

ZEN notes

Welcome to Y2K



While Mind negates in order to move
The Dragon swirls effortless among its endless patterns

Negating Nothing...

Dragon TailGate

Welcome (somewhat belated) to this new Millennium that has ridden in upon the tail of a lively Dragon, swishing us into year 2000 past all the expected obstructions, negating nothing. Perhaps if this had been the year of the tortoise, monkey, rat, or cock, we would all be sloshing around in mud pits of double zeros desperately seeking the right millennium, mind negating mind in order to move. And, since in its most primal form, the dragon is a vortex that either brings things in or takes things out, it seems most auspicious that this new millennium rides upon this ancient beast, for it might actually bring in some genuine change; something truly new rather than the usual well disguised permutations of the same old stuff masquerading as the latest new paradigm... but that remains to be seen.

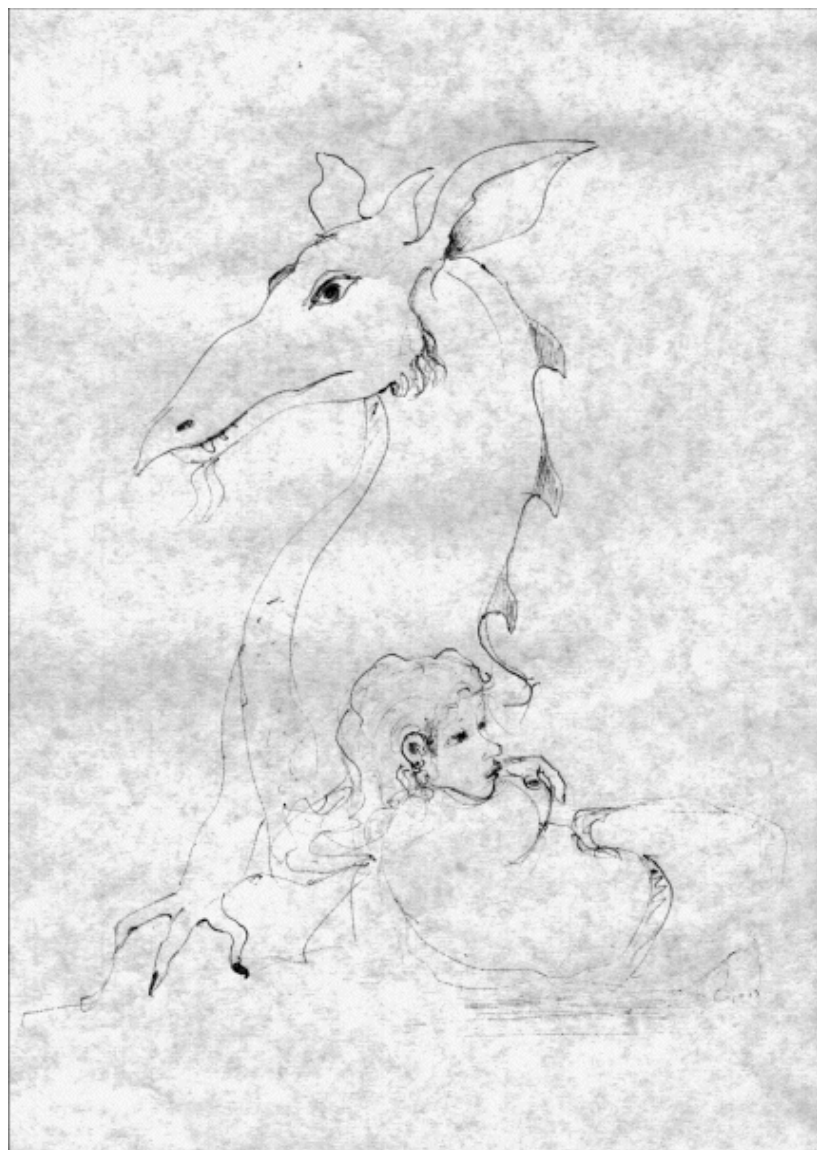
So I thought this would be a good issue to air out, on and around the centerfold, some of the Dragons that have made their appearance or home at the FZI. And for those of you somewhat jarred by the new hues on the cover, the new resident Dragon from Vanessa Coward's estate decided a year with triple zero (the null Trinity) was a good time to expand the spectrum of its possibilities. Of course you may never see such hues again or, as with the NY Times, they may show up again whenever the cosmic coloring book so requires.

