Zen Notes

The work goes on
Hammering and forging
The steel of Zen.
Wherever a monk lives
The old process continues,
Here comes
time after time.
another autumn dawn!

The lamp still remains burning
While morning rain patters at the window!
Let us pay homage to our Roshi, Soyen Shaku

Nyogen Senzaki

A SOLITARY PERSIMMON

Leaves from the Life of Nyogen Senzaki

*"I cannot but think you are talking nonsense when you say that one who does not have title (*Roshi*) should not preach Zen. The way of Zen is not so small nor so narrow, I can proudly say that.*

It is good to make varnish out of green persimmon juice. But is it not also poetic to see a solitary persimmon, left on on the leafless branch, in the winter, being pecked by a crow's bill?"

Nyogen Senzaki

Nyogen Senzaki (1876-1958) was one of the pioneers of Zen in America. Senzaki, a student of Soyen Shaku the first Zen Master to visit America,, came to America in 1905 and, like Sokei-an, Senzaki buried his bones here. These two men continue to be of interest to us because they came so early, matured their Zen in America, and because they came from a single line of teachers determined, not to simply replicate the monastic system of Japanese Zen, but to bring the living demonstration of Zen itself to the American landscape to see if it might take root.

Mary Farkas, editor of Zen Notes from 1956 to 1992, corresponded with Senzaki and three of his former students and friends: Saladin (Paul) Reps, Samuel Lewis, and Norman Money. Gradually, the First Zen Institute inherited correspondence, poems

and manuscripts of Senzaki from this cast of characters. As I watched Mary puzzle out some of this detective work for issues of Zen Notes in the early 1970's I felt she was fond of Senzaki and understood the difficulties of presenting Zen in those early days. Having completed Sokei-an's story in Holding the Lotus to the Rock, I recently dug out a cardboard box to properly archive this Senzaki material at the Institute and like this persimmon leaf on the cover, discovered some treasures involving Senzaki, that include Sokei-an, Mary Farkas, and these three students of Senzaki. Here in two issues, I am continuing the First Zen Institute's tradition of inviting a few ambitious readers to follow some of the threads between those who knew Senzaki well.

It is critical for the those unfamiliar with Senzaki's story to know that he was an orphan, and he seems to have been born in 1876. There is a story that he was found abandoned in the Kamchatka Peninsula in northeastern Siberia, and a traveling Jodo Buddhist monk found the infant and brought him back to Japan. That he was adopted by a ship's carpenter named Senzaki who was a member of a Japanese priest's temple in Aomori Prefecture, is certainly true. Nyogen was the name given him by the priest. He mastered classical Chinese early and took a great interest in Buddhism.

Senzaki studied with the Rinzai Zen Master Soyen Shaku at Shikayama Sodo starting in 1896 according to Soyen's biography. Perhaps they were introduced by D. T. Suzuki, also a student of Soyen's. Senzaki and Suzuki studied Sanskrit together with a Shingon priest and scholar. According to Senzaki's writings he stayed in Kamakura and studied with Soyen for five years. Eido Shimano Roshi asks, "*What was Soyen's opinion of Nyogen Senzaki? There is little mention in Soyen's diary of Senzaki while Dr. Suzuki is mentioned on every page and as "Daisetsu Koji", meaning lay Buddhist disciple. In brief references to Senzaki, Soyen Shaku calls him simply Mr. Senzaki.*"

Senzaki states that *"I was ordained a Buddhist monk under a Shingon teacher and studied the Avatamsaka Sutra. Later I entered a Zen monastery and studied meditation"* I believe Soyen felt pity for the sickly, but sincere Senzaki and found a space for him somewhat outside the strict monastic schedule, but his weak constitution again became a problem when Senzaki followed Soyen to America. Soyen was staying with and teaching Zen to Mrs. Alexander Russell and her family outside of San Francisco. Senzaki worked for the family as a gardener for a while (1905), but the work proved too much for Senzaki. Soyen's diary entry dated Aug. 3, 1905, rather unconcernedly states, "*Mr. Nyogen Senzaki left Mrs. Russell's home because the work was too difficult.*"

Soyen gave Senzaki a letter of introduction and sent him across the Golden Gate Bridge to make his way in this new land. Soyen probably didn't give it much more thought, and went on to tour the great American cities lecturing (D.T. Suzuki translated) on the classic principals of Buddhism that he felt would resonate with the modern educated sensibilities of the West. At almost the same time (1906), Soyen's heir and adopted son, the Zen master Sokatsu Shaku, had come to America with fourteen of his students to found a Zen community in America; an unsuccessful strawberry farm in Hayward outside of San Francisco. After a fight with Sokei-an, a member of this group, Sokatsu setup a Zen center on Sutter Street where he taught Zen. His students included a group of American missionary ladies.

