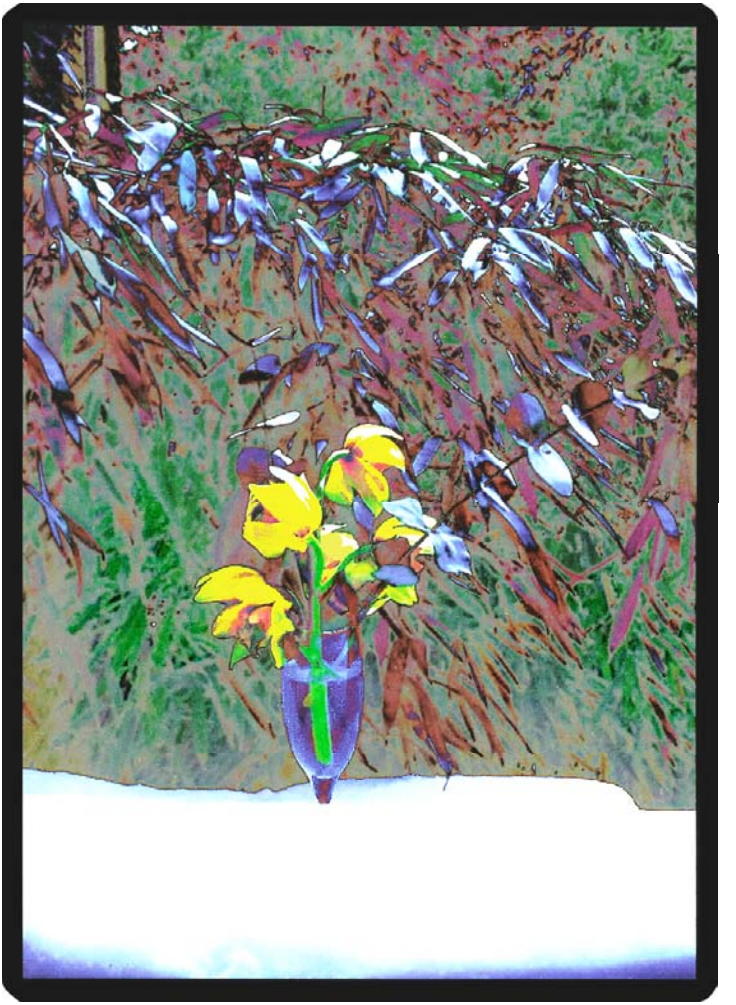
Zen Notes



Winter flowers sipping wine
In summer bloom

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

TWENTY-NINTH LECTURE

Saturday, February 11th, 1939

(Sokei-an speaking...)
I shall repeat the last sentence of the text of the last lecture:

"*When a Bodhisattva attains awakening, he is not bound to any Dharma and he does not seek emancipation from any Dharma. He does not hate samsara nor does he favor Nirvana. He admires neither the observation of commandments nor their violation. He does not esteem one who has practiced Dharma for a long time and does not think lightly of anyone who has just been initiated.*"

Then the part for tonight:

"*Because he awakes to all circumstances! He awakes as an eye sees all the circumstances before it with its own light. In this perfect light of awakening he attains a disinterested attitude in love and hate, because the light in itself possesses no real nature by which it loves or hates.*

O Obedient One! The Bodhisattva and the sentient beings of the future world who by practice will completely attain their disinterested mind, will apprehend that there is nothing to practice or attain. The light of Perfect Awakening which pervades infinite space, and absolute annihilation are not two different states. In this luminous state of annihilation, the hundred thousand trillion of countless Buddha-kestra (worlds) which are in number like the grains of sand of the Ganges, are like the blossoms in the sky which appear and disappear at random."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

"*Because he awakes to all circumstances!*" -- It means mostly the eight circumstances previously explained -- is not bound by any Dharma, does not seek emancipation from any Dharma, is not trapped by any special teaching, etc.

"*... he does not seek emancipation from any Dharma.*" -- However, he doesn't try to go away from any particular Dharma. If he were born in a Christian family, he would not be bound to

the Christian tradition nor does he seek emancipation from it.

"*He does not hate samsara nor does he favor Nirvana.*" -- He does not hate this world of birth and death, nor does he favor Nirvana. In both states he will be quite comfortable! Some say, "Oh, this world -- this filthy sinful life!" This is a usual conception -- to hate this world and to find refuge in some other world.

"*He admires neither the observation of commandments nor their violation.*" -- Just as a soldier in the regiment must take orders. But we do not pay attention to those who violate commandments. This human commandment is very romantic-sounding among 200 monks -- but observing a commandment means nothing! Two hundred monks in the dinning room -- just one sound -- bang! -- then silence. They eat and drink; one in the next room hears only silence. At half past five in the morning the monks are up; half an hour later, all are in line... just usual routine!