As an afterthought, probably the reason why Western dragons have such bad reputations is that they are basically earthy, remover dragons (primal sanitation engineers of things too precious) while the more heavenly Oriental dragons are generally bringers of things new (serpentine Santa Clauses of all that glitters)...

With that in mind please enter ... past this gatekeeper.....



....or rest to listen to the dharma with this guardian....



THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHINGS

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Chapter X, No. 17

On the third day of the eighth month in the second year of Hsien-t'ien (713 C.E.), following a meal at the Kuo-en Temple, the Great Master said to his assembled disciples: "Everyone, take your seats. I must bid you farewell."

Fa-hai said: "Master, what teaching will you leave so that those who are deluded in future generations can see buddha-nature?"

The Master said: "Listen carefully. As to the deluded in future generations, one who knows sentient beings will also know buddha-nature. If you do not know sentient beings, you will never come close to finding Buddha even in a million kalpas.

Now, by letting you know the sentient being in your mind, I let you realize your buddha-nature. If you want to see Buddha, just know sentient beings. Sentient beings cherish deluded notions of Buddha; Buddha does not cherish deluded notions of sentient beings. If a sentient being is aware of his own original nature, he is a buddha; if a buddha is ignorant of his own original nature, he is a sentient being. If his original nature is simple and even, a sentient being is a buddha; if his nature is uneven and distorted, a buddha is a sentient being."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

On the third day of the eighth month in the second year of Hsien-t'ien (713 C.E.), following a meal at the Kuo-en Temple, the Great Master said to his assembled disciples: "Everyone, take your seat. I must bid you farewell." Fa-hai said: "Master, what teaching will you leave so that those who are deluded in future generations can see Buddha-nature? The Master said: "Listen carefully. As to the deluded in future generations, one who knows sentient beings will also know buddha-nature."

To "know sentient beings" means, according to our teaching, realizing the structure of our mind, for we have many states of consciousness: the five skandhas, the twelve nidanas, the eighteen dhatus, and the functions and performances of the sense organs and strata of consciousness. All sentient activities of life are the

agents of consecutive consciousness, or the sense organs. When your knowledge of your own being becomes complete, you will be aware of your own buddha-nature. There is no other buddha-nature beside your own sentient nature.

These days, men are generally educated and, in a sense, enlightened. But in ancient periods, men were deluded and ignorant, living like animals. When the Buddha was born 2,400 years ago, he observed with his enlightened mind the barbarians and illiterate men everywhere and really thought that these deluded sentient beings must be enlightened by education. So the monasteries became cities of knowledge, knowledge of all kinds, like our universities of today. Now the monasteries are houses of ignorant men. Monks have forgotten the true meaning of enlightenment. It is the laymen who are attaining enlightenment.

Today, the monk's idea of enlightenment is some kind of superstition. They think they will attain supernatural power by attaining enlightenment. It's ridiculous! How can they attain supernatural powers when they cannot even attain natural powers? Zen students still have a deluded view of enlightenment, and charlatans talk and write about "supernatural enlightenment." They do not know true enlightenment because they have never experienced it.

When I was young, I told my teacher that I wanted to attain supernatural powers of sight, to penetrate the world right through to the other side. He laughed and said: "Your natural sight is quite perfect. When your five senses are in good order, you will not need supernatural powers."

If you do not know sentient beings, you will never come close to finding Buddha even in a million kalpas." Everyone thinks that Buddha is different from everyday men, from human beings. Some Buddhists believe that Buddha has been living in the Western sky. We have no relation to such a Buddha. We have nothing to do with the Buddha living in the Western Sky. Our own buddha-nature is Buddha. Of course, sentient beings are like orphans who never knew their own home.

