what to do with it, and sits playing with a toy called God."

Toys are for the amusement of children, they are not for adults. Zen de-

mands maturity and responsibility of its adherents. It admonishes them to be adult, to stand on their own two feet, not God's or anyone else's, and to respond wholly to what is most true in themselves and others. Our inborn freedom and spontaneity must not be fettered by attachment to God or Buddha. Zen masters have been known to cry, "You must kill the Buddha!" not as a dramatic gesture of defiance, but as an inescapable consequence of their love of freedom. However, a word of warning: Zen is not an anthropomorphic humanism. And only he who has the reverence and humility to prostrate himself before the Buddha can destroy him when he becomes a threat to complete inner freedom. Truly, 'Zen is a religion of respectful disrespect and disrespectful respect.'

In Zen, we have said, there is nothing to search for. Search implies some goal or object outside oneself and a subject-I that does the searching--a dualistic notion which fractures our inherent Wholeness. Since our True-nature has no insufficiency, like a circle to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be subtracted, what, then, is there to seek? Many people, proudly calling themselves seekers, become attached to the idea of seeking, with the result that they never find. In a different context Picasso once remarked, "Other painters seek; I find."

What we in the West term Buddhism has its origin, historically speaking, in the person and life of Siddhartha Gautama, later to be known as the Buddha Shakyamuni, i.e. 'the sage of the Shakyas clan.' Among Buddhists he is revered not as a deity or a savior who takes upon himself the sins of others, but as a fully awakened, fully perfected human being who attained liberation of body and mind through his own efforts and not by the grace of a supernatural being. People often asked him, "Are you a god?"

"No."

"An angel?"

"No."

"A saint?"

"No."

"Then what are you?"

"I am awake," he replied, and this indeed is the meaning of the term 'Buddha': one awakened or enlightened to his own Self-nature and all existence.

If Buddhism begins with Shakyamuni Buddha, in Zen the focus is on his awakening, or supreme enlightenment, an event which unites all sects of Buddhism, whether they be of the Mahayana ('Great Vehicle') persuasion, of which Zen is the core, or the Hinayana, sometimes called Theravada or Southern Buddhism. Placed in the limiting scale of time, the Buddha's enlightenment occurred on December 8, about the year 528 B.C., when he was thirty-five. Especially among Zen Buddhists this memorable occasion is observed not so much as a time of rejoicing as a time for renewed effort to realize our own True-nature as the Buddha realized his.

Upon his great awakening the Buddha is recorded as exclaiming, "Wonder of wonders! Intrinsically all living beings are complete and whole, endowed with virtue and wisdom, but because of their delusive thinking they fail to perceive this." I shall return to this term 'delusive,' for much of Zen teaching revolves about it. Here let me point out that in Zen Buddhism anyone who has genuinely realized his Self-nature has attained the first stage of Buddhahood, since in SUBSTANCE this realization is no different from the Buddha's. It is only in the DEGREE of the Buddha's enlightenment, as well as in the perfection of his character and personality--that is, in his equanimity, compassion and wisdom--that Shakyamuni Buddha towers above the man of average enlightenment. Perhaps it is like comparing a Sunday painter with Rembrandt. Both are artists, but how vastly different their attainments!

The substance of this Self-nature has been likened to water. One of the salient characteristics of water is its conformability: when put into a round

vessel it becomes round, when put into a square vessel it becomes square. We too have this adaptability, Buddhism teaches, but because we live bound and fettered through ignorance of our True-nature, we have forfeited this freedom. The mind of a Buddha is like water that is calm, deep and crystal clear, and upon which the 'moon of truth' reflects fully and perfectly. The mind of the ordinary man, on the other hand, is like murky water, constantly being churned by the gales of delusive thought and no longer able to reflect the moon of truth. The moon nonetheless shines steadily upon the waves, but as the waters are roiled we are unable to see its reflection. Thus we lead lives which are frustrating and meaningless.

How, then, can we bring the moon of truth to illumine fully our life and personality? We need first to clear this water, to calm the surging waves by halting the winds of discursive thought. In other words, we need to liberate our minds from bondage to conceptual thinking. Most people place a high value on abstract thought, but Buddhism has clearly demonstrated that discriminative thinking lies at the root of delusion. For this reason it has been called by the Zen masters the sickness of the human mind. This is not to say, however, that Zen condemns the intellect. Abstract thinking, to be sure, is enormously useful when its nature and limitations are properly understood. But so long as men remain slaves to their intellect, fettered and controlled by it, they can well be called sick, according to Buddhism.