"*He does not esteem one who has practiced Dharma for a long time...*" -- The usual attitude is to sit down and worship an old monk. But, "Look at that young monk -- just initiated!"

"*Because he awakes to all circumstances!*" -- All the eight circumstances. I do not admire my hand more than my foot -- it is the same body. To "awake to the circumstances" means that you are living in those circumstances -- that you are not dead in those circumstances. Perhaps you have a very big house, but no one is living in the rooms; every room is dust-filled, haunted. It is a dead house! But when every room is lit, furnished and clean, filled with flowers -- the house is awakened!

If you are just awake to outer activity and asleep inside, your mind is not awakened. You will go to the theater, cinema, spend your day very busily -- but maybe you have never looked at your own mind and may never know what is living there! Your mind is like the woods into which no hunter or woodcutter has ever stepped. Snakes, snails and frogs are living there -- it is a wild-wood! You must awaken to the inside -- and then to the outside, to all circumstances!

"*He awakes as an eye sees all the circumstances before it with its own light.*" -- This awakening means awakening to the outside; first awaken inside and then turn the light of this awakening to the outside. "With its own light" -- not with some borrowed light.

When you awaken to all circumstances, then this mysterious, supernatural power will be bestowed. Many people awaken to the inside and find the fundamental consciousness -- but few will turn this awakened light upon the outside and awaken to all the

circumstances -- so we meditate.

"*In this perfect light of awakening, he attains a disinterested attitude in love and hate, ...*" -- "Love" means favorable circumstances; "hate" means adverse circumstances. You must have a penetrating mind; you hate something because you don't know it -- and you attach to something because you don't know yourself.

Practice this disinterested attitude, the attitude based upon Perfect Awakening. Awaken in Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya. Awaken to each circumstance. To enter Buddhism, you must enter from the front gate. Do not enter from the side gate, the kitchen door, the window, the chimney. And you must enter the "house" of Buddhism in authentic fashion!

"*... because the light in itself possesses no dual nature by which it loves or hates.*" -- The light of awakening will go into all places. Your eye must go into every place and every mind with a disinterested attitude. As in your kitchen, your eye will go into each utensil -- this is a knife, this a spoon, this a cup.

"*O Obedient One! The Bodhisattva and the sentient beings of the future world who by practice will completely attain their disinterested mind will apprehend that there is nothing to practice or to attain.*" -- This line is a little complicated. I will explain it carefully.

First, you must be indifferent to all those circumstances. "Indifferent" is a little different from "disinterested." Purposely you must be indifferent. I observed the Christian missionaries who came to our country -- they smiled the same way in the rich man's and the poor man's house.

Second, then you will attain the "disinterested" mind -- not making any discrimination anywhere. Your mind becomes natural!

Third, you forget about nondiscrimination. When you see a rich man, you may admire his beautiful clothes; when you see a poor man -- I had better help him! You do not always give the same smile. When you truly attain the disinterested mind -- you are delighted by beautiful things and you recognize the ugly.

But the half-baked disinterested mind pays no special attention to one or the other, and the immature disinterested mind sees nothing.

In conclusion, in attaining the disinterested mind, the third

attitude of the fully enlightened, disinterested mind loses the disinterested quality. It looks as if he were making discriminations -- but it is the true enlightened mind.

I shall cite an illustration. When I was thinking and dreaming about New York, looking at photographs or making pictures of the city skyline and the beautiful Hudson River -- that was immature knowledge.

Next, I came to New York by train and by ferry from Weehawken, and entered 23rd Street. Then I talked about New York, described it, wrote about it and sent picture-postcards everywhere!

Third, I have stayed in New York for many years and I have entirely forgotten it! I am thinking of something else. In attaining the disinterested mind, there are these three stages.

"*The light of Perfect Awakening which pervades infinite space* ..." -- The light of Perfect Awakening shining on this outside! So all eight circumstances multiply, and again multiply -- and our knowledge of Awakening will penetrate all branches of human activity. This is one side.

"... *and absolute annihilation* ..." -- This absolute annihilation is the other side. You will attain it! There is no color, no sound -- only the vibration of air.

Reality -- the state itself -- is intangible, unintelligible; when you get into it, neither Reality nor yourself exists! In true Nirvana, that ecstasy of union with the universe will be completely annihilated!