Once there was a child who had been abandoned. He grew up and heard that his own true home was in another village. He went to the village to find his own house. Through all the streets of the village he went, visiting every house. He went into and came out of his own home but never realized it. Every man has buddha-nature within him. Going into it and coming out of it, he never realizes it is his own buddha-nature. The child finally found his home and suddenly realized that all the neighbors living there were his relatives, his cousins, uncles and aunts. Once in a long while, man

realizes buddha-nature within himself. Then, suddenly, he realizes that his hand is the hand of Buddha, the Lotus Hand. He realizes that he himself is Buddha. There is no other Buddha in the world.

"Now, by letting you know the sentient being in your mind, I let you realize your buddha-nature. If you want to see Buddha, just know sentient beings." True enlightenment is clearly explained here by the Sixth Patriarch.

The Buddha has three virtues in his nature: 1) the intrinsic nature for observing this present consciousness; 2) the intrinsic nature for practicing tranquillity - samadhi; and 3) the intrinsic nature for wisdom. Sentient beings have three poisons in their natures: 1) covetousness and endless desires - lust; 2) maliciousness and cruelty - anger; and 3) idleness - no enjoyment of education, ignorance. There is an analogy between these three poisons and the three virtues of buddha-nature:

1) Controlling the intrinsic desire of man is present consciousness. These two are operated by the same factor.

2) Anger and quietude are also the performance of one particular element of mind. When it performs negatively, it is anger; when it performs positively, it is tranquillity.

3) When your wisdom is not used properly, you are ignorant; but when your wisdom is available in all circumstances, your ignorant mind will become enlightened.

So if you would like to know what Buddha is, you must know what sentient life is.

"Sentient beings cherish deluded notions of Buddha": The sentient mind cherishes deluded images in meditation. Sitting cross-legged with their spines straight, such people see the images of a buddha with long arms and a long tongue. Many think that is Buddha, or that the Buddha of 2,400 years ago is Buddha. Some educated men think that Buddha is awakened knowledge, the Knower, but not man particularly. Such men never come to their *own* Buddha. They think Buddha is an immortal being lying somewhere in them like a diamond hidden in a wooden statue.

Sometimes in Japan, a family will hide a diamond in a Buddha statue and hand it down from generation to generation until the last generation destroys the Buddha image and finds the diamond. They take it to a diamond dealer and find it is just glass. Someone had taken the true diamond and had put a glass one there. They never realize *the whole figure is Buddha*, including this endless universe, the endless past, present and future. How can they realize

that they themselves are Buddha?

"Buddha does not cherish deluded notions of sentient beings." That is, if anyone attains enlightenment, he does not cherish any deluded notions of sentient beings.

"If a sentient being is aware of his own original nature, he is a buddha": This is stated very clearly and very kindly.

"If a buddha is ignorant of his own original nature, he is a sentient being." Everyone is born a buddha, but he happens to be ignorant, so he is satisfied with his unenlightened life. When someone drops a diamond among glass beads, no one realizes it is a true diamond. The famous story in the Lotus Sutra illustrates this very clearly.

A child of a king became lost during a war and was carried into the enemy's country. Twenty years later, as a beggar, he returned to his own country. The king, his father, saw him on a street corner sweeping dung. (We do not see this any more in this automobile age, but in the old days the King's child was standing on a street corner sweeping dung.) The King, looking for his son, realized this dung scraper must be of his own family. But when the king's attendant went up to him, the dung scraper was frightened, and he ran away. It was hard to catch him. So to find him, the king himself became a dung-scraper and a beggar. Finally, they became acquainted, and they scraped the dung together. The King bought him something to wear, and little by little he then asked him to eat with him. First, because the dung-scraper had no manners, he took him to the Coffee Pot and later to Child's, and finally, to the Ritz Cartoon. Then he told him he was his own true son. If I tell you today you are a buddha, you will not believe it. Well, tomorrow I will take you to the Ritz Cartoon.