In the teachings of the Zen masters we find conceptual thought described as the 'stream of life and death.' Random ideas are relatively innocuous, but beliefs, opinions, rationalizations, ideals, dreams, hopes--in which we become imprisoned as in a cocoon--are all hang-ups, according to Zen. Voltaire was in the company of the Zen masters when he observed, "Opinion has caused more trouble on this earth than plagues or earthquakes." As for ideals, G.K. Chesterton, the British essayist, once

wrote, "There is nothing the matter with Americans except their ideals. The real American is all right. It's the IDEAL American who is all wrong."

Dare we condemn our dreams and hopes? They seem to be the very stuff of our lives. Yet they are nonetheless illusory. Buddhist doctrine holds that the past is unreal because it has already gone; the future because it hasn't yet arrived; and the present because the moment you THINK of it, it's already disappeared. Linger in the past and you sacrifice the present. Hope in the future and you neglect the 'here and now.' Think neither of past, future or present, only be one with every moment, and you have all three, not as a trinity but as an indivisible unity.

Delusive thought, then, is the mental static which prevents us from being in tune with our daily existence. Delusive acts are an ignorant clinging to the unreal and the ephemeral which we mistakenly assume to be real and permanent. Now, the mother of delusion, according to Zen Buddhism, is the notion of an ego-I, that is, the acceptance of oneself as a discrete, isolated individuality. How is this delusion born? Deceived by our senses and our bifurcating intellect into postulating the dualism of myself-and-other, we are led to think and act as though we were confronted by a world external to us. Thus in the unconscious the idea of 'I,' or selfhood, becomes fixed, and from this arises such thought patterns as I hate this, I love that; this is mine, that is yours. Nourished by this fodder, the imperious ego-I comes to dominate the personality, attacking whatever threatens its domination and grasping at anything which will enlarge its power. Antagonism, greed and alienation, culminating in suffering, are the inevitable consequences of our failure to recognize the nature and limitations of our intellect and our senses.

The fundamental unity and interdependence of all existence becomes clear when we are undeluded. In Zen this is expressed by such statements as, "When John is clouted, Jim cries out; when clouds rise over the southern mountains,

their rain falls over the northern range; when a school bell is rung in Rochester, a class begins in Tallahassee." Analyze and discriminate, though, and the Unity is broken. See things 'steadily and whole' and 'ours is the world and all that's in it.' Stevenson's line, "The world is so full of a number of things I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings" sounds trite, yet it has a profundity--if we can assume, that is, that kings are happy. Do you remember the charming Persian legend, quoted in one of Maeterlinck's stories, of the king who was very powerful but also very unhappy. He consulted his seers to find out what he must do to be happy. After diligent research they found a clue to the dilemma. "Your Majesty," they told him, "you must wear the shirt of a happy man." There followed a long search and finally a poor peasant was found who was perfectly happy. He was an unkempt fellow who wore no shirt. Today he would probably be called a hippie.

The enlightenment of the Buddha, I have said, is paramount, since the doctrines and principles and philosophy of Buddhism all emerge from it. Besides the unreality of an ego-I, the Buddha in his enlightenment perceived that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, fleeting forms in a stream of ceaseless change, which arise when certain causes and conditions bring them into being and which pass away with the appearance of new causal factors. The Buddha further realized that the substratum of existence is a Voidness out of which all things endlessly arise and to which they endlessly return. This Emptiness cannot be described as a blank cipher or a bleak negativity but as a Something charged with power and creativity.

Pain, the Buddha proclaimed, is an inevitable condition of life. Our sufferings, though--that is, our evaluation of pain from which we stand apart--are rooted in a selfish grasping and in fears, fears and terrors which spring from our ignorance of the true nature of life and death. "One thing I teach," said the Buddha, "suffering and the end of

suffering." So he was called the Great Physician. Since he was not content merely to diagnose the ills of man but to prescribe clear-cut remedies, his Dharma can fairly be described as optimistic and practical.

It is optimistic and not fatalistic, as it is sometimes charged, because he taught that a man's karma, that is, the sum effect of his thoughts and deeds, is not fixed but variable. Karma can also be called the law of action, reaction and interaction, or simply the law of cause and effect--as you sow so you reap. Except for some such circumstances as one's being born a man or a woman or black or white, each has the power to change his karma by the way he chooses to accept or reject life. Let us say one is sent to jail for a crime he has committed. Here we see the working of cause and effect. One may then decide to repent and become law-abiding or determine to be more careful not to get caught the next time. Or else one may choose to utilize the confinement as an occasion for spiritual discipline by zazen, good reading, and the like, as Oscar Wilde did when he was sent to Reading Gaol. Similarly, one born sickly can become well by attention to his health, while one born poor has the possibility of becoming rich. The doctrine of karma, one of the cornerstones of Buddhism, is such a complex subject that these brief remarks hardly do it justice. But, unfortunately, there is no time to pursue it further on this occasion.

