Zen Notes

Late, late Fall...

{Winterscape, Hsia Kuei, China ~ 1200}

THE GREAT SIXTH PATRIARCH'S TEACHINGS

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Chapter X, No. 20

Having recited his gatha, the Master said: "All of you, take care of yourselves! After my passing, you must not lament or weep as would people in the world. If you wear mourning or receive condolences, you are not my disciples, and [your behavior] is at variance with the True Dharma. Strive only to know your own original mind and to see your own original nature. [Your original nature] is neither moving nor still; it is not born, nor does it die; it neither comes nor goes, is neither right nor wrong, neither stays nor departs. I fear you may not understand my meaning because your minds are bewildered. Again, I ask you to strive to see your own original nature."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The Sixth Patriarch was dying, and by this time the famous, enlightened disciples had already left his place. But the younger unenlightened disciples were still clinging to him. Realizing he could no longer aid them, he pointed to that which they must strive to attain, enlightenment: they must see their original nature. This is the Sixth Patriarch's Zen.

Having recited his gatha, the Master said: "All of you, take care of yourselves! After my passing, you must not lament or weep as would people in the world." This was an old tradition in the Zen school. In Zen temples, when the master dies, all the disciples recite sutras before his coffin preceding the cremation. Usually, they recite three words of lament - "Ai, Ai, Ai." That is all. They do not weep or burst into tears. You must not lament emotionally in the Zen school, and your face must not be suffused with raining tears.

In Shintoism, in my own country, the wife and sisters of the deceased are not permitted to follow the coffin in the funeral procession. It is always the first son who leads. Wearing his father's costume and using a bamboo cane, he follows the coffin in his bare feet. No woman is permitted to walk in the procession.

Strange, but this is old orthodox Shinto. These days, women take part. But in my childhood, they were not permitted. Of course, in Buddhism, all follow the coffin in the funeral proces-

sion. In China, professional criers are employed - "crying men" and "crying women" - to wail and mourn. It makes for a very melancholy procession. But in the Zen sect, this wailing to the heavens is not permitted. The monks just say three words - "Ai, Ai, Ai" - and meditate. No one drops a tear. This is Zen behavior. It does not mean indifference to death. It means the monks know the meaning of death. They are emphasizing the profound, deep principle of death.

"*If you wear mourning or receive condolences, you are not my disciples, and [your behavior] is at variance with the true Dharma.*" The disciples do not wear anything special - just their usual clothes, no special black or white.

At the time of the teacher's death, scattered disciples come to the main temple, and before their master's coffin, join their hands, burn incense three times, and meditate - no one speaks a word.

Sometimes a layman comes to the temple to offer condolences and raves about the master: "Oh, your master is dead! Such a wonderful man! What can I do?" The monks just look sarcastic and say nothing as they receive him. Then the layman asks, "Don't you feel sorry?" Well, if you have a true and honest mind, you cannot say a word. Silence is the deepest condolence.

It is a precious time. The master is dead. The man who was laughing and crying and speaking now has gone. He has left a great question for all sentient beings.

When I officiate at a funeral service, especially in America, I see the man in the casket - I look at him - and I always think: "Indeed, I strove many long years for this state of existence called death, and I know what it is." I am not ashamed to lead this dead man's spirit to the place where he has to go. A blind monk, officiating at a funeral service, comes to the dead man, but he does not know how he has lived, where he has gone, or what death is. For a blind monk is just like a beggar: he comes, conducts the service, burns incense, but he does not know anything.

There are many religious teachers who do not know the true meaning of death. Such blind teachers cannot save the soul of a cat. How can they lead the soul of a human being to death, weeping, bursting into tears and receiving the condolences of laymen? This is not the true behavior of the Buddhist.

"*Strive only to know your own original mind and to see your own original nature.*" When you see a man who was your friend, who was eating chop suey last night and this morning is dead, do you go and look at his face and say, "I'm sorry"? If you have any

sense, you have some question about death; you want to understand what death is: What will happen after death? What was I before birth? The shallow-minded man and the deep-minded man will be measured at such a moment.