When you practice meditation, the four jnanas, drop the old memories -- you come into a wonderful abandoned state. Consciousness fuses entirely in mind-consciousness. Heretics think this is absolute Nirvana -- but it is the so-called fourth stage of jnana. That relaxation, that ecstasy, will be completely destroyed -- annihilated in true Nirvana. The state itself is neither dark nor light, neither time nor space. To explain this, the Buddha calls it "Absolute Annihilation!"

"... *are not two different states.*" -- From this standpoint you must observe. While you have something on your mind as ecstasy , you will never forget that state. You are trapped in that state, and you will not get out until that state is completely annihilated! You will find yourself again -- but it is not the same person! Before you attained awakening, you were within yourself -- but now you are

no longer there! This one will become your "representative" -- but it is not you any more. You see yourself in bottomless, huge emptiness; the thing you called "you" is no longer there! But something in this emptiness moves and speaks, while you yourself have become very small and insignificant.

"*In this luminous state of annihilation the hundred thousand trillion of countless Buddha-kestra, which are in number like the grains of the sand of the Ganges, ...*" -- This Buddha-kestra, is countless -- but it has another meaning, too.

I am Buddha-kestra from this window; it is my window. You are Buddha-kestra from your window.

"*... are like the blossoms in the sky which appear and disappear at random.*" -- The Buddhist must do things! We might just say, "annihilation" -- but the Buddha says, "Luminous state of Annihilation." This annihilated state has light and power. But the Buddha says that in this spaceless, timeless, luminous state the countless Buddha-kestra appear and disappear at random -- like blossoms in the sky!

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Twenty five Zen Koans

Selected and Translated by Sokei-an Sasaki

In the winter and spring of 1938 Sokei-an gave a series of lectures entitled "Twenty-Five Koans". He had planned to publish all of them monthly in "Cat's Yawn" but only succeeded in publishing the first four. Since "Cat's Yawn" is out of print and we only have two copies left, I would like to start publishing the whole set in Zen Notes starting with this first, timely issue of 2004. -ed

First Koan

(January 8, 1938)

The Second Patriarch, Eka, questioned Bodhidharma, saying:

"My mind had not yet found repose. I entreat you, Master, [show me how I may attain] repose of mind."

The Master answered, "Lay your mind before me. I will repose your mind for you."

Eka said, "It is impossible for one to lay hold of one's mind."

The Master said, "I have already reposed your mind for you."

Sokei-an says;

This is the end of the Koan. This Koan appears in several authentic texts of the Zen school, in Mumonkan, Kattoshu, Keitoku Dentoroku and others.

When Bodhidharma came to China the scholastic philosophy of Buddhism was at the height of its development. In southern China the Buddhist Emperor, Liang Wu-ti, was building many temples and monasteries and supporting many monks and nuns. His capital was Kenko [Chien K'ang], the present day Nanking.

In Northern China there were wonderful activities in Buddhism, because those early teachers of Buddhism and their manuscripts came from the northern route, through the Pamir plateau, Chinese Turkestan, across the Goby Desert to the source of the Yellow

River [Yang-tse], and came down to the city of Loyang, at the eastern bend of the Yellow River. Loyang was the capital of the country of Wei, and a center of culture and Chinese civilization at that time -- the T'ang dynasty, and the foregoing dynasty, the Sui.

Huien-tsan, a famous Chinese monk, went to India, stayed about fifteen years and came back with about 120 camel backs of sutras, and started to translate them.

Bodhiruchi was a very famous monk at that time. In his office were one hundred Indian monks and five hundred Chinese monks, working under the direction of the Emperor Liang Wu-ti.

Bodhidharma came by sea from Southern India, by Java, landed in Canton, came into Nanking and met the Emperor Liang Wu-ti. Bodhidharma was already 120 years old -- sometimes said to have been 145 years old. The description is not very clear. He made a conversation about Buddhism with Emperor Liang Wu-ti.

The Emperor asked a question of Bodhidharma: "*I am building monasteries and supporting the monks who are translating the sutras. What merit can I attain?*"

Bodhidharma answered him: "*In a word, there is no merit.*"

The Emperor failed to understand his words. Bodhidharma left Nanking and went north across the Yang-tse River to the city of Loyang in the country of Wei. There was some revolution there. The Queen revolted against the Emperor and seized the throne, and his children captured her and threw her into the bottom of the Yang-tse River. Bodhidharma, unfortunately, arrived in the middle of that revolution.

He then left the city of Loyang, went to Mount Su's top and there he was living in a temple grotto called Shorinji [Shao-lin-szu]. Opposite this Shorinji Temple there is a high mountain about 8,000 feet high, called Shorinji Mountain. From this grotto temple any one would see this huge cliff of Shorinji. Bodhidharma took up his abode in a cave facing this cliff.