Sokei-an and Senzaki had known each other in Japan and again in San Francisco between 1906 and 1910. When Soyen and Sokatsu returned to Japan (1910), they had sowed the seeds of Zen in these two unlikely characters. It was the eccentric aspect of both men that made them suitable for staying in America and expressing Zen before the American eye. Sokei-an and Senzaki knew each other in San Francisco at the time of the great Earthquake. This was a terrible time of racial discrimination against the Japanese with beatings and killings by roving gangs. Senzaki managed to survive through a series of odd jobs. Sokei-an arrived in New York by 1915 and found some shelter from this discrimination in the international, bohemian setting of the emerging Washington Square scene.

By the 1920's Senzaki was teaching Zen on Bush Street in San Francisco, but eventually left because of differences with an heir of Soyen's named Furukawa who was also teaching there. Senzaki moved to Turner Street in Los Angeles where he met a Mrs. Tanahashi. He cared for her handicapped son Jimmy and began teaching at his Mentorgarten which he considered to be a Zen Kindergarten. The reader interested in a more comprehensive biography and other source materials on Senzaki can consult Rick Fields' When the Swans Came to the Lake, Eido Shimano Roshi's Like A Dream, Like A Fantasy and past issues of Zen Notes to name a few.

Our source materials pick up the story around 1930 with Saladin Paul Reps; a poet, painter, Buddhist/Sufi, and a student and friend of Senzaki over his lifetime. Reps was instrumental in publishing together with Senzaki some of the earliest books on Zen in America. What I did not know was that Reps also knew Sokei-an in the early 1930's. The "Miss Reps" business in his letters seems to have been a running joke between them and "*those forgotten friends that find each other once more on the bridge of the rainbow*'" apparently refers to Senzaki.

Rev. Sokei-an Sasaki
The First Zen Buddhism Institute in New York

Miss Saladin Reps
Los Angeles, Cal.

August 16, 1931

My dear Miss Reps,

I received your letter and realized that all those forgotten friends of the remote past find each other once more on the bridge of the rainbow-- seven colored world--

I am carrying the book in my suit case as I travel in the country and will ponder its meaning as I find time.

I appreciate the poem-- Zazen-- and am sending you one that has dropped from my pencil point, -- a Japanese Uta- thirty one syllable poem-- in English.

.

A Country Road
Cool shadows of the willow tree
Sweeps the weathered garden porch.
Whose baby are you?
Your mother might have fear
of your deep slumber!

Sincerely yours, So-shin Sasaki

Here is a letter to Senzaki from the early 1930's. One might ask why two Japanese men are writing to each other in English...

Rev. Sokei-ann Sasaki
Sixty Three West Seventieth Street

Nyogen Senzaki:

I received the Gateless Gate and the 10 Bulls. Both you and I are foreigners, therefore we cannot fuss much about the the literary value of our writings. But if if there are such books as those two translated literally, it will help practical Zen students in this country. Therefore I directed that each one in our group have one. Concerning the 10 Bulls, the subject is step by step of realization, but whoever reads this book will consider himself already in the tenth stage, therefore the rest of the nine stages cannot help him very much. This is what Zen teachers say.

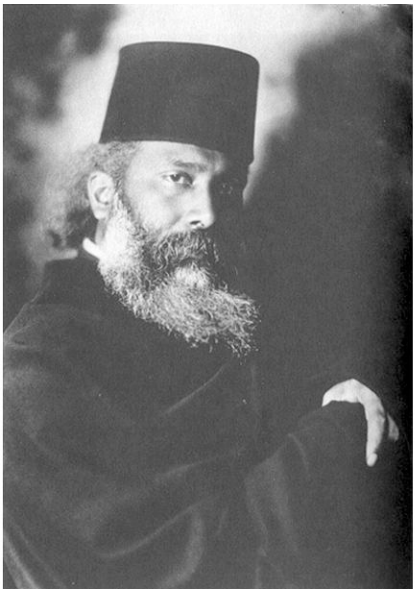
... Three years ago I started translating a collection of Rinzai lectures. I am planning to finish the work this autumn and may publish it to give away, not to sell. It is the same as your work, merely a literary translation. I heard such and such a Sutra. If

