

Sokei-an

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How did Rose know Sokei-an?

From 1974-1023-Laws-Columbus

I was acquainted with Sokei-an and I'm acquainted with disciples of Sokei-an who got nothing from years of attending Sokei-an's meetings in New York City and on the west coast.

Correspondence

SH to AF 11/6/2014

We skirted this topic when talking about Pulyan, but I don't recall reaching a specific answer:

-- When and where did Rose meet Sokei-an, if he did?

Here's the Sokei-an jigsaw puzzle -- which pretty much excludes the possibility that Rose actually knew Sokei-an -- even though I always thought he did.

(Extracts are below)

A) In 1976-Pittsburgh -- Rose mentions Sokei-an but the reference is vague.

B) In 1976-Definition-of-Zen-Kent-State -- Rose indicates that it was Mac who know Sokei-an.

C) In 1978-0511 at OSU -- Rose says he knew Sokei-an

According to wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokei-an> :

Sokei-an died May 17, 1945, which was before Rose's experience. (so the "assimilation" question doesn't enter)

Therefore Rose would not have met Sokei-an through Pulyan.

Art had indicated that Rose met the taxi driver Mac in California in the late 1950s. (Art has since removed that from his page, which was on selfdiscoveryportal.com/Conquest.htm) -- and Mac sounds like a short time acquaintance, in the absence of other records of him.

Rose's first letter to Pulyan was August, 1960 which must have been not too long after Rose met Mac, or came back to WV from California.

So if Rose had met Sokei-an earlier, it would have been on an earlier trip to California. Two problems with that:

1) If Mac had mentioned him, Rose would have said, "Hey, I know that guy," etc., which is not where the conversation went.

2) Also, this from From 1975-0206-Kent-State, Side 4 min. 18:07

R. There were two times when I went to the west coast. One of them was to stay in Death Valley – I was there for awhile, right over from Death Valley. The other time I was in Seattle, which was where this enlightenment experience occurred.

So trip number 1 would have been 1947-Seattle. Trip number 2 would have been "late 1950s" where he met Mac. Going by this, Rose could not have met Sokei-an in California because Rose wasn't there before 1945 (war time).

The other alternative would be that Rose met Sokei-an in New York.

The reason I ask is that Pulyan spoke highly of Sokei-an and says he was one of only 4 students of Zen master Sokatsu Shaku who reached enlightenment. It is worthy of note that his source is a writing from Sokei-an himself. Yet Rose was not impressed by Sokei-an.

Also, when Pulyan mentioned Sokei-an. Rose never responded as having met him.

Steve

Re A)

[I had formerly understood the following quote to mean the Rose had met Sokei-an in California. He appears to be saying either that his friend "Mac", the taxi driver in California, was in touch with Sokei-an, or that Suzuki or Watts were in touch with Sokei-an (both were).]

From: "1976-Pittsburgh -- probably 1976-1021-Student-Union-Pitt"

But I paid no attention to Suzuki and less to Watts because I sensed that Watts was somewhat off the beam although he was in close communication with a man I had met years ago in California, that was Sokei-an.

[Alan Watts studied Zen in New York but moved to California in 1951. (per Wikipedia)]

Re B) 1976-Definition-of-Zen-Kent-State

02:12

This happened to me quite a few years ago and at that time hardly anything was written about Zen. In fact, I heard about the man in question, his name was Pulyan, by word of mouth. I had gone out to California and ran into some fellow who had been digging into Zen for a few years, and he knew both Sokei-an and Pulyan.

[Regarding this quote, did he "know" Sokei-an or just "know of" him by reputation?]

Re C) 1978-0511-Relative-and-Absolute-OSU-Columbus

Side 1 -- min 25:38 Any true Zen teacher is able to do this. Incidentally, we've had Zen teachers in this country – gobs of them – and it's my feeling that most of them are phony. Because money is behind it. Whenever you make money the prime objective, you're going to be concentrating on that more than on trying to get to somebody's head. I looked into some of these – because I wondered what they were doing more than anything else. I had two Zen teachers. Pulyan didn't talk about money, wouldn't talk about it, he didn't charge.

26:25

The other one I knew, Sokei-an, who was a friend of Alan Watts, had come over here as a boy. I'm convinced that he was a pious Buddhist, that's all. He was trying to set up his shrine here and he succeeded at it. He wrote a book that meant nothing – I mean it didn't seem to have too much in it, except the history of certain anecdotes and that sort of thing. And this is what we get out of Zen today, for example with Suzuki Roshi – the other Suzuki, on the west coast.

26:59

But there was more emphasis put upon what kind of shoes or sandals you wore, what kind of tea ceremony you had, whether you sat in meditation with your back to the wall or facing the wall. You bought a kimono, a pillow to sit on, and all this sort of thing. And to me this is sheer nonsense. This has nothing to do with the interior man. So you're getting back down into another organization, that's all. And organizations kill the vital part of what you're doing.

27:34

misc

Sokei-an arrived in California sometime around 1907, then went back to Japan, returned to California, set up his ashram in NY in 1930, doing most of his work there, but apparently moved back to California late in life.

Pulyan

Pulyan did not know Sokei-an personally:

<http://selfdefinition.org/pulyan/letters/1960-1114-pulyan.htm>

"These 4 were Zuizan Goto, Eisan Tatsuta, Chikudo Ohasama and Sokei-An (who "worked" in New York & founded "The First Zen Institute" which still exists -- the Zen Master there now is Miura Roshi). These 4 men were remarkable men. I know several persons who knew Sokei-An"

AF to SH 11/6/2014

As I recall without Martin's letters in front of me, Rose made an earlier trip to LA. From my book "Retreat from Untruth": "In the winter of 1945-46, Rose had gone to LA at the request of Frank Hammil, who was teaching at UCLA. Then, during the winter of 1947, Martin discovered that Rose had returned to LA, not to see Frank Hammil again, but to see Jeanne Hammil. "[page 50 in my book. this is taken from Martin's notes.]

However Sokei-an was dead by then.

I do not recall R saying that he met or knew Sokei-an, but that doesn't mean anything. However, I think R often said he knew somebody metaphorically--implying that he not only knew their philosophy, but their character or personality--knew their mind and where they were coming from.

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