There was a Zen monk who was living in a temple in a village. There was a rich man who had lost his daughter, so he asked this monk to officiate at his daughter's funeral. The monk stood before the coffin and gave a Zen shout, the Lin-chi "Ho!" In the Lin-chi school, the monk shouts, that is all. Then the service is over. So at this funeral, the monk shouted at the dead daughter. The gentleman questioned him. "Where did she go when you shouted at her?" The Zen monk could not answer. The gentleman laughed: "You don't know anything about it! You shouted at the dead spirit of my daughter, and you don't know anything about it!" Then the gentleman swept his sleeves behind him and went home. Perhaps, in the American way, he would have kicked the dust, turned on his heels and gone home. The monk went home, too. That night, he ran away from the temple - he was a very conscientious monk. He went to Kyoto, to commence the real study of Zen.

"*[Your original nature] is neither moving nor still; it is not born, nor does it die; it neither comes nor goes, is neither right nor wrong, neither stays nor departs.*" The Sixth Patriarch used these words to indicate the state of your original nature - nothing is moving, no motion. Dilettantes think this is an absolutely annihilated state.

There is no motion, but everything is moving - vividly. All elements are at work: water is flowing, fire is burning, everything is working, and it is not a contradiction. Nothing is in action in that state. The dilettante thinks it is the state of death. The Sixth Patriarch said, "Nothing is resting; everything is working from morning to evening."

When I came to America, I thought the custom of painting and rouging the dead face not a very good one. One day, I went to a funeral and saw a Japanese woman's dead face painted like a flower - her eyebrows were painted, her lips were painted - they had even kept her smiling lips! It was obnoxious and vulgar, too. I had no sympathy for the dead woman's husband who was so materialistic. How can a Buddhist monk officiate at a funeral service standing by a corpse painted like a flower? Perhaps, it is the New York style. But to me, it is a Coney Island style, showing no respect for the dead person. It is obnoxious and sacrilegious.

When you look at a dead man's face, there is no action in it but he is not resting either. He is in eternal life. He is living. He has not gone when he dies. He has neither come nor gone. There is no

beginning, no end. Therefore, there is no coming or going. And from the state of Reality, there is neither right nor wrong. Nothing is standing or walking. The shadow of the bamboo in the moonlight is sweeping the dust from the stairs all night long, but nothing has happened. No dust has been swept. No stairs have been swept. From the standpoint of Reality, nothing has happened. Not a mote of dust has been swept. We came here. We lived. We died. Nothing has happened. Originally, from the standpoint of Reality, this is the bottom of the empty sea.

"*I fear you may not understand my meaning because your minds are bewildered*" - "I speak profoundly, but your mind is disturbed by my death. I fear that you may not comprehend my idea."

"*Again, I ask you to strive to see your own original nature.*" From morning to evening, you are speaking many words, and your emotions fluctuate like the waves of the ocean; but in Reality, nothing has happened. At the bottom of the empty ocean, nothing has happened. And on the surface of the sea, nothing has happened either - when you realize your original nature.

The Sixth Patriarch was pursued by enemy monks after he attained, and received his teacher's acknowledgment of enlightenment. Even religious monks can feel jealousy. Helped by the Fifth Patriarch, to avoid the jealousy of his fellow monks, the Sixth Patriarch escaped to the south. As the monks were pursuing him, one of them named Ming, a tall army officer monk, caught up with him. The Sixth Patriarch left the robe and the bowl, handed down to him from his teacher, on a rock and concealed himself. Ming tried to take the robe and bowl from the rock but could not lift them, for they were as heavy as a mountain. When he failed to lift them, he became afraid - his whole body was suffused with perspiration. (This is psychology and no mystery.) But *how* the transmission was made to the Sixth Patriarch was the question that came to Ming when he could not lift the robe and the bowl.

Observing this, the Sixth Patriarch appeared and said, "Take the robe and the bowl back to the temple, but the Dharma, which was handed down from my teacher, belongs to me. Then Ming said, "Please open your honey gate so that I may understand the Dharma that you possess." The Sixth Patriarch said, "Before your father and mother, what was your original aspect?" Upon the Sixth Patriarch's words, Ming was suddenly enlightened.

Before your father and mother, what was your original aspect? Before the creation of the world, what were you? These are profound questions. If you were not there, you would never be here. If you were there, before creation, what were you?