Bodhidharma realized that scholastic and philosophical Buddhism had become dominant in China, and that the scholars of Buddhism had failed to grasp the reality of Buddhism. He was convinced that he must promulgate Buddhist Realism. This could not be conveyed in lectures, so he demonstrated it with his body of Buddhism, sitting down in a cave, with his face confronting a high cliff for nine years speaking no word to his visitors. The Chinese dubbed him the "Wall-gazing Brahmin." Day and night he sat in meditation in the cross-legged posture.

This meditation was not what is commonly conceived of as meditation, thinking of something far away. Bodhidharma was not intoxicated by the brew of human thoughts. His mind was pure as the empty ocean; it was realistic emptiness. The monks of the capital were engaged in translating sutras and in debating hairsplitting points of doctrine, elevating their minds with merely theoretical knowledge. The Buddhism which came from India at that time was like that, for the true Buddhism had died out in India a long time since. It was fortunate that Bodhidharma should have brought the true Buddhism to China; otherwise there would not be anything called Buddha-Mind among us today!

There was a famous scholar of Loyang, a student of Taoism and Confucianism, named Eka. He had heard of Bodhidharma, so he went to Shorinji to have an interview with him. Bodhidharma spoke no word to the visitor. So Eka went down the mountain.

Three years afterwards he came up the mountain again. This was during winter, the 9th of December. In Central China, about the bend of the Yellow River, near Loyang, it is quite cold; about 20 degrees colder than New York City. I went to Vermont one winter and the temperature there was almost the same.

Eka was forty years old when he visited Bodhidharma again. Hitherto his name had been Chin-koa [Divine Light]. He stayed at Shorinji with Bodhidharma, for about six years. He died aged one hundred and seven years. He was a man of the Northern Sui dynasty, about 570 C.E., in the middle of the sixth century.

When Eka arrived at the mountain, Bodhidharma was meditating in the Temple Grotto. You must think of the strength of the monks of that day, what they endured and went through, but don't take it too literally -- it was his attitude; he spoke no word, but kept himself sitting down and he selected a nice place. These days all monks have a brass band going before them. Bodhidharma was in the mountains, but it was a farm mountain and he was the Master of the mountain. He was at first in the beautiful city of Liang, where many monks were translating the sutras, protected by the Emperor and debating. How mischievous, and how debasing for themselves, in this enlargement of mind which is nothing but theoretical knowledge, far away from realizing emptiness.

Eka stood in the snow, waiting for Bodhidharma to speak. But Bodhidharma paid no attention to him; Eka was no more to him than a tree or a rock. All night Eka stood in the snow. In the morning he was buried to his waist in the drifts, but still he stood there, intent upon asking Bodhidharma for the true teachings!

Realizing the stranger's honest desire, in compassion Bodhidharma said to him, *"Standing in the deep snow, what is it that you wish?"*

Eka replied, *"I beseech you, O Master, open your lips and bestow upon me your pure Dharma!"*

The Master said, *"So you are seeking the true Dharma! From ancient days monks have cast away their lives for true enlightenment. It is difficult to find. How dare you ask me to teach it to you!"*

Eka drew his heavy dagger, cut off his left arm and presented it to the Master, saying, *"Thus I prove my sincerity!"*

This incident is described in the scriptures, but many students of the Zen School do not accept this cutting of the arm in the literal sense. "To cut off" is interpreted as casting aside all traditional methods for arriving at the final truth. Bodhidharma realized that Eka's mind was ready to accept his instruction and that he was capable of becoming an utensil of Dharma. Therefore he said to Eka: *"Well then, what do you wish?"*

Whereupon Eka spoke, *"My mind has not yet found repose. I entreat you, Master, [show me how I may attain] repose of mind."*

The Japanese word *anshin* is translated as "repose of mind," but its meaning is broader than that of the English words. *Shin* means "soul," "spirit" or "mind." To obtain absolute relaxation, to attain absolute freedom by the annihilation of every sort of agitation -- this is *anshin*. *Anshin* is the foundation of life. Without it we cannot live one moment in joy. If we attain it we can live in repose under any circumstances.

Eka had been an earnest student of Confucianism and Taoism for many years, but he had not been able to find complete repose. He had visited many teachers, but something was not yet quite clear to him. There were still some doubts in the bottom of his mind. As long as you have that uneasiness, as an artist you cannot create, as a warrior you cannot fight, as a scholar you cannot teach, as a priest you cannot convince your fellow men. No matter how you act, if you have no repose of mind a true man will find you out. Eka was an honest student and admitted at once that he had some doubts.

