Zen Notes

Threading the Needle

(Seiko Susan Morningstar)

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

THIRTY FIRST LECTURE

Saturday, February 25th, 1939

"O Obedient One! All Bodhisattvas strive to realize samsara and Nirvana thus. They strive to realize those states step by step. They contemplate upon the states which they have thus realized. They stay and live in that realization. They experience this realization according to such and such methods. They always attain enlightenment thus and seek this Dharma without doubt and agony."

Then the Lokanatha, desiring to reaffirm what he had said, recited the following gatha:

"O Samantanetra!

You must know that the bodies and minds of all sentient beings are like phantoms.

The body pertains to the four Bhuta and the mind to the six Bhautika. (the six qualities of objective entities)

When each of the four elements which constitute the body returns to its original element,

Who is it that reorganizes them?"

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The Gatha following this will be continued next week.

"O Obedient One! All Bodhisattvas strive to realize samsara and Nirvana thus." -- I must explain this "thus." I must go back to the lecture which I gave you last Saturday. Having no more time, I failed to explain the last part, so I shall explain it tonight.

At the end of the last lecture there were some complicated sentences which describe the consummation of the realization of samsara and Nirvana; I shall explain this consummation of the two states:

Samsara means this present state of the human being -- the state of birth and death.

We take three kinds of birth and death. Our bodies take birth and death and our life takes birth and death.

As an example -- I was born as an artist. I died in "it" -- in the state of an artist -- and then I was born in the state of a poet and died again. I was then born in the state of a Buddhist teacher. This is so with everyone: When he was young, he was a butcher, at thirty he was a grocery-man, and at fifty he went into real estate.

And our minds take life and death almost every moment. A minute ago I was thinking of a cigarette; that mind died and I was thinking of chocolate; and that mind died... grapefruit? Perhaps the cigarette will come back again -- be reincarnated in the mind.

These are called the three kinds of samsara.

Then "Nirvana" -- it is just one state. Commonly, it is explained as the state of death -- but Nirvana is not the state of death! It exists beyond birth and death. It is like a triangle, a pyramid, of which Nirvana is the base. This is the literal meaning of samsara and Nirvana. The sides of the triangle are birth and death.

Usually people think there is no beginning of birth and death, and that therefore birth and death are nonexistent. Ridiculous! Nirvana will never vanish -- that state is always existing. The Bodhisattva apprehends the true state of samsara and Nirvana through his own experience. This enlightened one's definition is different from the usual notions. He explains it in four degrees -- a very lofty conception.

I think I will speak about this once in my life. Perhaps later you will recall this lecture and realize what I am saying. The Bodhisattva presents it thus:

1. He states that Nirvana does not appear after the vanishing of samsara. People believe that samsara must go and then Nirvana comes -- but the enlightened one thinks in no such way. To him, samsara and Nirvana exist at the same moment. It is true. It is just as the bottom of this bottle and its mouth exist at the same time; it doesn't take two different places -- just one! This illustration is of two places -- but the true conception of samsara and Nirvana is just one place.

People think that enlightened Dharma will come when the deluded mind vanishes -- but enlightened ones don't think so. The enlightened mind and the deluded mind are in the same place! It

does not come and it does not go -- "Now I am deluded -- but when I study Buddhism I will be enlightened!" My teacher used to express this as "amateur thinking." It is the dilettantism of Buddhism. So, to the Bodhisattva, the enlightened mind and the deluded mind are one.

2. The amateur thinks that when you are enlightened, there is some place in which you can get something and abandon something. In this objective place, he believes you can attain, abandoning the deluded mind.

But, to the enlightened one, there is no special place for enlightenment -- there is nothing to attain and nothing to abandon! Queer, isn't it? The state of enlightenment is really beyond the realm of the amateur's mind.

You sit down upon your quilt and meditate -- and there is nothing to lose. You don't get anywhere, but you need not go away from this place!

People think there are enlightened men who are staying some place and doing something. Enlightened ones think there is no enlightened man, that you are just the same; that there is no place to go, and nothing special to do or to desist from doing!

3. To the enlightened mind, the objectivities and subjectivities are entirely annihilated! There is no physical part and no spiritual part; body and mind are one. There is no inside nor outside.

People think you must go inside to meditate. "Inside" is also dilettantism. If you deny the outside -- how can you accept the inside? If you deny them both -- on what do you meditate? There is really nothing to meditate upon.

Others think there is something to experience to prove this enlightened state. But the enlightened one thinks there is nothing to prove, nothing to experience, and there is no man to prove or experience the enlightenment! Throughout the universe, there is no one at all -- so how can he assume to prove anything by his own experience?!