BOOK REVIEW

The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism, Edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright. Oxford University Press. New York.
Reviewed by Peter Haskel

Apart from meditation itself, perhaps no aspect of Zen practice has been more closely linked with Zen in the popular imagination than the koan. Until recently, however, little was known of the koan's actual origins and development. What scholarship there was tended to be sectarian, unequipped or unwilling to examine many of the traditional assumptions about how the koan had evolved and about the Zen of the period the koan texts purported to reflect, the so-called "golden age" of the Tang dynasty (618-907). The familiar Tang Zen stories and personalities which form the basis for much of koan literature and whose distinctive zany action and charm characterize what many think of as Zen, are, in fact, known to us only through works of later periods, especially those of the subsequent Sung dynasty (960-1279), when koan Zen as we know it was taking shape. To what extent our picture of Tang Zen has been an image created or at least critically mediated by these later Chinese teachers and anthologists is one of the many fascinating issues raised in a recent collection of articles by Western and Japanese scholars of Zen, *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright.

The Master Ma-tsu (709-788), whose line includes such luminaries as Huang-po and Lin-chi (J: Rinzai), was perhaps the first teacher to embody the wild or "crazy" style of Tang Zen encounter dialogues, the madcap, seemingly inexplicable interactions with other Zen monks that underlie much of koan literature. But our earliest information on Ma-tsu derives from the *Halls of the Patriarchs Collection* (*Tsu-t'ang chi*), a 952 anthology which, T. Griffith Foulk observes, is also one of the oldest reliably dated texts in which there is evidence for koan practice. According to John R. McRae, an authority on the early history of Chinese Zen, it was these dynamic interactions between teachers and students witnessed in the *Halls of the Patriarchs,* often leading to the students' sudden enlightenment, that set Zen apart from other schools of Chinese Buddhism. The fact that our earliest accounts of the lively style of Zen epitomized by Ma-tsu and his descendants were recorded a century or more after their deaths, leads McRae to conclude that we are "entitled to substantial skepticism about whether these encounters actually occurred." He writes that the stories of the Tang masters' Zen encounters appearing in the *Halls of the Patriarchs,* our earliest source for this

particular type of anecdote, were recorded by monks in the Min-yue region of Southeast China (now Fukien), based on accounts of practitioners who had fled there to escape the disruption that accompanied the collapse of the Tang dynasty. The *Halls of the Patriarchs*'s chroniclers, McRae suggests, recognized the special character and appeal of the Zen stories brought by the refugee monks and hastened to record them for the benefit of future generations.

Other aspects of Zen traditionally associated with the early, Tang masters can also be attributed to later periods. Among these, as Albert Welter points out, are the concept of a special teaching outside the scriptures, the notion of lineage as the source of a master's "sectarian identity," and the story of Mahakashyapa's smile as the origin of Zen's mind-to-mind transmission. All these, like our principal written sources for Tang Zen, were products of the Sung interpretation of Zen's history. In fact, Welter insists, we only know Tang Zen through the Sung, so that "in important respects, the so-called 'golden age' must be treated as a products of Sung revisionism." Morton Schlutter, another contributor to this anthology, concurs, insisting that extant "histories" of Tang Zen are not history so much as religious literature, embodying the interests and issues of their compilers' period. (Our earliest version of the record of Lin-chi itself, for example, dates only from the early twelfth century, some 250 years after the period it describes.) This is not to say that such materials and the stories and encounters they record are "untrue"; merely that their value is not as presentations of historical fact so much as facets of the history of how Zen has expressed its image of itself and its relation to its past. Or, according to McRae's first law of Zen studies: "It's not true and therefore it's more important."

The koan method was itself a product, perhaps the most conspicuous product, of this Sung re-reading of Zen's past, in which teachers took up, commented on and had students "work on" episodes primarily involving masters of the Tang and the subsequent Five Dynasties period (907-960). The practice of teachers assigning koan cases to students already appears in the record of the tenth-century master Yun-men (864-949), and by the eleventh century seems to have been common in the Sung temples. Dale Wright suggests that development of the koan may have been influenced by earlier practices standard in Chinese Buddhism, specifically recitation of dharani and the Buddha's name and the various contemplation practices common in Tien-tai, Hua-yen and Esoteric Buddhism.