"If his original nature is simple and even, a sentient being is a buddha; if his nature is uneven and distorted, a buddha is a sentient being." When you drive your automobile in the Gobi desert, you can go everywhere; there is no one-way road. The nature of your mind pervades in all directions at once, evenly, as light or heat penetrates evenly. This is Buddha's nature, his even nature. The original nature of human beings is this even nature, but we are now in uneven nature, and our automobile must be driven on a one-way road. We cannot spread ourselves evenly in all directions like radio waves. We must move in one long line, like a telegraph line.

The Sixth Patriarch does not speak in philosophical terms. He speaks in ordinary terms. He did not receive his enlightenment from the sutras, so his speech is always different from others. Buddhism has become very simple in his mind.

Dragon Carver

Yeita Sasaki (who was later to be known as Sokei-an) began his professional career in art as a dragon carver, a rather specialized vocation, but one which in the Japan of his middle teens, which coincided with the last years of the nineteenth century, had a sure market. His mother believed it impossible for a boy of sixteen to support himself on such a slim foundation but let him go on a walking tour of the mountain temples in the province of Je-shu for one year.

With his tools on his back, he would visit a temple to repair its dragons or whatever, living on temple rations as long as the work lasted, it might be supposed. Then he would be sent on to another temple and so make his way from village to village.

(From a biography of Sokei-an by Utsubo)

In Sokei-an's own words....

I went with my mother to Yokohama where I worked in a woodcarving factory. Before settling there, I went on a walking trip through the Japanese Alps. I made my way by temple carving in the villages, earning about 35 cents a day. I walked for one year through the Japanese Alps, from village to village, my tools on my back, going from one temple to the next.

In China or Japan, monasteries are built on mountaintops or on the edges of cliffs. You can see a thousand miles before your eyes. In winter, when the valley is covered with snow, you feel you are in a world of silver. No color is before your eyes. In the valley it is so quiet. In the daytime when the monks are meditating, if there is any sound in the temple, it will be only that of a mouse or a rat.

I had my carving tools and I earned my way by temple carving through the Japanese Alps! but I had to sharpen my tools -- a long time it took me to learn that, it seems to me four or five years. And to sharpen my tools I must have a stone -- a very fine stone, very expensive, and I was without any money to buy it.

'Go see your uncle', my mother told me, 'He has plenty of money. Take him some of your carvings -- ask him to look at them, and tell him what you need. Wear your father's robe and pay a call on him.'

So I put on my father's robe -- not his priest's robe, of course, and because my father was a very big man and I but a boy of sixteen-seventeen, I was too short for his robe and it trailed behind me as I bowed before my uncle.

He looked at my work and asked me many questions. He looked at my tools too, and asked me if I intended to make woodcarving my life work. "I wish to," I said, "but have a hindrance. My tools are not well sharpened. I haven't got a good stone."

" What kind of stone do you wish?" he asked me.

" I wish the finest ," I told him, " the sharpening stone that comes only from your native province." I do not know if it is really so, that the finest sharpening stone comes from that province. I'm not sure, but perhaps his love for his province was flattered a little.

He turned my wooden image, looking at it very carefully from every angle. Then he said, " Very well, child, go back home and be a good son to your mother. I will order a sharpening stone from my province, one of the very finest. Go back home and wait till the postman brings it to you. It will be sent to you personally."

I waited for many days - two , three weeks. Then one day it came, addressed to me "Mr. Yeita Sasaki." It was a sharpening stone of the very finest. I began at once to sharpen my tools. I was very happy that day.

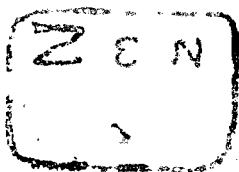
(From a talk at Edna Kenton's house in Greenwich Village 1936)



In searching for the various dragons nesting about the FZI the one above was discovered hiding in a stool carved by Sokei-an. This fellow was rather reluctant at first to share its image but finally, grumblingly acquiesced. So I call him the stool dragon...