In the Avatamsaka Sutra it is said: "If anyone conceived true awakening, thinking that through his attainment of emancipation, all afflictions of the mind were cleared away and that he has transcended this world -- then this one has attained no eye to demonstrate the true Dharma!"

This is a very big line! Through this line is shown who is a true teacher, who is shallow, who is an amateur and who is a professor.

Many teachers who think they have attained enlightenment, to the true Buddhist are just amateurs!

4. Therefore all the nature of Dharma is uniform. There is nothing to go away from -- nothing to come back to. All the nature of Dharma, in enlightened and unenlightened man, is uniform and indestructible and will return to the great existence of Reality!

Though you have attained the first three states which I have explained -- if you do not attain the fourth, you cannot speak about enlightenment! These four stages are my explanation of the "THUS:" "All Bodhisattvas strive to attain the samsara and the Nirvana thus."

"*They strive to realize those states step by step.*" -- This "step by step" means that you first realize the Four Bhuta -- the four great elements -- earth, water, fire, air. Then the next step: to think of the six sense organs and the six rajas (emergence of consciousness). You realize that when you were born, you knew nothing about it, and your mind moves into the 12 Ayatanani and so forth. You slowly realize in what place you are living and what are the 18 dhatava. This is preliminary work --- the grammar school of Buddhism, all this philosophical analysis!

"*They contemplate upon the states which they have thus realized.*" -- Not only do you realize the four great elements, the twelve Ayatanani, the eighteen Dhatava, the twenty-five bhava -- but now you meditate on this. First you make an analytical and then synthetical view; then you meditate upon it, contemplating the states thus realized.

"*They stay and live in that realization.*" -- Now he is not merely meditating on it -- he is living and dwelling in it. This is not mere meditation; here there are many states -- but there are four especially. You live in the first jnana, then the second, and so forth -- many states of attainment.

"*They experience this realization according to such and such methods.*" -- Now you are not using some method invented by yourself -- but you accept the methods contrived by ancient men for sentient beings of the future world; you throw away the notions you have held for a lifetime and submit yourself to the great Dharma which has existed through 2500 years! If you are taking koans from a Zen master and endeavoring to attain step by step -- then your own experience is according to those "such and such" methods.

"*They always attain enlightenment thus and seek this Dharma*

without doubt and agony." -- Well, Buddhism has existed for 2500 years. What is it? Just the Buddha's notion? Doubt! And agony! Trying to get something out of this for himself. But men who have simple and pure minds seek "without doubt and agony."

This is the end of the sermon given by the Buddha to Samantanetra.

Then Lokanatha, desiring to reaffirm what he had said, recited the following gatha: "O Samantanetra!" -- Samantanetra is the symbol of the "All-seeing Eye" -- so-called Dharma-netra. There are five eyes; Manu eye, Deva eye, Wisdom eye, Dharma eye, and Buddha eye. Some day I shall give a lecture on these five eyes. The eye of wisdom is seen very rarely, but when you find it you will find the Law of eye, Samantanetra, the wisdom of the Dharma eye.

"*You must know that the bodies and minds of all sentient beings are like phantoms. The body pertains to the four Bhuta and the mind to the six Bhautika.*" -- The six qualities of objective entities, usually translated as "dusts."

"When each of the four elements which constitute the body returns to its original element, who is it that reorganizes them?" -- This is the Buddha's question. "When the four great elements of you decompose -- where do you go? When your heat goes to fire, your body to earth, your breath to air, and your moisture to water -- where do you go?" This is the same question in the Zen school. You will observe this koan. And this one: "When the candle flame is blown out -- where does it go?" ... Do you know?

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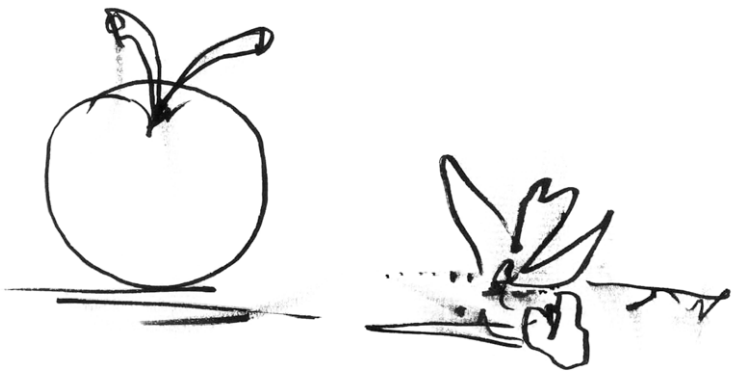

Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger;

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Sokei-an had undertaken two translations of the Record of Lin Chi (J: Rinzai). The first one during 1933-34 was complete and given in a series of lectures at that time. Then, during 1940-41, he began a second translation in a series of lectures which was cut short by his internment in 1942 at Ellis Island as part of the US Government's internment of Japanese during WW2. When Sokei-an was released, an illness contracted at Ellis island, prevented further work on this translation before he died suddenly in May of 1945.