Bramajara is the first sutra then the precepts we keep must be the first too. These days I am reading Hinayana Sutra especially for the precepts, and notice quite a difference in its viewpoint. I understand you studied the precepts under the Shingon teacher. Someday I wish you would tell your opinion about this. One of my friends who studied under the same teacher with me went to Europe to study the conditions of the fishing business and he came to NY. I told him to look you up when he comes to Los Angeles. I wish you would give my best regards to Saladin Reps. If he comes to NY I will be wearing a BVD which is made of steel and will meet him cautiously. Please tell him so. How is your heart trouble. Do you think you can live longer yet. I am worrying about that.

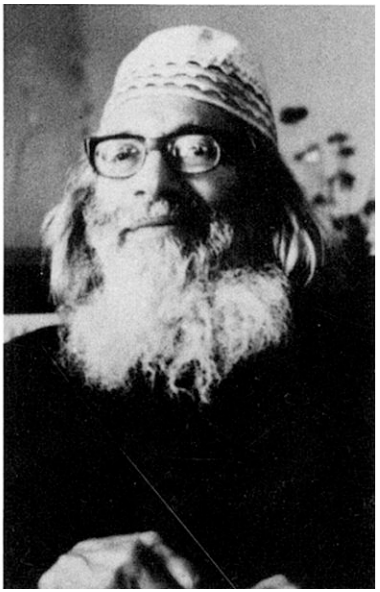
So-shin Sasaki

Besides Reps, Senzaki was also a teacher of Samuel Lewis, who met many of the great teachers of his day including Sokei-an. Lewis writes about these encounters with Senzaki and Sokei-an in his book Sufi Vision and Initiation, Meetings with Remarkable Men. In a letter to Zen Institute friends in 1954 Lewis writes:

*"In 1920 I first met Nyogen Senzaki in San Francisco. Sagaku (Rev. M.T. Kirby, a student of Soyen's) sent me to Nyogen Senzaki when Mentorgarden (*Senzaki's Zen center*) was opened."*



Inayat Khan



Samuel Lewis

Samuel Lewis, Paul Reps and Mr. Money were all Sufis as well as Zen students and knew the famous Sufi teacher Hazrat Inayat

Khan. Senzaki and Khan, both teachers of these men, eventually became friends, and Senzaki wrote a newspaper article about their first encounter. Here is an abbreviated version of this lengthy article, dated August 23, 1934:

A Sufi Zen Story

Murashid Inayat Khan was staying at the home of Mrs. Martin in San Francisco and I was accompanied by an old friend Dr. Hayes a psychologist. Zen is not confined to Buddhism. After being introduced by Mrs. Martin and shaking hands with the Murashid... an American custom... we were seated with Inayat Khan facing me across the table.

Inayat Khan smiled at me and said, "Mr. Senzaki, will you tell me, what is the significance of Zen?" I remained silent for a little while and smiled at him. He smiled back at me.

Our dialogue was over but the psychologist did not recognize it. He said you see Mr. Kahn, Zen is Japanized Sanskrit. Its original should be called Dhyana, which means meditation and..." At that point Inayat Kahn waved his right hand gracefully and stopped the conversation.

Mrs. Martin said, "I will get a book which describes Zen very well" Inayat Kahn gracefully waved his left hand, stopping her before she could rise from her seat, and glanced at me. His eyes were full of water... not of the tears of the world... but water of the great ocean, calm and transparent. I recited an old Zen poem, not with my mouth, not with thought, but with a blink like a flash ... "No living soul comes near that water. A vast sheet of water blue as indigo! The abyss has a depth of ten thousand feet. When everything is quiet and calm at midnight, the moonlight alone penetrates into the waves and reaches the bottom easily and freely." "Murashid, I see something of Zen in you." I said to him.

"Mr. Senzaki I see a Sufi in you." He said to me, and we smiled, one to the other. "You should practice your English. Why don't you tell us about Zen?"

The Murashid and I laughed merrily, and the psychologist joined in our laughter. The happy interview was over. I should have gone home at this time, but the psychologist wished to talk with his innumerable whys and becauses, and our Hebrew scholar must show her collection of books and documents, so we remained the entire evening discussing death and life, the universe and humanity!