The Buddha's prescription to end suffering consisted of many remedies, chief among them being meditation. In Zen, meditation takes a special form called zazen, a Japanese word whose literal meaning is "sitting with a concentrated mind." Zazen, the process of concentration and absorption by which the mind is calmed and brought to one-pointedness, constitutes the heart of Zen discipline. The Japanese Zen master Dogen called zazen 'the gateway to total liberation.' Zazen, though, involves much more than quiet sitting. It is an intense inner struggle to gain control over the mind and then to use it, like

a silent missile, to penetrate the barrier of the five senses and the discursive intellect. This emptying of the mind of random ideas establishes that inner equilibrium which the winds of conceptual thought can no longer upset.

The term 'brain-washing' is a charged word, but in the sense of purging and freeing the mind from enslavement to fugitive, useless ideas we can call zazen 'brain-washing.' Perhaps this will be clearer if I tell you briefly of the experiences of two Americans with zazen. The first, after he had been practicing Zen a short time, said, "I know that Zen discipline involves ridding the mind of all tightly held beliefs and values so that it becomes a clean slate. But look, I've spent four years getting an education at Harvard. This knowledge cost me a hell of an effort and my parents plenty. If you think I'm going to throw it all away for a pig in a poke called satori, you're crazy. To tell the truth, I'd rather read about Zen than practice it; that way I don't lose, I gain."

The second said, "Some people ask me, 'What have you gained from Zen?' I must answer truthfully that I have lost, and whatever gains I have made are the result of this loss. I have lost much that was not really myself, and as a result the burden of the false self which I was carrying around has become lighter. Unhappily, I do not yet know who I really am, but I know better who I am not, and this means that I can move about and flow more easily through life."

Upon hearing this some may ask, "In what way does one flow more easily?" Energies which once were squandered in compulsive drives and purposeless actions are now preserved through correct Zen sitting; and to the degree that the mind attains one-pointedness it no longer disperses its forces in the uncontrolled proliferation of idle thoughts. The entire nervous system is relaxed and soothed, inner tensions eliminated, and the tone of all organs strengthened. With body and mind consolidated, focused and energized our emotions respond with increased sensi-

tivity and our will asserts itself with greater strength of purpose. No longer are we dominated by intellect at the expense of feeling, nor driven by the emotions unchecked by reason or will.

Notice the emphasis on will, for without willpower progress is impossible. Dostoevsky recognized this when he wrote his brother, "Yet how terrible it is to perceive only the coarse veil under which the All does languish! To know that one single effort of the will would suffice to demolish that veil and become one with eternity--to know all this and still live on like the last and least of creatures... How terrible!"

To demolish the 'veil' demands more than dedicated sitting. It calls for a life of attentiveness and of constant awareness. For the ordinary man, whose mind is a checkerboard of criss-crossing reflections, opinions and prejudices, bare attention is virtually impossible. His life is thus centered not in reality itself but in his IDEAS of it. So the Buddha advises us, "In what is seen there must be JUST the seen; in what is heard there must be JUST the heard; in what is sensed (as smell, taste or touch) there must be JUST what is sensed; in what is thought there must be JUST the thought." If any of you think this easy, try an experiment on yourselves. The next time you eat, shave or go to the toilet see if you can perform these functions without the intervention of idle thoughts. You're exceptional if you succeed.

The aim of Zen discipline, then, is to focus wholly on each object and each action, stripping the mind of extraneous thoughts and allowing us eventually to see things as they truly are. The following story illustrates this. A Zen master was walking in the woods with one of his disciples. Suddenly a pure white rabbit darted in front of them. Taking advantage of the occasion, the master asked, "What would you say of that?" "It was like a god!" exclaimed the monk. "You're a grown man but you talk like a child," replied the master. "All right, then," said the monk, "what would YOU say about it?"

"It's a RABBIT," answered the master.

A rabbit is a Rabbit is a RABBIT! But how many know what this means? Such Knowledge is not arrived at through simple enlightenment but demands years of dedicated practice. So Zen teachers say, "A student's real training begins only after his enlightenment."

When Dogen, who later became a great Zen master, was asked what he had learned after three years of Zen training in China, he replied, "That my nose is vertical, my eyes horizontal."

Zen Buddhism, you see, is quite simple.

SUMMER PLANS

The Board of Directors met on the evening of March 13 to determine the financial details and calendar of activities for the projected summer program at the Gratwick farm in Pavilion, New York. As indicated in the last issue of ZEN BOW, a great deal has been planned, all of which we present below.

