

TREE PLANTERS



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Editorial

Die letzten redaktionellen Arbeiten an der vorliegenden Ausgabe von Tree Planters fanden diesmal in Crestone statt, am Tag vor dem traditionellen Rohatsu-Sesshin, das am 1. Dezember beginnt und am 8. Dezember, dem Tag der Erleuchtung des Buddha, endet. Das neue Gästehaus ist planmäßig fertig geworden und wurde mit Begeisterung von den Sesshin-Teilnehmern aus Deutschland und Österreich erstmals bezogen und eingeweiht. Während es in Deutschland winterlich kalt ist, genießen wir hier herrlich sonniges Wetter mit tiefblauem Himmel. Tagsüber wird es so warm, daß unser Mittagessen heute sogar im Freien stattfinden konnte.

Wir freuen uns, in dieser Ausgabe einen Auszug aus einem Text von Baker-roshi mit deutscher Übersetzung abdrucken zu können, der in vielen Einzelheiten auf die Praxis und die Grundannahmen des Buddhismus eingeht. Dichte, Tiefgründigkeit und Komplexität dieses Textes sind direkt aus der Zusammenarbeit Baker-roshis mit seinen Schülern in Sesshins und Seminaren entstanden. Sicherlich wird dieser Beitrag bei unseren Leserinnen und Lesern genauso ein freudiges Wiedererkennen auslösen wie bei uns.

Weiterhin enthält diese Ausgabe einen Beitrag von Werner Bisle über die Zusammenhänge von Sehen und Bewußtsein sowie Baker-roshis Terminplan für 1994. Roshi wird 1994 weiterhin in den meisten Seminaren mit Koans aus dem 'Book of Serenity' arbeiten, aber auch auf Grundfragen zu Lehre und Praxis des Buddhismus eingehen.

Wir wünschen Euch einen besinnlichen Jahresausklang und alles Gute für 1994.

Mike Bos, Ulrike Greenway und Christian Becker

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FROM THE WORLD OF BUDDHISM

by Zentatsu Baker-roshi

Everything changes

Buddhism is based on two fundamental premises—two assumptions which, for me, are facts. First, everything—absolutely everything—changes. Second, there is a distinction between mind and thoughts. That everything changes means that things (persons, all beings—including being itself, objects, phenomena) have neither inherency nor permanency. There is nothing which endures from some beginning point as an inherent nature. (In fact, since 'everything changes' there can be no definitive inclusive 'beginning' for anything.) Nor is there any absolute predictability that would establish permanence.

This means that there is no permanent soul, no permanent or inherent identity, no inherent nature or self, no unchanging entity, no indissoluble residue or remnant of self or things, no background reality (no 'double moon' we say in Zen), and no abiding or determinative 'ground' in or around either persons or phenomena. If we are looking for something to get hold of, then the futility of this endeavor is presented unnervingly as "The Basic Teachings" in the beginning of *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines Sutra*:

No wisdom can we get hold of, no highest perfection, no Bodhisattva, no thought of enlightenment either. When told of this, if not bewildered and in no way anxious, a Bodhisattva courses in the Well-Gone's wisdom. (tr. Edward Conze)

Change manifests as difference, movement, interval (time and space), and choice. And its inevitability accounts for the fact that our attempt to establish and maintain continuity without understanding emptiness is the source of suffering.

Mind and Thoughts

The second basic premise on which Buddhism depends is that there is a distinction between thoughts and mind. Or, we could say between 'mind' (as this English word is commonly used) and 'Big Mind'. Suzuki-roshi's most common meditation instruction was, "Don't invite your thoughts to tea." This instruction depends on there being a distinction between mind and thoughts. The fact that we are able to not invite our thoughts 'to tea' means that there is a mind larger than thoughts or a Mind that cannot be identified or defined by thoughts alone.

The experience of a mind that is free (at least relatively or instrumentally free) from conceptual and comparative thinking

is common to meditators. It is also familiar to many people. But when this experience is generated and matured through Zen practice (so that we realize a Mind which is a background, almost like an amphitheater, in which thoughts arise) it helps to loosen the adhesive identification we have with our thoughts.