On another occasion after a concert of Japanese music I was about to bid Inayat Kahn goodbye and suddenly I said: "All sounds return to the one, where does the one go?"

Inayat Kahn stopped walking and shook hands with me saying, "Goodnight Mr. Senzaki!"

Now Bodhisattvas, what do you think of Inayat Kahn? If you want to meet him this evening open the door and and face the green bushes in front of this meditation hall!

The following notes by Senzaki for a lecture on esoteric Buddhism were found scribbled on three small pieces of paper.

"Buddhism teaches a man to see his objectivity as a Buddha. He adores, then, thatness with this philosophy. He admires the universe with his poetical pantheism. He can also see his subjectivity as a Buddha. He respects thisness with his introspection. He pays homage to his inner shrine with his Buddhist idealism. In his meditation he learns four ways of elimination. He can shut the subjectivity and face the objectivity. He can also shut the objectivity and live alone in his subjectivity. Then he can shut both objectivity and the subjectivity and stay in the nothingness. Thatness and thisness, in such case altogether disappear, like two mirrors that face each other with nothing to reflect. He can also open both subjectivity and objectivity, and see that thisness and thatness are interwoven beautifully. He can move one finger and shake the whole universe with it. He can cough or yawn as the message of eternity. To him, life is the enlightenment of suchness and the world is a beautiful place."

Among Rep's papers were the records of *Friends of Hokku* (a type of Jap. poem)and these included Senzaki's translations with comments of many Japanese Zen poems. For example, this translation of a poem by So-etsu Mineo written when he was eighty years old. Mineo was, at the time, the oldest surviving heir of Soyen Shaku and Abbot of Myoshin-ji.

"The remaining snow still covers the temple-yard.
Severe cold of this spring threatens my old bones.
I am too lazy to speak of birth and death, or nirvana.
I only sit on the Southern verandah,
taking a sun bath with a potted plum tree."

Senzaki comments: *"Here is his Zen-- which is aged like best wine. There is no such junk to be called birth, death, or nirvana, in the eye of a Zen monk."*

And here, another poem from a kakemono (hanging scroll)

which Senzaki saw in San Francisco written by Tesshu Yamaoka, a well-known Zen student who almost reached the stage of a Zen Master although he was only a laymen.

"Falling blossoms are scattering on the ground.
No one ever tries to sweep them away.
Birds are singing the melody of Spring.
Undisturbed, a guest still rests in his land of Dreams."

In response to Reps calling him a great Zen master in one of his essays, Senzaki writes:

Dear Saladin:

Your essay is very good one. You can quote my writings all right. But why do you call me "a great Zen master"? I am not such an animal, - just a plain Zen monk. Please do not insult me any more

Nyogen Senzaki

There was some tension between Senzaki and Sokei-an, who felt that Senzaki knew better than to give koans in sanzen to American students. Sokei-an said, "*It would be impossible in Japan. No one would dare do it without authority. Here one can do anything.*" Senzaki who railed at the Japanese religious establishment of his day, made a big point of his relationship to Soyen and his status as a black sheep or homeless monk. Mary Farkas writes, " *He would say of himself, 'I'm not in the union, you know.'* " Sokei-an, finished his Zen with Sokatsu Shaku, a proper heir of Soyen's, and as a Zen master and lineage holder in this line may have been concerned with this issue. According to the notes of Edna Kenton, Institute historian during the 1930's: *"The impression is that there was some resentment that Sokei-an finished."* Edna Kenton also wrote Mary Farkas that: "*Senzaki's constant reference to Soyen and the inference that this very great man had given him a mission in America was a sort of exploitation, a little much. It sounded like a dream and I don't blame him for living it. The Japanese on the West coast had a rather hard time*"

Here is what Senzaki himself had to say in 1953 in a review of the Development of Chinese Zen by Ruth Sasaki:

"I cannot but think you are talking nonsense when you say that one who does not have title (Roshi*) should not preach Zen. The way of Zen is not so small nor so narrow, I can proudly say that.*

It is good to make varnish out of green persimmon juice. But is it not also poetic to see a solitary persimmon, left on on the leafless branch, in the winter, being pecked by a crows bill?"