Sesshin. Since the Center staff will not move out to the farm until June 29, the June sesshin will be held on the customary second weekend of the month, the length to be announced at a later date. Summer sesshin at the farm will last five and seven days, respectively. In July the sesshin will go from the evening of Tuesday, the 9th, to that of Sunday, the 14th, and in August, from the evening of Sunday, the 4th, to the evening of Sunday, the 11th. In these, as in all our sesshin, preference will be given to those who apply for the full five- and seven-day periods. There will be a slight reduction in the cost for those members applying for the full seven-day August sesshin, but the exact amount has not yet been determined.

Guest Speakers. The Center has not yet made final its plans concerning guest speakers at the farm, but we hope

to announce in the next issue of ZEN BOW more specific information about time, place, and names of speakers.

Resident-students. Philip Kapleau has decided to make room in the summer's plans for three men to train as semi-monastics along with the present three full-time monastics. Because the Center has no endowment fund, however, but must rely on dues, sesshin contributions, and other donations of its members if it is to continue its activities, there will be a charge of \$1.50 per day per monastic, or \$39.00 for the non-sesshin days of July, and \$27.50 for the non-sesshin days of August. The three students will, however, receive a reduction in the usual sesshin contribution. Applicants must be members in good physical and mental health.

Paying Guests. Two periods during the summer, July 14 to August 1 and August 14 to August 24, have been especially set aside when members and non-members may come to the farm on a weekly basis for what may appropriately be called a Zen vacation. Individuals or married couples may apply. These training-vacation periods will include daily zazen, contact with and instruction by Philip Kapleau, and a share in the work projects connected with the running of a country Center. The fields and woods of the farm offer ample opportunity for long walks, and the swimming pool in back of the Big House will be open for those who want to swim. Participation, of course, should be recognized as a solid opportunity to develop a disciplined life with the ultimate aim of Self-realization. For various reasons, it has been decided that only those beyond high-school age can be considered for inclusion in this experimental summer program.

Listed below are the kinds of accommodations that will be available at the farm:

Paying guest members, double room
occupancy.....\$10.00 per day
65.00 per week

Paying guest members, sleeping porch
(two cots).....\$ 8.00 per day
51.00 per week

Paying guest non-members, double
room occupancy..\$12.50 per day
82.50 per week

Camping Out. Either couples or individuals who wish to camp out, at a place on the farm to be provided for this purpose, will be asked to contribute \$5.00 per day per individual (meals included).

Just get rid of that small mind
that is called "self"
And there is nothing in the universe
that can hinder you.

--Zen verse

According to Buddhist definition, what we experience as the world is the result of our sense-activities, our thoughts, feelings and actions. So long as this thinking, feeling and acting is motivated by the illusion of our individual separateness, we experience a correspondingly limited, one-sided and therefore imperfect world, in which we attempt in vain to maintain our self-identity, our imaginary ego, against the irresistible stream of eternally changing forms and conditions. The world, therefore, appears to us as a world of impermanence, insecurity and fear; and it is this fear that surrounds each each being like a wall, separating it from others and from the greater life.

Self-realization liberates us from this fear by breaking down the separating walls and opening a vision into undreamt realms of freedom, in which the solidarity of all beings is revealed and becomes the natural basis of mutual understanding. Then compassion, good-will, selfless love, pity, etc. will no more be felt as 'virtues' but as the natural attitude of spiritual freedom.

--from FOUNDATIONS OF TIBETAN MYSTICISM
by Lama Govinda

INNER ACTIVITY

By 'activity' in the modern usage of the word is usually meant an action which brings about a change in an existing situation by means of an expenditure of energy. Thus a man is considered active if he does business, studies medicine, works on an endless belt, builds a table, or is engaged in sports. Common to all these activities is that they are directed toward an outside goal to be achieved. What is not taken into account is the motivation of activity. Take, for instance, a man driven to incessant work by a sense of deep insecurity and loneliness; or another one driven by ambition or greed for money. In all these cases the person is the slave of a passion, and his activity is in reality a 'passivity' because he is driven; he is the sufferer, not the 'actor.' On the other hand, a man sitting quietly and contemplating, with no purpose or aim except that of experiencing himself and his oneness with the world, is considered to be passive, because he is not 'doing' anything. In reality, this attitude of concentrated meditation is the highest activity there is, an activity of the soul, which is possible only under the condition of inner freedom and independence. One concept of activity, the modern one, refers to the use of energy for the achievement of external aims; the other concept of activity refers to the use of man's inherent powers, regardless of whether any external change is brought about.

--from THE ART OF LOVING
by Erich Fromm