It was only in the twelfth century however, that koan study seems to have emerged in its current form through the teachings of the Lin-chi master Ta-hui (1089-1163). Ta-hui's revolution lay

in emphasizing dynamic contemplation of the koan's *hua-tou*, or "punch line," as a form of shortcut to enlightenment. Morten Shutter contends in an insightful essay that Ta-hui evolved this method as a means for the Lin-chi school to appeal to the literati class, who manned the Sung bureaucracy and had become the principal source of patronage for Zen. Ta-hui insisted that koan contemplation, and especially work on the koan Mu (CH: *Wu*), was ideally suited to lay people with busy lives. Thus, ironically, a practice that in Japanese Rinzai temples is associated particularly with the training of monks was initially developed to suit the needs of lay people. The Lin-chi school, however, was not alone is seeking the literati's support. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the Ts'ao-tung (J: Soto) school, which had been relatively weak in the period preceding, was experiencing something of a revival with a series of innovative masters who, while still using koans, fashioned a teaching that emphasized the realization of intrinsic enlightenment through meditation. The literati had become increasingly drawn to the new Ts'ao-tung teachers, and it was to compete with the latters' success and to counter what he castigated as a passive "silent illumination" Zen, that Ta-hui developed his distinctive method of "contemplating the [koan's] key phrase" (*k'an-hua*, J: *kanna*). Shlutter maintains that prior to this period there were no discernible differences between Lin-chi and Ts'ao-tung teachings, and that their sectarian identities remained weak. Both used the koan, and eventually Ts'ao-tung teachers even adopted Ta-hui's koan method and abandoned their interest in silent illumination. The notion of truly distinct Lin-chi and Ts'ao-tung schools comparable to the situations of the Rinzai and Soto schools in Japan is, Shlutter maintains, a misreading based on projecting the later Japanese sectarian situation back onto Tang and Sung Zen.

In Japan, the celebrated master Hakuin (1686-1769) took Ta-hui's Zen as his model, as transmitted by his line's Medieval founder Daiô and his heir Daitô (though it is by no means clear that Daiô's teaching was a direct continuation of the actual Sung Zen he had studied on the continent). Hakuin's brand of vigorous koan practice inspired a revival in the Rinzai temples of pre-modern Japan and continues to dominate Rinzai Zen to this day. Michel Mohr, in an essay on Japanese Zen since Hakuin, makes the intriguing claim that among Hakuin's original contributions was his popularizing of Rinzai practice by stressing various Taoist spiritual/physical-hygiene-related techniques: the counting of breaths, the curculation of *ki*, or vital energy, and the focus on the *tanden*, the "center" just below the navel. Today all these are basic in instructing students in Zen practice. Commonly, Mohr points out, students begin by learning to count their breaths, before moving on to koan study, when they are told to work on the koan " with the belly, not with the head," and with the support of ki from

the tanden. Still, it may be worth pointing out that such practices might have been current in Zen temples prior to Hakuin. The seventeenth-century masters Takuan and Shôsan, for example, both allude to ki in their teachings, and the concept was conspicuous in the language of Neo-Confucianism, introduced by Zen monks in the sixteenth century. As for the systematic ordering of koans in the various lines of Rinzai Zen today, Mohr insists that there is no evidence for this in any of Hakuin's writings or those of his heirs; that is, it is quite possible that the koan categories and sequences followed in Rinzai temples today represent developments that are no older than the nineteenth-century.

Like many of the best entries in this volume, the final essay, by G. Victor Sôgen Hori, examines some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding Zen, in this case Zen practice as it exists in contemporary Rinzai temples. The author has spent many years studying Zen in Japan, and draws a number of unusual conclusions based on his experiences. He disputes, for example, the notion that the Zen mind, the mind of sudden enlightenment, often referred to in the West as kenshô, is a kind of empty state, a "no mind" cleared of all data, and inherently opposed to intellectuality, thought, and reason. "[A] pure consciousness without concepts, if there could be such a thing," Hori writes, "would be a booming, buzzing confusion, a sensory field of flashes of light, unidentified sounds, ambiguous shapes, color patches without significance. This is not the consciousness of the enlightened Zen master." In fact, Hori reports, Rinzai temples maintain a demanding fifteen-year curriculum involving mastery of various difficult Chinese Zen texts related to koans, including the reading and interpretation of often arcane Chinese poetic phrases. A Rinzai Zen master must typically be accomplished as a linguist (to read the texts and commentaries on which he will instruct his students), a calligrapher, and often an artist and poet to boot. Zen stories to the contrary, he is certainly unlikely, at least nowadays, to be an illiterate woodcutter. Hori hardly ever heard the word "kensho" ("breakthrough," literally, seeing one's nature) used in his years in the temples. Instead he found nearly ubiquitous the term kyogai (here, "spiritual endowment"), implying the practitioner's oneness with his daily activity, an expression of nonduality in which subject and object are mutually dissolved. In Rinzai temples today it is this oneness, Hori says, which is the goal of practice, whether in koan study or in cooking the temple rice.