The third member of this curious group of Senzaki students

who corresponded with Mary Farkas was Mr. Money, "*Half dead, wishy washy, and lukewarm*" by his own description. He was attracted to the strong, outspoken and positive character of Senzaki and Paul Reps who he first encountered at the Turner Street Zendo in Los Angeles. Both Mr. Money's intimate accounts of Senzaki told to Mary Farkas and those of Professor Yoshito Hakeda told to Peter Haskel (Zen Notes, 1974) show Senzaki to be a warm and sincere man living in Zen and utterly true to his beliefs. Mr. Money also encountered Samuel Lewis, who instructed him in the ways of Senzaki:

Money remarked to Lewis: "*On certain days Senzaki would invite me to lunch but lately he hasn't. Now I know he has hardly enough for food himself... "I'm ashamed I should have given him five dollars,*"

Lewis: "*He wouldn't take it. He just accepts what he barely needs. If you insisted he take five dollars he would just give it out to the kids or take you to lunch. Senzaki is a wonderful distributor and knows there is a rightful owner for everything, even money. So you would be putting a five into the right hands.*"

Dear Saladin,

I will interpret the sermon of a Shingon monk tomorrow after class. You and your wife are invited to 342 East 1st. (The Shingon Buddhist temple). The fire ceremony will be performed at 7:30

Senzaki

Dear Nyogen-san, *Oct. 10, 1940*

Sent you 101 Zen Stories today. I like your broad humanitarian viewpoint expressed in the foreword to 10 Bulls, but I do not see why you help Japanese sectarians to promote a fire ceremony which is obviously a theatrical performance for profit. Went to see the ceremony but fire did not shoot up to the roof as Olive had promised and I could not understand the mumblings, although I must say that Olive looks much purified from having attended. Perhaps you are playing a joke on us in suggesting we take in (or be taken in) by such an emporium?

Curiously yours, Saladin

Dear Saladin Reps: *March 8, 1942*

Will you come and take me out of this Zendo. My friend Senzaki is going to be evacuated, most any day. I rather wish to stay here than to live with Japs in Death Valley. Of course, I stay wherever Senzaki asks me, if you fail to receive this message.

Inayat Kahn

SENGAI STORIES

Portrait of Sengai by his friend Saito Shuho
Property of Shofuku-ji Temple

Among the most beloved and eccentric figures in the history of Japanese Zen is the Rinzai master Sengai Gibon (1750-1837). Like his contemporary the Soto Zen master Ryokan, Sengai was legendary for his warm and unassuming personality, his naiveté, and his close relations with the common people who were his neighbors. Sengai's friends included the Fukoka domain's daimyo, Kuroda Narikiyo, and his samurai retainers, as well as local artists and literati, farmers, drunks, brewers and noodle-makers--the whole gamut of society in Hakata, the town on the northern tip of Kyushu where Sengai's temple, Shofuku-ji, was located. As late as 1930, children in the area all knew stories about "Sengai-*san*," as he was affectionately referred to, and the people of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's five main islands, commonly spoke of the Master as "Sengai *bosatsu*" ("Bodhisattva Sengai"). Exceedingly stunted and homely in appearance, always dressed in ragged robes, Sengai was said to have resembled a " mummified monkey", an impression born out in the portrait painted by Sengai's artist friend Saito Shuho. Besides his ready wit and abilities as a Zen master, Sengai, like Ryokan, was celebrated, for his brushwork, especially his playful drawings, which collectors went to inordinate lengths to wheedle out of him.

Born in Mino, now Gifu Prefecture, Sengai entered the

temple as a child. Rinzai Zen in Sengai's period was dominated by two important teaching lines, both centered on the great Kyoto headquarters temple Myoshin-ji: the line of Hakuin Ekaku and that of Hakuin's contemporary, the Zen master Kogetsu Zenzai. Sengai became the disciple of Kogetsu's heir Gessen Zenne (1702-1781), from whom Sengai received inka on passing the koan, "Kyogen's 'Up a Tree.' " When Gessen died, Sengai set off on *angya,* or Zen pilgrimage, and was eventually asked to assume abbacy of Shofuku-ji, Japan's first Zen temple, established by Myoan Eisai in 1195. Here Sengai spent virtually all his remaining years, reluctant to accept repeated invitation to travel to Kyoto to assume imperial abbacy of Myoshin-ji. As he wrote in one poem:

"*The followers of Buddha are extolled in every quarter*
The disciples of Confucius are praised throughout the world
I sit on a rock among vines and creepers
Now and then watching the drifting clouds
that pass before my eyes."