The Master answered, *"Lay your mind before me. I will repose your mind for you."*

"Lay your mind before me" -- in a word, "show me your

mind." There is the Realist speaking! "You speak many things. I have heard many words. But show me THAT!"

There is a very expressive American slang phrase, "I come from Missouri -- you've got to show me!" In Zen we do not accept any speaking in terms.

Thus Bodhidharma said, "Show me your mind!"

Eka replied, *"It is impossible for one to lay hold of one's mind."*

The Master said, *"I have already reposed your mind for you."*

This is the koan. Of course the answer -- how to handle this in the Zen school -- is not written in any book, and a Zen monk will speak no more than this.

I have beaten twenty dusts all this hour, giving legs to the snake which does not need it, so I will beat no more dusts! I could offer this to the snake and the snake would refuse it!

I will give you twenty-five Koans. I hope you enjoy it. I will do it once in a lifetime. I will not repeat it once more.

(Rang bell)

(Sokei-an's carving: The Koan)

Note from the editor

To many, since Zen became prominent in the West, there is an idealistic image of a continuous transmission from master to student from the time of Buddha's holding up the flower and Mahakasyapa's smile. There is an assumption that the many Zen teachings that have cropped up in the West, like lilies in the field, are direct descendants of Buddha's flower. Thus, too many readily digest the dharma lineage and teachings of zen masters that have shown up on the scene without really scrutinizing the teacher's merits.

The truth is that this "direct link" has been broken on several occasions, especially in Japan, and reconnected by the sincere, spontaneous effort and awakening of certain zen students without a recognized master's stamp of approval. So, like the Buddha when he saw the morning star, they too had to rely on an intrinsic sense that their realization was authentic experience of the "Great Matter" despite the lack of a real master to witness it.

While modern Zen appears to have all the trappings of the real dharma, there seems to be something vital missing which the flood of zen books in the last decade or so may be trying to fill in. This age of terror avoidance is spawning an era of "goldfish pond" zen nestled in the safe haven of a sprawling shopping mall consciousness more and more interested in security and peer acceptance than confronting the "Great Matter". Very few, indeed, are willing to climb into a solitary row boat cast upon a vast ocean in search of the Great White Whale. Yet that is exactly the type of quest the Buddha and the early Patriarch's underwent and is the only quest that will bring before one that magnificent, yet dangerous beast whose very presence will evoke primal terrors within that need to be faced not fenced before any real progress in dealing with the "Great Matter" can be made.

Students of today need again to reaffirm their own footing in the absolute and the wisdom of their intrinsic nature rather than in the tasty smorgasbord of zen delicacies being offered in the name of the "Great Matter" by others. So with this in mind, I think it will be of interest for readers of Zen Notes to get a taste of a period in Japan when zen was not what it seemed to be as the new series Bankei and His World by Peter Haskel will present to you.

* * *

The cover flowers were done by Bob Schaefer's wife, Chamaiporn Schaefer, who has an exquisite touch with flower arrangements. I intend to have an issue displaying some of her creations. The picture, itself was taken by some guy I met staring into a mirror while brushing my teeth. -ed.

BANKEI AND HIS WORLD

This issue of Zen Notes begins a new series, Bankei and His World. *It was originally composed in preparation for my thesis on the maverick Zen Master Bankei Yotaku (1622-1693), which incorporated much of the same material. The earlier version, however, included a good deal of additional information drawn from modern Japanese scholarship, material which has rarely been available to English-speaking students of Zen and Zen history and which I thought would be of interest to readers of Zen Notes.*

Bankei regarded his teaching of the Unborn as wholly original, and his freewheeling "natural" style of Zen stands in marked contrast to much of what came before and after. But no set of ideas, however radical, exists entirely apart from the time and place in which it is formed. Bankei's originality, independence, and iconoclasm were themselves characteristic of certain currents in Japanese Zen during the seventeenth century, a period of revival, innovation, and even revolution for the Zen school. Like Bankei, many of his contemporaries in the priesthood believed that the authentic transmission of Zen in Japan had been debased and finally destroyed during the preceding two or three centuries. If Zen was to continue, such reformers argued, it had to be thought through again from the beginning, not only revitalized but reinvented. The Zen of Bankei's age, the Tokugawa period, was in many ways a rejection rather than an extension of the Zen that came immediately before. To fully understand Bankei and seventeenth-century Zen it is necessary to start with a discussion of Japanese Zen in the late Middle Ages, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the subject of Part I. Part II will deal with the Zen of the Tokugawa period itself , while the third and final section presents a biography of Bankei based on the traditional sources. Part IV, The Zen of the Unborn, *an essay on Bankei's teachings, was published previously in* Zen Notes, *Vol. 38, numbers 4 and 5. --PH*