Not every one of the eleven entries in The Koan is equally revealing or readable, as is often the case with such collections; and the publisher seems to have taken a rather Taoist approach to the task of proofreading the work, which, surprisingly for a distinguished house like Oxford University Press, is peppered with

annoying typographical errors. But such quibbles aside, this volume is a must for serious students of Zen history, offering a range of new perspectives on koan Zen and the development of the Zen school in China and Japan while exposing many of the myths about these subjects that have accumulated over the years. Perhaps as interesting as some of the answers The Koan proposes to the complex questions surrounding Zen's origins are the questions themselves, which have often been neglected in the past and will now certainly be challenging scholars for some time to come.

Bohdidharma - (Sesshû 14th Century)

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

SIXTEENTH LECTURE

Saturday, October 22nd, 1938

"Just as the illusory blossoms bloom in the sky,
The blossoms depend upon the sky for their existence.
Though the blossoms in the sky vanish,
The empty nature of the sky is not changed at all.
All awakened states come forth from illusory states.
When illusions vanish, awakening will be complete
Because awakened mind is the immobile mind.
If these Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world
Stayed far away from the state of illusion forever,
All illusions would disperse just as the fire produced in a piece of wood
Dies out, burning up the piece of wood.
There is no gradual awakening and no gradual method of practice for awakening."

SOKEIAN SAYS:

This is the end of the Buddha's gatha. It was beautiful in Sanskrit -- but when the Chinese translated it, it lost its poetical quality. And then I translate it into English -- and its beautiful quality is lost forever!

In the beginning of this poem, the Buddha had said to Samantabhadra:

"You must know that the beginningless illusory
darkness of the sentient beings
Has been created in accordance with the
perfectly awakened consciousness
Of all Tathagatas."

"Tathagatas" means "Buddhas" -- those who realized the original nature of Tathagata, of the state of Reality. The previous

Buddhas had awakened to the state of perfect Reality.

To cite an illustration for this -- you could say that all the clouds in the sky are produced from the clear blue sky. The state of Tathagata's mind which awakened to the perfect Reality is like the sky -- always shining, bottomless, and boundless.

We all have this perfectly awakened mind at the bottom of our mind, the mind which has the function of producing the illusion (color, sound, etc.).

Our ever-awakened consciousness produces this physical body and the five sense organs. Through this, consciousness makes contact with objective existence -- and this produces the illusory world. I produce my world, you produce your world; the horse, cow, cat, dog -- each produces its own world!

As far as I know, my world and yours are not so different because our consciousnesses are at the same point; but I am not so sure that the world of the horse and that of the cat are the same. I realize that my taste and the taste of my cat are not quite the same -- but human consciousnesses are alike so we produce the same kind of world.

"*Just as the illusory blossoms bloom in the sky, ...*" -- One who has affected eyes will see the blossoms in the sky and will think the sky produces them.This allegory is used to cite this illusory world.

"*...The blossoms depend upon the sky for their existence.*" -- All the illusory phenomena depend upon our awakened consciousness.

"*Though the blossoms in the sky vanish, the empty nature of the sky is not changed at all.*" -- When the mountains, sea and sky and earth are destroyed, the interstellar space will also be destroyed. Is this true? It is not! Interstellar space will not be destroyed.

When we die, the physical body and the five sense organs are destroyed, and our consciousness is scattered and dispersed -- but the conscious state of Tathagata Mind will last forever. So we are always awakened; we do not need to awake once more.One should just sweep off the illusory dust from the surface of the mirror.

Precious jade is always covered with rock, and you must break off all the rock which conceals the precious stone. The precious Chinese jade comes from the Hun-lun Mountains. Jade miners find it and send it to China in a lump of rock. Then the jade cutters break away the rock and find the precious jade. It is very

hard to break away the rock -- it must be chipped off in tiny pieces and it takes a long time.

The good Buddhist teacher finds the jade mind in the student and chisels it out of the rock. But you don't need a Zen master's teaching -- you can do it by yourself!