...sit on him if you dare...

The Dragon Gallery



THE DRAGON HAS DIED

The dragon who was a god
And the guardian of the grain of seven villages has died.
Perhaps it was an omen, one said,
That the harps of the shrine of the god
Were harping a nocturne in the morning breeze!
The folks of all the villages came standing at a distance
To see the dead dragon in awe.
One after another asked,
Had he really died?
Or was he sleeping?
Would he revive?
Behold the dragon who closed the eyes
And hung down the head from the tallest bough of the tree
Upon the top of the hill;
But his ornamented tail with the scales like rainbow
Was coiled around the foot of the hill!

Sokei-ann





The Father of many Zen Notes Dragons



Vanessa Coward... ZN Vol. VIII



Seems like a child of the one opposite... ZN Vol. XV

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FOURTEENTH LECTURE

Saturday, October 8th, 1938

"Because you constantly keep this attitude of aloofness from illusion, this very attitude also becomes illusory. You must therefore isolate this illusory mind. This attitude of isolation becomes in its turn also illusory. Once again, therefore, you must isolate this attitude of isolation. And this isolation of isolation is still illusory and it too must be isolated. Then, when there is nothing to isolate, all illusions have been exterminated. It is like fire produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. When the fire is produced, the wood will be annihilated; when the ashes are scattered, the smoke will vanish. The study of illusion through illusion is like this. Thus all illusions will be dispelled, but this does not imply that everything will fall into the state of absolute annihilation."

The period of this sutra is not clear, but the scholars think it was written approximately about 700 years after the Buddha's death. After the period of Asoka and before Nagarjuna, Buddhism went to northern India and made contact with the Greeks in the territory of Bactria -- the northern part of Afghanistan.

The preceding part of this translation was that "illusory mind must be eradicated to attain Reality." "Illusion" in English is "phenomenon" -- appearance in seven different colors, sounds, and so on. But optical science proves that color is not absolute existence on the outside -- but appears in our eye. And sound does not come from here (strikes gong); the vibration of the air comes from here, but the sound is produced upon the ear-drum.

We are accepting this illusory phenomena as Reality! We cannot see the absolute objective reality with our naked eye -- but our intellect knows there is a reality -- not behind and not within the illusion. In conclusion -- illusion is reality!

When you wish to see the ocean you could say, "I don't want to see the waves. I like to see the ocean!" The ocean is not behind the waves, or within them. The waves are the ocean.

This type of conception is Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana will bring heaven down among us! Heaven is not behind, or within this life -- heaven is this life!

While you are thinking about heaven abstractly, heaven cannot come down to earth. But if you understand this illusory existence, you will grasp the reality -- no longer abstract. To attain this "abstract" reality, you must keep yourself aloof from this illusory existence. This attitude is called Hinayana Buddhism. "O, this world is filthy! To attain enlightenment we must deny this world and go up the mountain!"

Such a one will keep himself in a cave, eating food once a day -- at noon time -- and speaking no word for ten years, meditating upon this abstract reality. Everyone thinks this is the most solemn attitude of Buddhism! All young monks take this view -- I did myself for a time.

There are many stories of the death of those monks. "He stands up from his meditation, walks to the cliff and dies there!"

After long, long meditation -- I stand up, walk across the Hudson River into the rocks -- and disappear! This is just an allegory of attaining reality.

"Because you constantly keep this attitude of detachment from illusion, this very attitude also becomes illusory. You must therefore isolate this illusory mind." -- Keeping away from this illusory world to enter emptiness -- he thinks that he is in reality -- but he is only in the term of reality -- in his own conception. He has retreated into his own subjective state which is termed reality, or noumena. He is living in the term!

