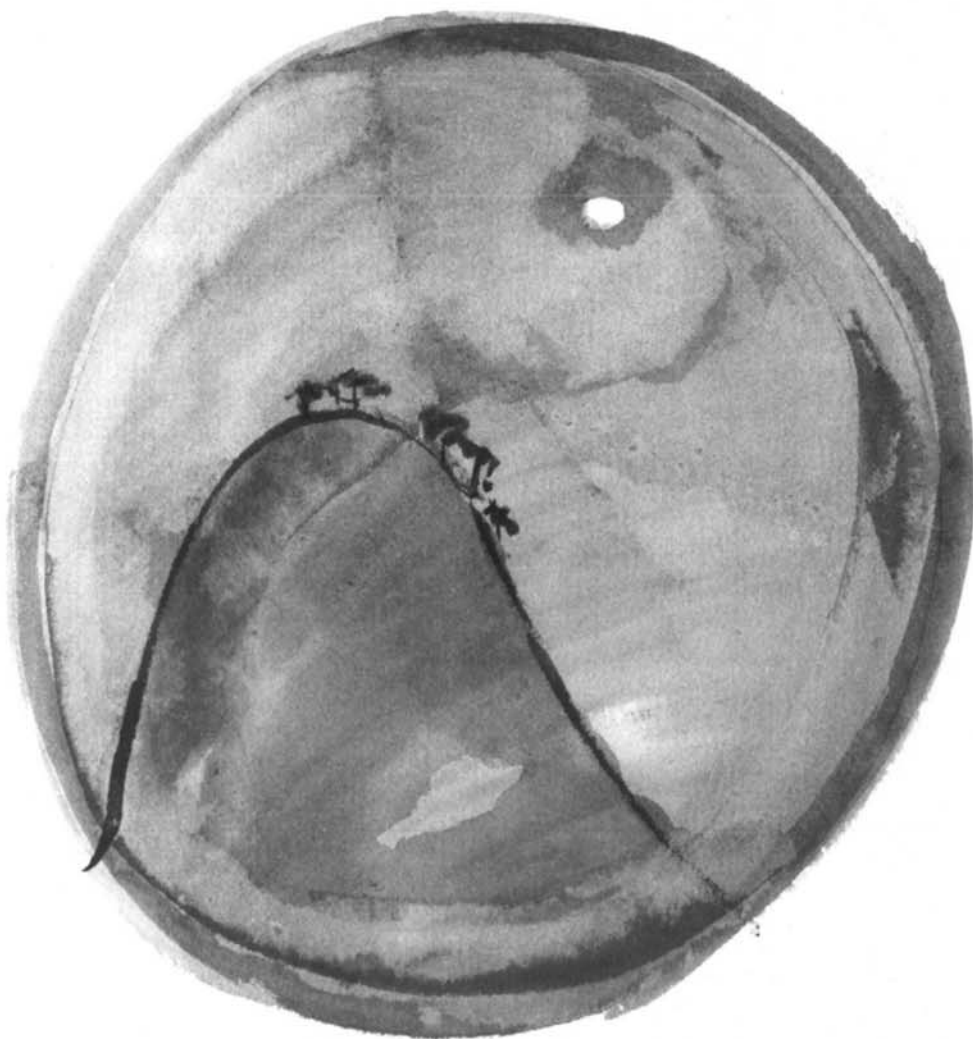


ZEN notes



Rōhatsu is an abbreviation of the words *Rōgetsu* (the last month of the year) and *hatsu* (eight days). It refers to the first week of December ending with December Eighth, when the Buddha's Enlightenment is celebrated in Japan. The monks in their monasteries undertake such severe practice during this time that it is referred to as *inochi tori* (life-taking) *rōhatsu*. For one week they struggle, with all their strength, the harder not sleeping at all, to repeat the Buddha's effort to reach the Great Awakening he attained when, sitting under the Bodhi Tree, he saw the morning star.

Mrs. Vanessa Coward, a lay Zen student privileged to take some part in *Rōhatsu* at Daitoku-ji in Kyoto, here records her impressions. Those who have experienced the event can best appreciate her success in conveying its atmosphere, but we believe others, too, will be enabled to catch glimpses of this subtle world if they will use their Zen Eye.

This issue has been prepared with the special care of Hide Oshiro, who styled it, and Ina Lowthorp, who printed it.

Rohatsu 1956



The stance
was shaky



It
Promised
me nothing



To suffer and enjoy
at the same time



It is
Indescribable



I began to
walk



And there
Under
My feet....



HA!



They all shouted at me
"Hello stones"
I said



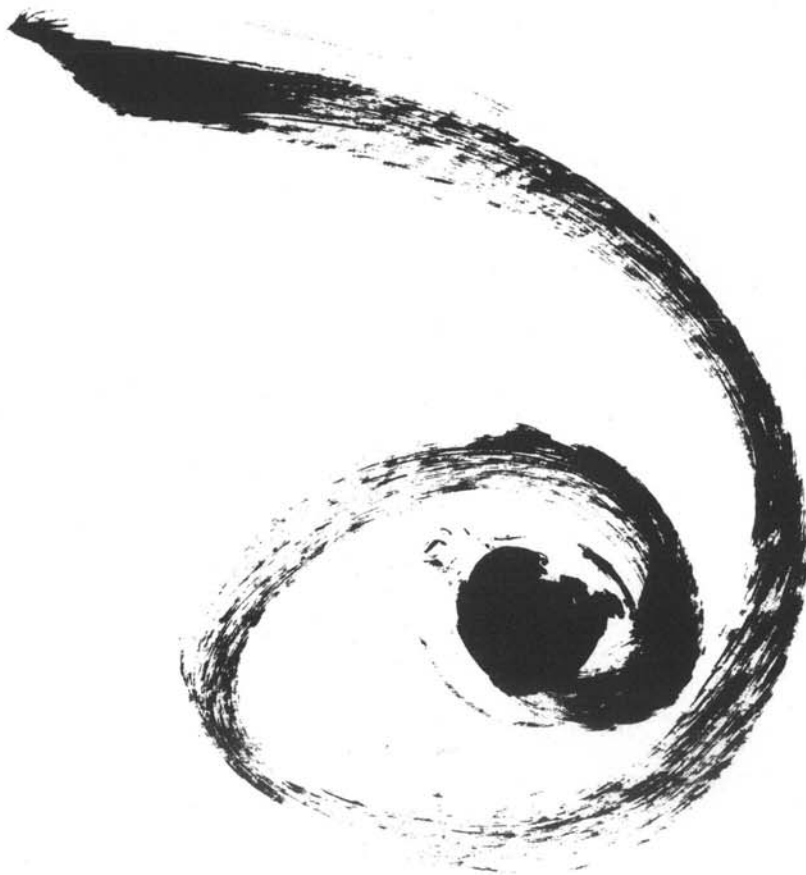
The bird
called out my
Name



I set off on the downward path



why couldn't somebody tell me



My mind tell ratio
PLACE



I had not understood
The FORM



And then I realized I had
Lost my mind



I leapt for joy



I gave up
Sitting and sat
down



I lay down To sleep



Catching a bird
in flight



I was on a blade
of grass



I took the Form
of a cloud



Winter brought
the usual profusion
of flowers



It is a solitary place
This universe

Ejun



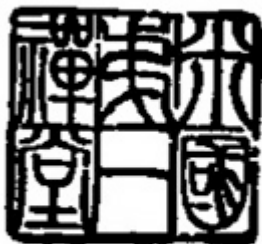
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