After we have been meditating for a while, we come to see 'our' thoughts arising and disappearing rather like billboards that we pass by on an internal highway. With greater stillness we come to see that these billboards have been constructed from a larger karmic scenery of the mind and we begin to have a certain detachment from these billboards. We see that they are constructs which can be deconstructed and reconstructed. And as our meditation deepens, these mental billboards disappear into a boundless inclusive space and our foreground and background minds merge into emptiness.

A Definition of Practice

The idea of 'practice' is the Buddhist response to change. If everything changes then we are in the middle of choice, change, and suffering all the time—whether we like it or not. Practice is the intentional acceptance of this; it is the simultaneous abiding in the independence and interdependence of each moment; and it is the conscious and intentional participation in the moment after moment actuality of what we are doing just now—what is under our feet, before our eyes, and in our mind and feelings. If we can't intend what we are already doing and feeling, then we have to find and do what we can consciously intend—and, hopefully, can intend with conscience. Practice is the gate and reality of a world that can be intended, but cannot be named. During a cold early morning talk at Tassajara in December of 1967, my teacher Shunryu Suzuki-roshi said, "You may say, 'I did it!' But actually it is not so. When your effort is serious 'it' cannot be defined. 'It' is not defined by anything. This kind of practice and understanding is true zazen."

In Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind (p.32), Suzuki-roshi says:

Whatever we see is changing, losing its balance. The reason everything looks beautiful is because it is out of balance, but its background is always in perfect harmony. This is how everything exists in the realm of Buddha nature, losing its balance against a background of perfect balance. So if you see things without realizing the background of Buddha nature, everything appears to be in the form of suffering. But if you understand the background of existence, you realize that suffering itself is how we live, and how we extend our life. So in Zen sometimes we emphasize the imbalance or disorder of life.

Our deepest intentions—what makes us most fully human—weave into and generate the 'background' of our life. Knowing and acting on this is the way we realize our 'Buddha Nature'. Buddhist teaching helps us know and see the weave. Practice is the act of weaving. What weaves through change, through similarity and dissimilarity, is repetition—rhythm, heartbeat, breath, the perceptual reinforcement of familiarity (what we have seen and heard before), conscious intention, and realization. Practice is to intentionally use perceptual and biological repetition to actualize our life, to weave together intention, insight, causation, the details of life and phenomena (perception, speech, activity, livelihood), liberating views, consciousness, and awareness. Knowing how to do this is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism.

Mindfulness

Practice is also to see the basket and to see through the basket—the weave should never be (and, in fact, cannot be) perfectly tight. This is the realizing practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is repeated intentional consciousness. It is the practice of bringing attention to exactly what we are doing and feeling. It is also bringing attention to the very mind of doing and feeling (seeing into the weave of the basket itself) without trying to change the situation. This is not to say that trying to change does not have beneficial results. But mindfulness is essentially a practice of recognition and acceptance and not an effort to change things. Change does occur, but through the subtlety of presence and the aliveness and responsiveness of awareness.

Mindfulness practice includes the concentration and absorption of mantra and huatou (pronounced: 'hwahdough' and meaning: 'turning words to their source') repetition as a way of penetrating to our true life and activity. It is also the unweaving and reweaving of the basket. This unweaving and reweaving is based on emptiness and the experience of samadhi. In Zen it is a fruit of the practice and realization of uncorrected and unfabricated mind both in zazen and in daily life.

Making Conscious Vows

Making and holding a vow is a form of repetition. With each mental and physical act we are either binding ourselves to the world or freeing ourselves with the world. Just giving something a name is a kind of vow. It is a way of giving order to the world and a way of entering into its order. Of course, it is also the way we make the world personally and consensually predictable. Even 'thinking' is an unconscious vowing if we believe our thoughts do any more than tentatively describe existence. And, of course, the establishment of our formative and underlying 'views' is in effect a 'vow' that everything is a certain way and will remain so.

Our way of thinking, our views, and our personal and cultural habits are built up through innumerable small, mostly unnoticed, vows—vows that things are real or important only in particular ways; that we are such and such a kind of person; that we are beautiful or unlikable; or that trees, the world, the ground, and our jobs are likely to be there tomorrow etc.

And our ego is predicated upon, and reified through creating a consistent and predictable picture of the way things are. This is sometimes called 'misplaced concreteness'. In this context we can see that this is also 'misplaced vowing'—the reification of a delusion that the world has permanence etc. On the positive side, ego is our version of existence; it is the way we form our existence; and the means by which we select and edit perceptions and information so that we can function with effectiveness and direction. On the negative side, ego excludes perceptions and information that do not reinforce and support our particular identity and 'self'.