PART I: ZEN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD

Despite certain idealized conceptions of Rinzai and Soto Zen as single, unified teachings that span the generations of teachers and disciples, these sects of Japanese Zen, from the time of their introduction in the Kamakura period (1192-1333), were marked by conspicuous diversity and almost continual change. In no line or temple do we find a single coherent teaching that can be traced intact from its original founders throughout the Middle Ages or into the Tokugawa period (1600-1867/69) in anything but

name. This is as true of major temples and lines as of lesser ones. The pure Sung koan Zen promulgated by Nampo Jomyo (Daio Kokushi,1235-1309) and Dogen Kigen (1200-1253)--founders of the lines from which most modern Japanese Rinzai and Soto groups trace their descent -- was already being radically transformed within a century of their deaths, and ultimately gave way in both sects to a system of secret oral transmission for the koans, the *missan denju* whose practice was strongly influenced by Esoteric Buddhism. Indeed one common feature which characterizes the development of all the Zen groups during the medieval period is the tendency to diverge significantly from their original Chinese models, even where, at the outset, these models had been scrupulously observed. This did not reflect a deliberate rejection of Chinese Zen teaching, but rather a gradual process of adaptation to Japanese norms and preferences that in time came to alter imported Zen, and even the nature of transmission itself. Although, outwardly, many of the forms of Chinese Zen were maintained, the essential character of Chinese Zen was ultimately subverted by this accommodation to more traditional Japanese cultural and religious models, a process that occurred simultaneously, though with different results, in both urban and provincial temples.

While in part explained by the intrinsic appeal of such traditional elements among the Zen monks themselves, this process was also conditioned by their need to secure the patronage of the current ruling elite and to present the sort of strongly modified Zen that would fulfill the expectations of their patrons. While there remain certain exceptions, by and large medieval Zen in both the capital and the provinces came to be strongly identified with and dependent upon the dominant military clans, and every significant shift in the power structure saw a corresponding reordering in the Zen world. Whether or not directly attributable to this factor of patronage, crucial changes in both the intellectual and organizational character of Japanese Zen nonetheless emerged in the wake of each major political upheaval.

The world of medieval Zen, moreover, was never monolithic; varying tendencies and streams existed side by side, within the same sect and, at times, the same temple. Precisely because of this heterogeneous character, the usual classification of Japanese Zen groups as "Rinzai" or "Soto" proves unsatisfactory when applied to the Muromachi period (1333-1573), the period of the Ashikaga shogunate. In fact, the commonly stated distinctions between Rinzai and Soto are essentially Japanese distinctions, almost wholly the invention of the Tokugawa period, when members of both sects, rejecting or simply denying the experience of the Middle Ages, attempted to forge for themselves identities based on the original teachings of their founders. In medieval China itself,

from the time of the Sung dynasty (960-1279), no critical differences between Rinzai and Soto teachings are apparent.

While the leading line, or *ha*, of Japanese Soto Zen, the Eihei-ha,, was active primarily in the provinces, it tended to remain fragmented and even included lines closely associated with the urban Rinzai temples and rejecting any distinction between the two sects. Similarly, the *Wanshi-ha* , a separate Soto transmission arriving in the late Kamakura period, had been strongly influenced by Lin-chi (J: Rinzai) teachers in Yuan China, and in Japan established itself in an environment dominated by Rinzai lines. Most heterogeneous of all, however, was the Rinzai school itself, consisting of a large number of lines--twenty-two, forty-one or fifty-three, by various calculations--imported in the Kamakura period, the overwhelming number of which were concentrated in the cities as members of the so-called Gozan system, under the patronage of the Kamakura and Muromachi military governments or *Bakufus* . Others, like the Daio and Genju lines saw their most important development as private temples in the provinces, where they came to share certain common characteristics with the provincial Soto groups. The result was a provincial Zen in which both Rinzai and Soto monks participated, a Zen that evolved apart from, and at times in opposition to the Zen of the official urban temples. The principal division in medieval Japanese Zen, both intellectually and institutionally, was between these two groups: the official "Gozan" temples of Kamakura and Kyoto, referred to as the *sorin* , and the various lines existing outside this organization, identified with the Zen of the provincial temples and referred to under the collective term *rinka*.

Originally, in China, both terms had been used interchangeably, referring simply to Zen temples as a group. *Sung-lin* (J:*sorin*), however, came eventually to designate those temples under the patronage and control of the palace and the official elite, the government-dominated temples, marked by an increasingly complex ceremonial and organizational structure; while *lin-hsia* (J:*rinka*) served to identify those temples not within this category. In Muromachi Japan too, *sorin* referred to the *kanji* , the temples of the official Gozan system, which came to include virtually all the Zen lines except the Daio, Eihei, and Genju, which constituted the principal powers of the *rinka*. Yet even here, the distinctions were not absolute, and in certain instances, *sorin* and *rinka* merged in subtler shadings.