Sengai assumed abbacy of Shofuku-ji in 1789, but in 1811 he turned the temple over to his leading disciple, Tangen Toi (d.1855), and retired to a sub-temple, Kyohaku-in. Perhaps tired of the incessant requests for samples of his brushwork, in autumn 1823 Sengai is said to have renounced all further artistic activity, and had the resolution--itself a poem-- carved in stone and set up outside his hermitage:

"*Here in Fukuoka in my black robes*
I'm putting down my brush for good
Having brought only trouble and shame on myself
As a result of all my scribbling."

In 1837, Tangen committed some infraction for which he was removed by the domainal government from abbacy of Shofuku-ji and sent into exile, forcing Sengai, at age 87, to return and become the temple's abbot once more. Later that year Sengai was able to hand over the abbacy to another disciple and returned to Kyohaku-in, where he passed away several days later. His death verse, for which he seems to have broken his self-imposed ban on poetry and calligraphy, contains a pun in the use of the word "cliff," the second of the characters that make up Sengai's name-"Immortal's Cliff":

"*When arriving, know where you came from*
When departing, know where you've gone
Without letting go the edge of the cliff
The clouds are too thick to know where you are."

Sengai is the sort of figure about whom legends and folk

stories naturally arise, and the following are a selection of such tales from *Sengai osho itsuwa sen* (Selected Tales of Master Sengai), published in 1998 by Hanazono University's Center for Research in Zen Culture and based principally on a 1930 collection of Sengai stories, *Sengai osho heso* (Master Sengai's Belly Button) by Kuramitsu Daigu.

Sengai's Thank-You

The Master had a reputation for never thanking people. One rainy day, on a street not far from the temple, the thong of his *geta*[1] broke, and observing his distress, the lady at the local tofu shop ran and purchased a new thong and hurried to him with it. The Master, however, did not thank her but just bowed and returned home without a word.

Thereafter, whenever the lady met the Master he still failed to thank her, leaving her filled with indignation.

"What a rude priest!" she thought to herself. And to an acquaintance she complained," Everyone praises the Master for being such a worthy man, but he isn't anything of the sort. On a rainy day his geta thong broke and he was really in a bad way. But even though I went and bought him a new thong and replaced it for him myself, he never thanked me. I can't imagine a more ungrateful priest!" she fumed.

The woman's acquaintance visited the temple and reported this to the Master.

Sengai said, "When one finishes saying thank you, that's the end of the matter right there. But I intend never to forget a kindness as long as I live."

Sengai and the Fish Bones

Once a day laborer noticed under the main hall of the temple fresh bones from a sea bream. Fish was forbidden in the monastery, and the workman hurried off to the Master with the evidence.

"Master! Master! Look what I found under the monks' hall!" he exclaimed. "How embarassing to have fish bones turn up here at the temple."

"Well, well," said the Master, "The novices nowadays have certainly gotten soft. Back when I was a novice we never left over even the bones!"

[1] Japanese platform clogs, often worn in rainy weather.

Sengai Dresses for the Occasion

Among Sengai's friends was the noodle-maker Sokyu. He was a warm and generous host, and his home was always filled with guests--actors, sumo wrestlers, doctors, scholars, and priests. Sokyu greatly revered Sengai, and would regularly bring him the jam dumplings of which the Master was fond, along with the first fruits and vegetables of the season. Being of an open and pure nature, Sokyu was unconcerned with his personal appearance, and even when visiting the master at Kyohaku-in would wear his work clothes.

One day Sokyu arrived at the temple carrying fresh jam buns and wearing work clothes covered in flour .

"Your Reverence," he called out from the entryway, "Are you in?"

Sengai came out and said, "Ah! Sokyu! What's up?"

"I just baked these jam buns," Sokyu replied, "And I wanted to bring them to you while they were warm."

"Indeed!" Sengai said. "Please, wait here just a moment." And hurrying back inside, the Master changed into his formal priest's robes before reappearing and respectfully receiving the proffered jam buns.

Puzzled, Sokyu stammered, "Your Reverence, I'm very much obliged."

"Not at all," Sengai told him. "After all, you arrived wearing your professional clothes, so the least I could do was put on mine."