Here I must point out one important thing: When we find the perfectly awakened Tathagata state in ourselves, then this state is everlasting existence.

Then we will find something else. We have a tendency to objectify this Perfectly Awakened Tathagata State and extend it to objective existence from our own subjective mind. This we call "heaven" or "God" -- and we think we are ephemeral, but God is everlasting.

We create a secondary religion: God is outside ourselves, and we pray to him in heaven; heaven is beyond and we will go there after our death!

But, in the original sense, heaven is within us. To go there we do not need to wait for death. Behind the film of the mind -- heaven is always there. The Buddha's Buddhism is always there. Some sects of Buddhism are founded upon this Perfectly Awakened Tathagata State.

"*The empty nature of the sky is not changed at all.*" -- The empty nature of the sky is the everlasting state of Reality. It cannot be changed at all by the shifting of this phenomena.

"*All awakened states come forth from illusory states.*" -- The awakened state will be found by digging through this illusory mind. By vision and words, this illusory state is created: we have vision -- and we give it a name. Without names, we cannot think about anything. But words are not accurate: the word "tears" suggests sadness -- but there are tears of joy.

We cannot think of the Perfectly Awakened State of Tathagata in words. Of course Reality has a name (we call it "Reality") -- but we must reach the state!

"*When illusions vanish, awakening will be complete;*" -- The Buddhist does not mutter prayers when he meets his own God. In silence, he immediately realizes that state. Muttering prayers is an erroneous way for us to reach the state of Reality. Of course, if you think the state of Reality (God) is in the sky, you will join your hands and pray.But in the Zen sect we just brush all thoughts away and sit upon Reality. It is hard to do!

"*... because awakened thought is immobile thought.*" -- When the Sixth Patriarch disguised himself as a coolie, stayed at a nameless temple in the country, and was sweeping the garden with a bamboo broom this incident is recorded: In that garden, there was a banner fluttering in the wind and the monks were talking about it. "See that banner fluttering!" "No, the banner is not moving, the wind is moving!" The discussion was endless and then the Sixth Patriarch said: "Neither the banner nor the wind is moving; it is your mind that flutters!"

When we are young, we use this story, discuss the meaning of it and meditate upon it. "The banner is my mind and the wind is circumstance. My mind moves and produces the outside; so when my mind moves, it moves the outside." "No, absolute objective existence moves." Endless dispute!

The Sixth Patriarch overheard this kind of debate and, holding his broom in his hand, he said: "Neither wind nor banner is moving. Your original nature is moving!"

Of course the two monks thought he must be crazy but the abbot overheard him, came out, knelt on the ground and said: "We have heard that the torch-holder of the Fifth Patriarch is living somewhere in this part of the country. Overhearing you, I ask: Are you the man?" And the Sixth Patriarch answered: " I am the man!"

The state of the Sixth Patriarch was revealed immediately to the Abbot by what he had said to the disputing monks: "Your original nature is moving."

In the koan, this is simplified by "your mind is moving," but in the Sixth Patriarch's mind there are no such two-three things, because wind, mind, are just one original nature. So reality is moving. And this Moving Reality is called here, " immobile mind."

"*If those Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world stayed far away from the state of illusion forever,*" -- "Stay far away," in the Chinese term, is a very awkward way of suggesting the attitude which stays far away from the state of illusion forever. When you know that this is an illusory state -- you need not go away!

In the theater -- I have never seen it in this country but in Japan -- some villain tries to kill someone and the audience will throw an orange or a bad egg at him. I don't do this because I know he is not a villain, but an actor. Someone will see a movie actress and send her a love letter -- but I know she is acting her love, and I save my two-cent stamp!

You do not need to leave the movie theater. Nor do you need to go to the mountain cave -- it is not true Buddhism.

Some will say: "Don't go to the movies! Don't speak! Don't eat meat!" I did not come to America to promulgate such Buddhism.

"*... all illusions would disperse just as the fire produced in a piece of wood* (by friction) *dies out, burning up the piece of wood.*" -- But to find this Reality you must look at illusion first very carefully. You must scrape the screen, unveil the illusion, to attain Enlightenment. You will attain it all of a sudden.

"*There is no gradual awakening and no gradual method of practice for awakening.*" -- A Hindu teacher in New York pinches your nose and says "Do you see a green light?... You are enlightened! Twenty-five dollars please! If you give me more I will show you more enlightenment!" This could be called "gradual enlightenment." Once for all, there is no such thing! You begin and you end. There is no method or gradual practice for awakening!