Standing somewhere between the two, for example, was Daitokuji, founded by Daio's heir Shuho Myocho (Daito Kokushi, 1282-1338). Daitokuji maintained important aristocratic connections in the capital, supported virtually as a private temple of the Imperial court, though it continued to rank formally within

the Gozan system till the mid-fifteenth century. Its Zen, however, differed in important respects from that of the *sorin*, being identified with *rinka* Zen practice, as was that of its branch temple, Myoshinji, which ultimately overshadowed it. Both Daitokuji and Myoshinji maintained a certain idealism in respect to Zen study, and, as the leading *rinka* temples in the capital, became the natural focus for those rejecting the increasingly effete atmosphere of the *sorin*. The Daio line constituted a particular case, combining elements of both *rinka* and *sorin*, but in this respect it was hardly unique. As noted before, certain Eihei lines were intimately associated with the *sorin* temples; and within the Genju lines, too, instances of such close contact with the *sorin* occurred from the beginning of the Muromachi period and were dramatically augmented with the "refounding" of the sect in the sixteenth century, when the Genju line and its Zen were virtually absorbed into the Gozan.

The expressions *sorin* and *rinka*, then, describe not only different classes of Zen organization--the official temples and their lines and those outside the official system--but two very different "styles" of Zen, transcending both Rinzai and Soto. Nevertheless, the influence of certain common intellectual elements dominated the otherwise diverse developments of these two styles. Two of these were of particular importance in determining the course of medieval Japanese Zen. The first was the continuing prestige of Esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyo*) and associated practices, in particular the role of secret transmission and the performance of *kito* or esoteric rites. Already in the Kamakura period these practices were represented in many of the Zen temples, and their influence continued to expand throughout the Muromachi period, even in those lines such as the Daio and Eihei whose original founders had vigorously rejected any compromise with the older Heian-period (798-1185) sects of Buddhism. No longer limited to auxiliary practices, however, esoteric elements eventually altered the form, and, in certain instances, even the content of Zen transmission in both the *rinka* and *sorin*.

The second key factor common to both *sorin* and *rinka* Zen was the central role played by Chinese language materials. In the *sorin*, these were treated primarily as subjects for study or for imitation, and this literary culture became the mainstream and principal glory of Gozan Zen. By contrast, the *rinka*, though not without literary figures of its own, concentrated its attention on the *agyo*, short, generally arcane phrases drawn from Chinese sources. These were construed as "answers" to the koans and were preserved secretly, often together with their explanations and interpretations, in each *rinka* teaching line. This practice apparently originated in the Kamakura period and grew

progressively more popular. It was the secret transmission of the *agyo*--a procedure modeled largely on *mikkyo* prototypes--that formed the cornerstone of the *missan denju* system and became the principal mode of Zen study in the *rinka*, even penetrating the *sorin* temples in the course of the sixteenth century. Thus, during the late Muromachi period, both "literary" and esoteric elements appeared to find a certain mutual resolution in the *missan denju*, which was eventually adopted throughout the *rinka* and the *sorin*, in certain instances even persisting well into the Tokugawa period.

While both *sorin* and *rinka* existed simultaneously, it was the *sorin* that dominated early Muromachi Zen under the patronage of the Ashikaga Bakufu. The *rinka* came to prominence only in the latter part of the Muromachi period, following the decline of Ashikaga authority, and the *sorin* during its heyday was scarcely affected by the *rinka* temples. I would like, therefore, to discuss separately the development of the *sorin* in the Muromachi period before turning to an examination of the *rinka*, which, by contrast, evolved in many ways as a response to its counterpart, the Gozan temples of the capital.

As mentioned above, during the early Muromachi period, all the lines of Zen except the Eihei and Genju were placed under Bakufu control as official temples in what is known as the Gozan system, patterned on the hierarchical *Wu shan* system of ranking for Zen temples adopted during the Southern Sung dynasty (1126-1279). In China, the *Wu shan* system reflected the important connections that had developed between the palace and bureaucratic elite and the Zen school, particularly the Lin-chi sect, which had emerged as the dominant school of Zen from the time of the dynasty's removal to the south. Members of the bureaucracy conducted official inspection circuits of the Zen temples, studied under Zen teachers and on occasion joined the Zen priesthood. The life of the temples, in turn, became strongly imbued with the atmosphere of aristocratic Chinese culture, with a growing emphasis on ceremonial, the composition of poetry and the synthesis of Zen with Confucianism. Lacking any significant popular following, the Zen sect depended on a relatively small number of key patrons drawn from the highest circles of the Sung administration, and its survival depended on cultivating and maintaining these aristocratic connections. Enthusiastic Japanese monks returning from the continent often conveyed a misleading image of the Zen sect as a dominant force in Chinese intellectual life, but its actual influence was restricted to a fairly narrow sphere. Buddhism itself had greatly diminished in importance in Sung China, and the Zen sect represented only a small portion of this already reduced domain. Even within the Zen monasteries themselves, the temple registers indicate that the overwhelming number of monks were foreigners, principally Koreans and