I call all this 'vowing' because I am emphasizing the fact that we participate in the reification of naming and thinking through our conscious and unconscious views, intentions, and mental and physical habits. We do not have to be passive recipients of a 'given' world. We can give the world to ourselves through making our intentions and unacknowledged vows more conscious.

It is not immediately apparent to everyone that 'thinking' and 'naming' are forms of vowing—that as soon as we 'think', as soon as we have a thought, we are establishing the 'world'. It is normal and necessary that we establish a relatively predictable and consensual world that is sustained by belief and

trust. But we shouldn't be fooled by it. And it is very difficult not to be fooled since the very nature of the process of thinking and naming is to create a convincing 'reality'.

At the same time, if we establish a world that we 'think' is permanent and separate from us, then we isolate ourselves from the 'reality' of interdependence and emptiness—and from the Big Mind of realization. Therefore we need vows that correct our dependence on views that are not based on the recognition of emptiness and the necessity of compassion as the practice and manifestation of our larger address in this sentient world.

This is why vows are central to, and an indispensable source of, Buddhist practice. The taking of vows in Buddhism is a recognition that through the habits of thinking and acting we are always vowing, and so we need to participate in this mostly unnoticed process with more consciousness, wisdom, and compassion. This is why the first teaching of the Buddha, the Eightfold Path, starts with Right Views and Intentions. The practice of the Eightfold Path is the main way that we can restructure and purify our ingrown habits and delusive views and come to the clarity and insight that allows us to live wiser and more compassionate lives.

We need to participate in making our world by taking vows that are antidotes to the web of delusory vows we have already made (or that have been given to us from birth); that clarify and simplify our life; and that recognize life in its fullest spiritual and enlightening potential.

Through the years the many kinds of vows in Buddhism have coalesced into one compassionate vow that is repeated daily and brought into the flesh and bones of meditation: "I vow to realize Enlightenment with all beings." This 'thought of enlightenment', this vow, is a recognition that enlightenment is possible and is inseparable from our larger Being with others.

Space, Time, and Lineage

In Buddhist cultures, space is the fundamental dimension, not time. A daily chanting refrain in many Zen temples is: "All Buddhas, Ten Directions, Three Times, All Beings, Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas, Wisdom Beyond Wisdom." Here it is the ten directions of space (the four cardinal points, the inbetweens, plus up and down) that are being referred to. It is not the continuity of time but the three time-spaces of past, present, and future that is being referred to. In other words, the entirety of the phenomenal world imagined spatially, spiritually, and simultaneously is the equivalent of a Buddha, of all beings, of all the manifestations of realization, and of Wisdom itself.

In Buddhism space is sacred. Through analysis and meditation, time is understood and experienced as a succession of spaces that is inseparable from being-in-itself—"being embedded in being-time", as Dogen would say. Temporal sequentiality is an extrapolation of distance, an unfolding of spatial distance, and is a quality or dimension of space that arises through movement. Space is not just understood as being 'out there',

preceding and waiting to receive us, but is understood as being fundamentally interactive and inseparable.

So space arises from, and is shaped by, our own being-in-space. In this sense we are its creators. Lineage becomes important as the actual continuity of being-space manifested in the mind to mind, bodymind to bodymind, transmission of the teaching as 'Elder to Elder'. The introduction to the koan of Yanguan's Rhinoceros expresses this teaching:

Oceans of lands without bound are not apart from right here: the events of infinite aeons past are all in the immediate present. Try to make him present it face to face, and he won't be able to bring it out in the wind. (Case 25, Book of Serenity, tr.T.Cleary)

To transcend emotion, detach from views, remove bonds and dissolve sticking points, to uphold the fundamental vehicle of transcendence and support the treasury of the eye of the true Dharma, we must also respond equally in all ten directions, be crystal clear in all respects, and directly attain to such a realm. But tell me, are there any who attain alike, realize alike, die alike and live alike? (Case 91, Blue Cliff Records, tr.T.& C.Cleary)

Space Connects

At this point, I think I should present an exercise. Words can effectively point and sometimes precipitate, but practice is a much more likely vehicle for realization. This exercise is characteristic of Zen in that it uses words as a mantra to actualize and transform a mode or state of mind.