Translated and Copywrite by Peter Haskel
(to be continued--ed)

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

TWENTY-FIFTH LECTURE

Saturday, January 14th, 1939

"O Obedient One! Because the six kinds of dust are pure, earth is pure. Earth is pure, so water is pure. Fire and air are also pure.

O Obedient One! The four great elements are pure, so the twelve Ayatanani (entrances), the eighteen dhatava (realms), the twenty-five bhava (existences) are pure. They are pure, so the ten jnanani (abilities of enlightened wisdom), the four vaicaradyani (fearlessness), the four pratisamvada (penetrating knowledge), the eighteen avenikadharma of Buddha (the excellent innate qualities of Buddha which are not innate in others), and the thirty-seven bodhyangani (types of practice by which you reach Nirvana) are pure. And all those eighty-four thousand gates of Dharani are pure."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

This is a very complicated part -- to give an explanation of all these technical terms in a lecture!

"O Obedient One!" -- The Buddha is addressing Samantanetra. In this sermon, the Buddha destroyed the usual conception of purity and impurity in the human mind!

According to these words -- when the human mind becomes pure, everything becomes pure; when the mind becomes impure, everything becomes impure.

There is no "pure" or "impure," objectively on the outside -- it is created in your mind. So, when you observe everything with an enlightened mind -- everything will become pure. Of course you must understand the meaning of this "pure!"

In the West the word "pure" carries some moral meaning -- but here it is like pure water or polluted water. If you think a monk is pure because he is celibate and the layman is impure because he is

married -- you are taking the wrong view.

"*Because the six kinds of dust are pure, ...*" -- This "dust" is taken from the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit "rajas." It is also called "filth," impurity, because it is not original quality.

The six kinds of dust is the Buddhist term for the six kinds of consciousness; the five senses and mind-stuff. When your mind is clear and transparent like water, there is no mind-stuff in it.

Color is also dust. The pure original object has no color; it is created by the eye in accordance with the vibration of light -- so color is not in the sky, in water, or in any object -- and you are deluded if you think color exists in anything on the outside. So you cannot see with your physical eye the real objective existence. Yet it is the true world! But we are deluded by our sense organs and create our world and believe that it is real. You must destroy this "film" to see Reality -- this is the fist gate to enter Buddhism.

The three dimensions of space, hard or soft, light or heavy, etc., are also delusion. If our touch were hard like a diamond -- this wood would feel soft like a pillow! If we are salamanders -- we can go through fire! This is a relative world.

At Tokyo University, a professor produced the eye of an insect, a fly! I went there and put that eye on my eye; I observed a rainbow world -- all motes and currents of air. There were no human beings, no floor, no table -- all was a rainbow -- and that little insect was living in it. He is living in a different consciousness!

The consciousness of human beings is somewhat uniform -- but we do not know about other forms. I give sugar to my cat and he doesn't like it; I give him salt and he likes it. Perhaps, to him, salt is sweet and sugar is bitter!

When we understand about the rajas, we enter the gate of Buddhism and the world is different! Nothing is outside -- all is rajas, and there is no impurity in it!

"*Earth is pure, so water is pure. Fire, air, are also pure. O Obedient One, the four great elements are pure.*" -- So our body is pure -- and there is no impurity in the world! This destroys a queer notion which has been entertained a long time in the human mind!

"*... so the twelve Ayatanani are pure ...*" -- The entrances. When you put on a shoe -- you enter the shoe. The pure mind enters into something -- the shoe, the hat, the robe. The Buddhist

observes the whole world in such a way.

We come into our world -- the human world. Our original elemental mind must come into this world and put the human mask on the face! If you come into the world with the cat mask on the face -- and someone says "Good morning," you will answer, "Mieou!"

The twelve Ayatanani -- means that we enter the six different sense organs and live six different objective existences which confront us: color, sound, smell, taste, touch, and the mind-stuff which creates dreams and thoughts -- the six rajas. Our ocean of consciousness enters twelve different states -- Ayatanani.

"... *the eighteen dhatava* ..." -- Add the six consciousnesses to the twelve Ayatanani and it makes eighteen dhatavas. (There is no plural to the Western "consciousness" -- but temporarily I make it "consciousnesses.") Some Western scholar used another term, "Nirvanic consciousness!" We think that in Nirvana there is no consciousness. My cat has no consciousness, the sky, the earth, has no consciousness. When consciousness is latent, dormant, we do not call it consciousness -- we call it Nirvana. The sky has consciousness but it is sleeping -- we call it Nirvana. Some trees have a kind of consciousness. In Africa there is one whose branches can bend over and enclose a horse! Only a skeleton is left.