Then you may ask: "Why do you keep on here, giving us your method, your koans, peeling our minds?"

I am peeling your illusory mind -- there is a gradual method for doing that. I peel the onion, skin by skin. It takes a long time to peel off these illusory skins but without it there is no awakening.

This is the Sixth Patriarch's Zen -- a somewhat different viewpoint. In the later part of the sutra, this view is explained from the primitive Buddhism attitude -- to draw you into it.

Without going near a movie screen you know it is not Greta Garbo, that it is illusory!

So all illusion to me is a fact. It is a manifestation of Reality!

108 Bows

By Ian Chandler

My first exposure to the Buddhist bowing practice was at the Korean-style New Haven Zen Center, where I attended a weekend meditation retreat many years ago. The 108 bows came as a surprise to me, since I was accustomed to Zen as a meditation discipline involving the mind and essentially unrelated to religious worship. Here we had an entire room of people -- just awakened at 4:00 AM -- bowing in unison before a golden, brightly painted Buddha statue, the sort you find in the Buddhist temples in Chinatown. The leader of the bowing, as I recall, kept the count on his mala beads. With each bow, we started in a standing position, hands in gassho. While keeping the upper body erect, we bent our knees until they touched the cushion on the floor. Then we bowed, touching our heads to the mat and extending our arms forward, palms turned toward the ceiling. Then, pushing off with our arms, we returned to a crouching position on the floor, and finally straightened our legs while keeping an erect upper body posture, hands once again in gassho. It surprised me that I was out of breath after 40 of these in rapid succession, but somehow continued on until the end. An ancient temple rule, I was told, said that you could not eat breakfast unless you had first done 108 bows.

Later, I adopted the 108 bows as part of my own practice and my Zen mentor, Mary Farkas, approved with some enthusiasm. When we held our weekend Zen retreats together, she gladly joined me, and although in her late 70s was generally able to do one bow for every two of mine, continuing on for a total of 54. There were not too many kindred spirits who joined us, but we both found the practice invigorating. This is the only form of aerobic exercise that I get, and I am able to run a mile without too much difficulty.

Bowing before an altar -- humbling one's self before the divine -- doesn't bother many people. Catholics bow on one knee and make the sign of the cross as they enter their pew in church. However, some people have a very strong distaste for it. I remember the days when my father was an African art dealer and our house was packed full of African statues and masks. Many of my parents' friends were artists, and they liked it. Others found it odd, and others reacted with anger.

My father was a salesman, and his territory was upper New York State. He had established contacts with a number of African art dealers from Mali. These guys would pack an 8 foot by 8 foot crate full of African art and load it on a freighter. When they arrived in New York, they would set themselves up in a cheap hotel room. Buyers for Nelson Rockefeller came in first, followed

by some of the New York galleries, and they bought up the most expensive pieces. My parents would very carefully cull the room for the best of what was left, while my brother and I sifted through the Ashanti pieces for a complimentary gold weight. As they got good at it, my parents learned about all the different tribes, the rituals and ceremonies involved, and easily developed the ability to distinguish between tourist art and the real thing. My father took the art on consignment, and sold it to museums in upper New York State. Many of the small colleges and universities along the New York State Throughway purchased a mask or two. The University of Rochester purchased several of them. Even the tourist art found a good use as Halloween masks. My mother decked out the masks with black streamers resembling African raffia, and the effect was quite striking.

It was the late 1960s and most of the African countries had just gained their independence from the European powers. The African dealers were Muslims and most of them had no regard for the tribal religions. They purchased art from the children or grandchildren of the real practitioners of these religions. The prevailing ideology at the time was that the African countries were now going to become civilized along with the rest of the world and it was time to get rid of all this old stuff. I even remember one late-night conversation in a New York restaurant when one of the Africans, now drunk (he was not a good Muslim) told of his competitor's attempts to smuggle art across the Nigerian border. Like Japan, Nigeria valued its cultural heritage and it was illegal to export anything out of Nigeria other than tourist art. Our business companion denigrated his fellow Africans' uncultured ways, and went on to explain that many of the Africans were so backward that they even believed that America's Moon landings were nothing more than a giant staged propaganda event. However, as he explained, "Some of us are more primitive than others." Many of the pieces my father obtained were magnificent works of art and sold for several thousand dollars each. I expect that some of the Africans parted with grandfather's old mask or statue for the equivalent of a few years' salary.