We usually think of space as separating things. For example, what is across from us now—a wall or a tree, or this book, or the distance between us appearing here in the pages. Instead

of assuming 'space separates', let us try on the language, the phrase, 'space connects'. The idea that 'space separates' is in our language and in the preconceptual frame of our perceptions. And it is reinforced by everything we do like walking across a room to pick something up. But let us try the phrase out. It will make us feel something. It may move us into another mode of mind and perception where space really does connect—where perception and the world begin to feel undivided.

We may dismiss this feeling intellectually. But please be patient. Intellectually, the world is divided and conceptualized. But it is also undivided. When we feel someone staring at us from behind, that is an undivided perception. If we think about it or compare, we lose the feeling. But when we turn around and find someone is staring at us, that is when we know that space connects as well as separates.

By repeating this phrase consciously and then as an instilled habit in our background mind, we can change or move away from the automatic and habitual assumption that 'space separates' into 'space connects'. Maybe for the remainder of today we might repeat to ourself that 'space connects'. As we are walking, looking around, and doing things, let us see the world with the feeling that space is connecting us. After a while we may click into what I call an 'underwater feeling' because



Shunryu Suzuki-roshi

se everything feels as though it is connected by a fluid medium. We know what it is to look into an aquarium and see a fish swimming and the plants moving in the water as the fish goes by. It is like that. We feel everything around us responding to every movement, even to every thought. As was said by Shenhui, "Identify yourself with space and there will be no place that you will not embrace."

AUS DER WELT DES BUDDHISMUS

von Zentatsu Baker-roshi

Alles verändert sich

Der Buddhismus beruht auf zwei grundlegenden Voraussetzungen — zwei Annahmen, die für mich Tatsachen sind. Erstens, alles — ausnahmslos alles — verändert sich. Zweitens, es gibt einen Unterschied zwischen Geist und Gedanken. Daß sich alles verändert bedeutet, daß Dinge (Personen, alle Wesen — das Sein selbst eingeschlossen —, Objekte, Phänomene) weder Inhärenz noch Dauerhaftigkeit besitzen. Es gibt nichts, das von einem Anfangspunkt aus als inhärente Natur Bestand hat. (Tatsächlich kann, da sich 'alles verändert', nichts einen definitiven, alles enthaltenden 'Anfang' besitzen.) Genausowenig gibt es irgendeine Art von absoluter Vorhersagbarkeit, die Dauerhaftigkeit begründen würde.

Dies bedeutet, daß es keine dauerhafte Seele, keine dauerhafte oder inhärente Identität, keine inhärente Natur oder kein inhärentes Selbst, keine unveränderliche Wesenheit, keinen unauflösbaren Rückstand oder Überrest vom Selbst oder von Dingen, keine Hintergrund-Realität (kein 'doppelter Mond', sagen wir im Zen) und keine beständige oder bestimmende 'Grundlage' innerhalb oder außerhalb von Personen oder Phänomenen gibt. Wenn wir nach etwas Festhaltbarem suchen, wird uns die Vergeblichkeit dieser Bemühung am Anfang des *Sutras der Vollkommenheit der Weisheit in Achttausend Zeilen* in einer entmutigenden Weise als "Die Grundlegende Lehre" vor Augen geführt:

Keine Weisheit können wir zu fassen bekommen, keine höchste Vollkommenheit, keinen Bodhisattva, und auch keinen Gedanken der Erleuchtung. Wenn er, nachdem ihm dies gesagt wurde, weder verwirrt noch in irgendeiner Weise ängstlich ist, übt sich ein Bodhisattva in der Weisheit des Sugata.

Veränderung manifestiert sich als Unterschied, Bewegung, Abstand (Zeit und Raum) und Auswahlmöglichkeit. Und die Unvermeidlichkeit von Veränderung ist für die Tatsache verantwortlich, daß unser Versuch, Kontinuität zu etablieren und aufrechtzuerhalten, ohne dabei Leerheit zu verstehen, die Quelle des Leidens ist.