A baby has no consciousness, but after three of four years he will recognize me! This consciousness awakes from semi-consciousness; developed consciousness comes into the sense organs and makes the eighteen dhatavas. This consciousness is not mine -- not yours. You are American and I am Japanese -- but we have the same consciousness, see the same colors, taste the same taste. This shows that we are not individual. To realize this uniform consciousness should destroy egotism!

"... *the twenty-five bhava are pure*." --Altogether, there are twenty-five forms of existence. Human beings go up and down -- down and up -- always making karma, always repeating -- and never reaching the highest heaven! But if they can come clear of it -- they will never again reincarnate in this human life!

(Madame Blavatsky made it still higher in her creation of that Western culture called "Theosophy.") We do not need to go higher! But we must get out of this state!

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BOOKS NOTED

ZEN SAND: the Book of Capping Phrases for Koan Practice, by Victor Sogen Hori. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2003. $37.00, cloth.

Capping phrases, *jakugo* or *agyo*, are the Chinese phrases commonly used in koan study in Japanese Rinzai temples. As such, they offer a window onto the curious melding of of Chinese religion and literary culture that produced the koan, and onto the manner in which koan practice is carried out in Japanese temples today. Now *Zen Sand* offers Western scholars and students of Zen access to an unprecedented number of capping phrases in translation, over four thousand phrases of varying length drawn from two important modern phrase anthologies. The title is in part a reference to *Zen Dust*, Ruth Sasaki and Isshu Miura's 1966 Zen miscellany, which included a small selection of the phrases.

Victor Hori, a professor of Japanese Religions at McGill University, spent many years as a monk in Rinzai temples in Japan, and the volume is informed by his firsthand experiences of Japanese koan Zen as well as those of Japanese and American Zen priests of his acquaintance. The book's introductory material places the phrases in their context within the koan system as evolved by Hakuin and his successors, offers intriguing conjectures as to the origin of the phrases in the poetry "games" that were a part of Chinese literary culture, and surveys something of the history of the capping phrases in koan study in China and Japan.

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From the editor:

(good old fashioned Gut Zen.)

The cover is a direct reproduction of the persimmon leaf upon which Senzaki wrote his poem. It has held up well over all these years and is in better shape than most of our manuscripts from that time and makes a good case for the use of "living paper". Maybe we should do Zen Notes on large lettuce leaves? Now, not only does your mind receive the Dharma but when hungry, have a Zen Notes salad and your whole body gets the Dharma....

While the beasties debate who should appear next, I'll sit in,
so long as A rose that is a rose ...
is still a persimmon leaf

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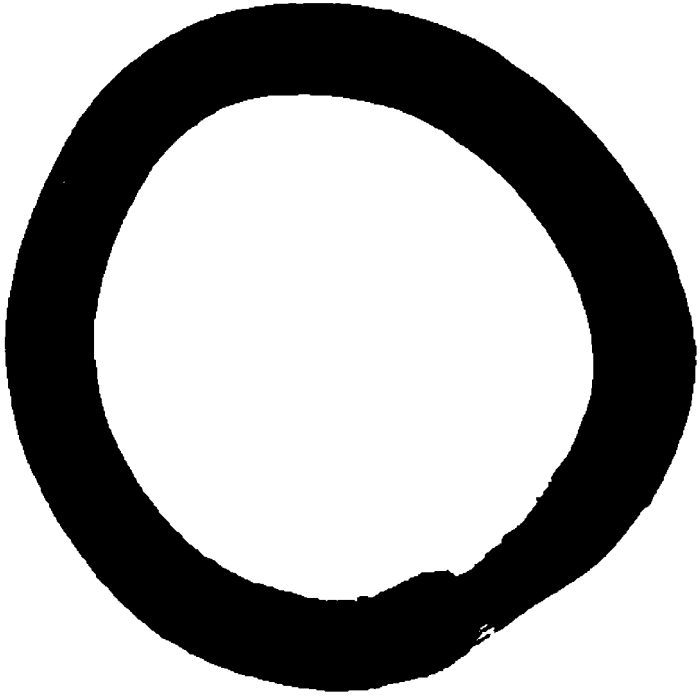

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