Having grown up in a house full of the idols and images of West Africa, idolatry in the Buddhist tradition didn't bother me at all. When I visited Dharamsala, the summer home of the Dalai Lama I followed a nun into the Dalai Lama's temple. She bowed down, touching her head to the ground in front of the main Buddha Statue, and I did the same. Then I sat zazen for a while, bowed once again and left the temple. On the porch outside the main Buddha hall, there was a Tibetan woman, perhaps 60 or 70 years old. She was laboriously doing a long series of bows in the direction of the main image in the temple. These were not the easy Korean-style bows which I learned at the New Haven Zen

Center, but the more vigorous Tibetan-style bows, where the final stage of each bow is to stretch yourself out flat on your stomach, arms stretched out over your head in the direction of the Buddha. I observed her for a while, and then investigated other parts of the temple compound. When I returned fifteen or twenty minutes later, she was still going at it! Although I didn't count, I expect that she probably did the full 108 bows.

Why bow before Buddha statues? In this context, the Buddha is not a human being, nor is he a god with the power to bestow blessings upon those who worship him. Rather, he is an archetype of the very best than mankind is capable of, with discipline, self-reliance, perseverance, wisdom, compassion, diligence, energy, intelligence, mindfulness -- dhyana and enlightenment. Bowing before Buddha statues means that I revere these qualities. Even though I may find Buddhism appealing as a philosophy, and intriguing as a study in cultural anthropology, it's really not quite the same thing as practicing the religion itself. Bowing before Buddha statues makes me part of an ancient form of religious worship going back well over 2000 years, and makes me part of the Buddhist Sangha. It says that I am a Buddhist.

Poem for a napping cat...

A wave of Zen
Does not leave the sea
To gnash its teeth at spirit-sailors,
And feed false ecstasy
With monsters of the deep;

....mere dream storms of a sleeping cat
Which,
moused by a furry bell
beams its Cheshire smile,
purring between nubile breasts of a young girl,
scattering spirit-sailors
through the reefs and dusts of time....

A wave of Zen,
The sound of one hand caressing the gnashing void of Mumon,
Bares, again, those nubile breasts
Which,
nestling Joshu's cat,
(two halves in harmony)
....purring....
Beckon from their diamond beach;
Still empty
With the sound of Waves
....laughing....

No Cheshire...
Instead, I'll nap in a New Year;
No dog, no dragon, no cat... not even nothing,
Just Chaka-san, dreaming, to the sound of a furry bell...

Happy New Year

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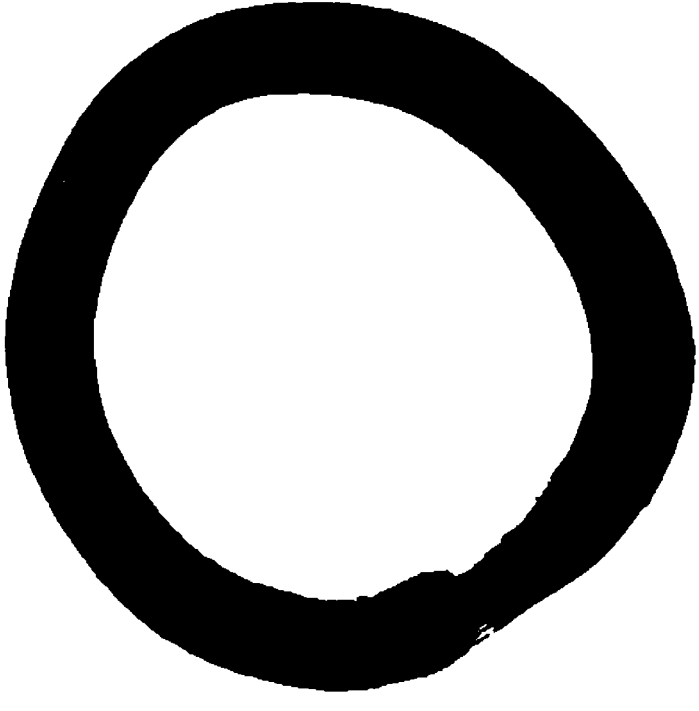

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