Japanese, while by the Yuan dynasty, few Chinese remained.

The world of Chinese Zen, then, was relatively limited in scope, dependent on and identified with yet another, albeit influential, minority, the governing elite. The *Wu shan* system, as a product of this relationship with the Sung court and bureaucracy, established a series of ranks for what became the official Zen temples. It was inaugurated in the reign of the Southern Sung Emperor Ning-tsung (1195-1215) and is said to have been based on early Indian precedents. At the apex of the system were five temples known as the *Wu shan* (J: *gozan*) followed in rank by ten temples called *shih c'ha* (J: *jissatsu*, or *jissetsu*) and thirty-five lesser temples referred to as *chu shan* (J: *shozan*).A corresponding order of ranking was established for the Zen monks themselves, who in the course of their careers would pass from *chu shan* to *shih ch'a* to *Wu shan*, with each stage requiring official permission. Appointments to the abbacy of the leading temples might come directly from the Emperor.

(To be continued)

NOTE: Diacritical marks and footnotes have been omitted to facilitate publication. Any questions regarding sources may be addressed to the Editor, *Zen Notes*.

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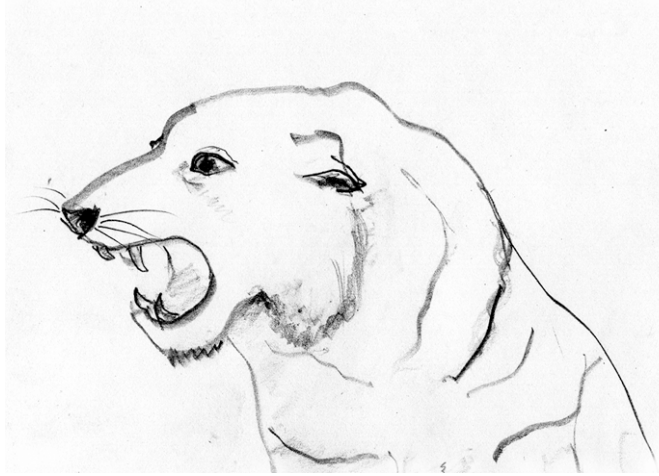
The year of the monkey? My paws!
It's always a year for cats.
Some monkey must have snuck in by putting catnip in my catnap...



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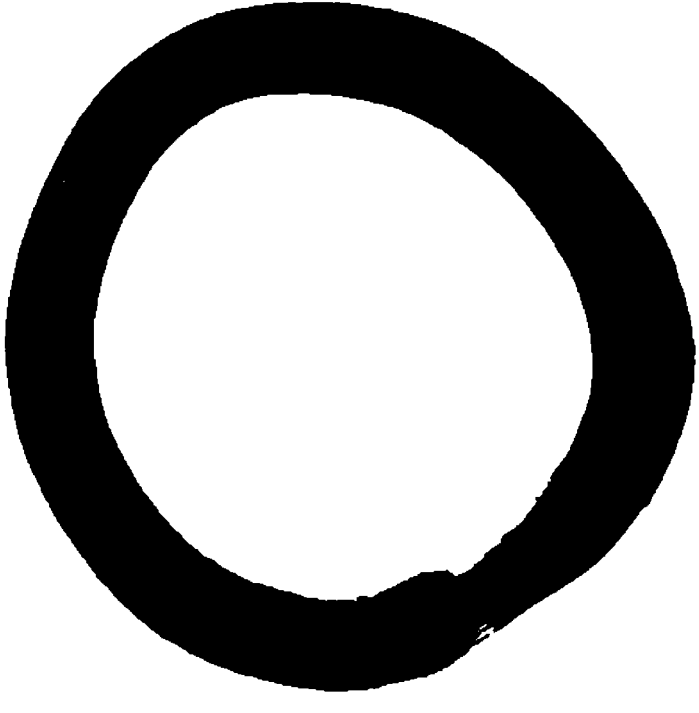

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