"Isolate this illusory mind." Emptiness or abstract reality is also illusory; it is not the awakened state. Almost every Buddhist and student of Zen commits this error! He makes a good practice of meditation, and in the practice he forgets himself in absorption. He comes out from it thinking he has attained reality. He goes to his teacher with the good news -- "Show me your reality!" says the teacher. The student sits down with closed eyes. The teacher hits him and says, "Go to bed!" Very few understand the true aim of meditation. You exhaust yourself in meditation -- come out and think you are enlightened! Why don't you get some whiskey and go to bed? This is also my attitude. You must follow a real teacher who has traditional knowledge of meditation. Don't just pick up anyone from the street-corner!

This type of aloofness must be isolated. First isolate illusory attitude and then, illusory mind.

"This attitude of isolation becomes in its turn also illusory. Once again, therefore, you must isolate this attitude of isolation." -- To isolate the illusory mind, to isolate this Emptiness -- many

monks do this. They close their eyes in meditation, isolate the illusory mind and open their eyes -- "Oh!" We all pass through these stages but we do not teach this in the Zen school! When you isolate your attitude of isolation -- this is the third illusion.

"And this isolation of isolation is still illusory and it too must be isolated." -- This must be isolated and that must be isolated and there will be no end! In the Zen school we say, "The tortoise drives its tail into the sand, trying to brush away the mark of the tail; and he shakes the tail and leaves the trace of the tail."

In this way of practice of meditation one never gets into Reality! As it is said, one tries to pull out a wedge and drives another one in. It is as a woodcutter cuts a tree; he puts in a triangular wedge, and to pull it out he puts a larger wedge in. It will be endless!

It is the same with the use of words: driving in with the word you cannot get into Reality. Of course, philosophically, you can get into a term which defines, indicates Reality -- but it is still a term.

"Then, when there is nothing to isolate, all illusions have been exterminated." -- It is like peeling an onion. Give it to a monkey and watch him peel it -- skin after skin -- until there is nothing left. "Wah-h-h-h!" says the monkey.

To meditate after this fashion is exactly like this: first, you must keep yourself aloof from illusion; second, you must isolate the illusory mind; and third, you must isolate your attitude of isolation; fourth, you must isolate the isolation of the isolation!

But this isolation is different from what I give to the monkey. Peel off the first, second, and third illusions, and something is left. What is this? It is not myself! This is pure mind which is not embracing any illusion! It is so-called "original mind." Not that which is called the "human mind." In Western terms, it is "epistemological mind," knowledge itself. This knowledge itself is called Buddha.

Because Shakyamuni Buddha attained this, we call him "Shakyamuni Buddha." And because he gave us the means to attain it, we call him our teacher.

But this epistemological mind is not yet reality! It is intuition which leads us into Reality, which can cognize Reality. When you find this original, this epistemological mind, without doubt you have cognized Reality. With this mind, this intrinsic wisdom, Shakyamuni attained the state of Buddha. and he took

these four attitudes:

(You might say these terms appear in Mahayana sutras and never in the primitive sutras which were the Buddha's own teachings. You might ask, "Is there any description of these four stages of enlightenment in the Buddha's sutras?" My answer would be, "Yes, they are there, but you do not penetrate so you overlook them.")

In the Buddha's Sangha, he always classed his students in four ranks:

1. (*Stravake*)
2. (*Pratyeka*)
3. (*Bodhisattva*)
4. *Arhat*

These are the four stages. (*Stages 1-3 were missing in the original notes and were filled in ... editor*)

There is a story: the daughter of a dragon, eight years old, asked a question of the Buddha: "What is Tathagata (Reality)?" The Buddha answered her in silence and the eight year old Dragon's daughter became enlightened. The Buddha said, "She has attained Arhat!" She immediately attained the highest Attainment.

The first stage is to get into the stream -- the stream which is usually against him; and then he must get out of this stream.

The second stage he attains emptiness -- the whole world is empty; all is illusion and he is in profound emptiness. But his attainment is a conception -- he has attained a conception of Reality. He fell into his own conception and he thinks it is true.