Geist und Gedanken

Die zweite für den Buddhismus grundlegende Voraussetzung ist, daß ein Unterschied zwischen Gedanken und Geist besteht; oder, wie wir auch sagen könnten, zwischen 'Geist' (in der gewöhnlichen Bedeutung des Wortes) und 'Großem Geist'. Die häufigste Meditationsanweisung von Suzuki-roshi lautet: "Lade deine Gedanken nicht zum Tee ein." Diese Anweisung setzt voraus, daß es einen Unterschied zwischen Geist und Gedanken gibt. Die Tatsache, daß wir in der Lage sind, unsere Gedanken nicht 'zum Tee' einzuladen, bedeutet, daß es ei-

nen Geist gibt, der mehr als nur die Gedanken umfaßt, beziehungsweise einen Geist, der nicht allein durch die Gedanken identifiziert oder bestimmt werden kann.

Die Erfahrung eines Geistes, der frei (zumindest relativ oder instrumentell frei) von konzeptuellem und vergleichendem Denken ist, machen Meditierende häufig. Diese Erfahrung ist auch sonst vielen Menschen vertraut. Wenn diese Erfahrung aber durch Zen-Praxis erzeugt und zur Reife gebracht wird (so daß wir einen Geist verwirklichen, der einen Hintergrund für die aufsteigenden Gedanken bildet, fast wie ein Amphitheater), dann hilft sie, die anhaftende Identifizierung mit unseren Gedanken zu lockern.

Nach einiger Zeit des Meditierens kommen wir dazu, 'unsere' auftauchenden und wieder verschwindenden Gedanken eher wie Reklametafeln zu sehen, an denen wir auf einer inneren Straße vorbeifahren. Mit zunehmender Stille kommen wir zu der Einsicht, daß diese Reklametafeln aus einer ausgedehnteren karmischen Landschaft des Geistes gestaltet wurden und wir beginnen, ein gewisses Losgelöstsein von diesen Reklametafeln zu empfinden. Wir erkennen, daß sie konstruierte Gebilde sind, die auseinandergenommen und wieder neu zusammengesetzt werden können. Und wenn sich unsere Meditation dann vertieft, verschwinden diese geistigen Reklametafeln in einem grenzenlosen, alles einschließenden Raum, und Vordergrund- und Hintergrund-Geist verschmelzen mit der Leerheit.

Eine Definition von Praxis

Die Vorstellung von 'Praxis' ist die buddhistische Antwort auf Veränderung. Wenn sich alles verändert, dann befinden wir uns die ganze Zeit inmitten von Wahlmöglichkeit, Veränderung und Leiden — ob uns das nun gefällt oder nicht. Praxis bedeutet, dies willentlich zu akzeptieren. Praxis ist das gleichzeitige Verweilen in der Unabhängigkeit und der gegenseitigen Abhängigkeit von jedem Augenblick; und sie ist die bewußte und willentliche Teilnahme an der von einem Moment auf den anderen folgenden Wirklichkeit dessen, was wir gerade jetzt tun — was sich unter unseren Füßen, vor unseren Augen und in unserem Geist und unseren Gefühlen befindet. Wenn wir das, was wir bereits tun und fühlen, nicht auch zu unserer Absicht machen können, dann müssen wir herausfinden, was wir bewußt — und hoffentlich guten Gewissens — beabsichtigen können, und dementsprechend handeln. Praxis ist das Tor und die Wirklichkeit einer Welt, die zwar beabsichtigt, aber nicht benannt werden kann. Während eines Vortrags an einem frühen, kalten Morgen in Tassajara im Dezember 1967 sagte mein Lehrer Shunryu Suzuki-roshi: "Ihr sagt vielleicht: 'Ich habe es geschafft!' Tatsächlich ist das aber nicht der Fall. Wenn eure Anstrengung ernsthaft ist, kann 'es' nicht genau bestimmt werden. 'Es' wird durch nichts definiert. Diese Art von Praxis und Verständnis ist wahres Zazen."

In *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (S. 32) sagt Suzuki-roshi:

Alles was wir sehen verändert sich, verliert sein Gleichgewicht. Der Grund dafür, daß alles schön aussieht, liegt darin, daß es aus dem Gleichgewicht geraten ist, während sein Hintergrund jedoch immer in vollkommener Harmonie ist. Auf diese Weise existiert alles im Bereich der Buddha-Natur, indem es sein Gleichgewicht vor einem Hintergrund vollkommenen Gleichgewichts verliert. Wenn ihr also die Dinge seht, ohne den Hintergrund der Buddha-Natur zu erkennen, erscheint alles so, als ob es die Form von Leiden hätte. Versteht ihr aber