He can get caught in this conception -- can die in it without ever seeing Tathagata. He will come back to the world once more. In this stage, one will return once more.

In the third stage, he has no conviction -- he himself is in the state of Reality. He will not come back but there is an error in his attitude. He has attained Reality -- the real state -- but he has nothing to do with the world or with people. He is not a real, true Arhat. People come to him, and he does not smile; they ask him questions, and he does not answer; he works for his own salvation and not for the sake of others.

There is a beautiful saying: "He must turn himself again in the Pole Star!" The North-pole Star stays in the same place for twenty-four hours while the world turns. But while sitting in the North

Pole with his back to the world -- he should turn to the world and face it!

When you hear of "one who will be supported," it means an Arhat. Yes -- if you open the primitive Agama or Nikaya -- such things appear on almost every page. So you must know how to read these Buddhist sutras.

Zen is quite new in the history of Buddhism, but in China, in the T'ang dynasty, Rinzai talked about the "four attitudes of mind." He did not invent them. Perhaps they were even before the Buddha! I have not the time to speak of this, but it is written everywhere in Buddhism. Some day I shall explain this.

"It is like fire produced by the friction of two pieces of wood. When the fire is produced, the wood will be annihilated. When the ashes are scattered, the smoke will vanish."....a commentary on this says that this line was inverted, that it should be "When the smoke vanishes, the fire is produced; when the ashes are scattered, the wood will be annihilated." And in the translation this is kept.

How can he get enlightened? It is like washing your clothes at the bottom of the ocean. How can you dry them? "What do you study at the bottom of the ocean?" asked the Mock Turtle in Alice in Wonderland. "O, laundry is the highest course!"

"The study of illusion through illusion is like this. All illusions will be dispelled thus, but this does not imply that everything will fall into the state of absolute annihilation." -- When the monkey peels the onion the onion is annihilated. But when we peel off the mind, we attain original mind! This is the door to the state of Reality.



Runaway Dragon ... ZN Vol. XI

Such drags those Dragons.... always running off with the
spotlight...
No cat?... no fun...



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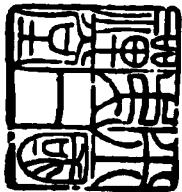
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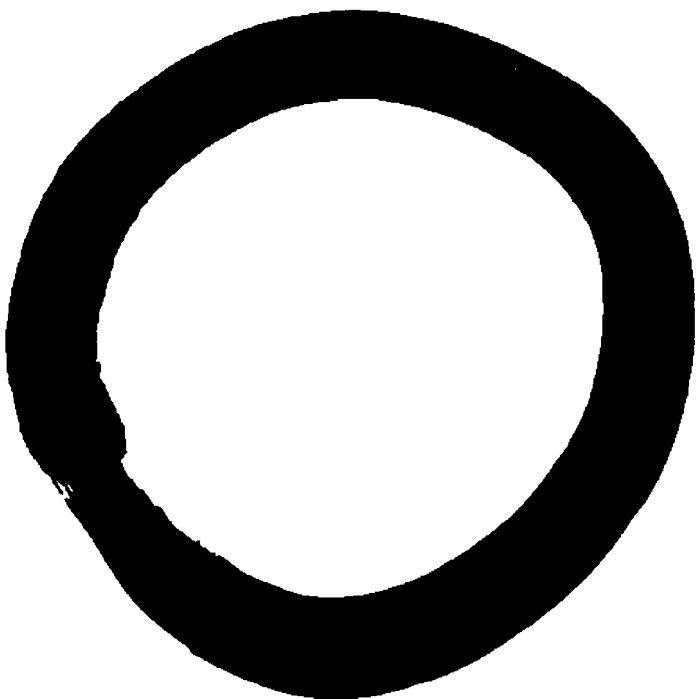
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Editor, usually anonymous artist, poet... Peeter Lamp

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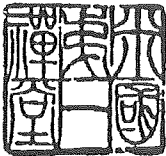


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