Mary Farkas began a Zen Notes series on Lin Chi in 1977, (Vol. 24 #3) using a mix of both translations. Volumes 24-27 contained her efforts, which went as far as Sokei-an had gotten with the second translation. Then in the middle 1990's one of our members, Robert Lopez, also a former editor of Zen Notes, undertook compiling all of Sokei-an's lectures on the first translation in hope of putting them in book form. He finally finished early this year but didn't feel it would work as a book. The publication committee after looking over the work agreed, but felt it would be good to publish Sokei-an's whole set of lectures on the first translation in Zen Notes.

Sokei-an began his series in the middle of Discourse X as he felt this was a better introduction to Lin Chi than beginning at #1, so we will follow his order in this respect. Sometimes, if the lectures are short enough we will include two together. -ed

Discourse X, Lectures 1&2

The Master said: "Today, whoever wishes to learn Buddha's Dharma must find true understanding. Attaining true understanding, he need not conform to life and death. He is at liberty to go or to stay. He does not seek the extraordinary, but gains it naturally.

"Brothers! The ancients had ways of making men. What I want to point out for you is that you should not be confused by others. If you wish to use [true understanding], use it! Do not hesitate!"

Lin-chi's says "today" for a reason. Buddhism in China at that time had reached its highest metaphysical development. The

Chinese had accepted the Buddha's *Dharma*,[1] the teaching from India, with their brains. Now they realized it was a "brainy" Buddhism. An impasse had been reached from which it was impossible to take another step. Lin-chi broke that impasse and created a new channel from which the slow flow of the time poured into a quick stream. It is the same here in America now. It will probably take another five hundred years for Buddhism to reach its heart.

Lin-chi says, *"Whoever wishes to learn Buddha's Dharma must find true understanding."* True understanding is the Buddha's true teaching—the *Dharma*. And it is not to be attained through brainpower; nor is it to be attained through the emotions. Buddhism tells us how to come to it in the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path, the fourth of the Four Noble Truths (suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path towards the cessation of suffering), is the path that brings us to what Lin-chi calls "true understanding." True understanding is not knowledge gained from the outside but is inherent wisdom, the faculty of gathering experience and creating ideas. This faculty manifests in us through meditation. The gathering is the sharpening of the sword of wisdom. To understand its sharp point one must meditate and realize it—that is, attain it.

"Attaining true understanding, he need not conform to life and death." In other words, he is not subject to *samsara*, the course of nature that is life and death.

In the autumn when a red maple leaf falls into a pool of water we see the water as red, but scooping up a handful we see that the water is not stained but pure. As the lotus is not stained when it grows from the mud, the soul is not touched by life and death as it struggles through—according to Buddhism—the realms of the three worlds, the *tridhatu*: the three stages of our observation of the universe.

The first world or stage is *kamadhatu*, the world of desire. In this stage our observation is through the five senses where all is agony. And in our agony, we observe the world in five ways: as hell-dweller, hungry spirit, angry spirit, beast, and human being.[2]

The second world or stage is *rupadhatu*, the world of form.

1 "*Dharma*" has various meanings: universal principle, teaching, phenomenon, or mental content.

2 I.e., the six realms, the various modes of *samsaric* existence in which rebirth occurs, consisting of three lower states: 1) *naraka* (hell), 2) *preta* (hungry ghost), 3) *tiryagyoni* (animal); and three higher: 4) *manusya* (human being), 5) *asura* (titanic demon), and 6) *deva* (god or heavenly being).

In this stage our observation is without desire but through the senses. Here we observe the world in the sixth way as a god or angel, what Buddhists would call a *deva*.

In the third world, that of *arupadhatu*, our observation is without the senses but with the mind. It is the formless stage.

These stages or worlds have been described in Buddhism as a staircase of meditation for our ascent to the state of complete annihilation and the cessation of suffering, the third of the Four Noble Truths. When one has attained the knowledge of the fourfold, not dualistic view, one knows that life and death taken together are one. This life is not to be changed—*this* is life in heaven. So it is from the pure consciousness of the *arupadhatu* stage that realization is, as Zen says, instantaneous. It is not necessary to deny or to affirm anything—one *is* Reality. Speak Reality with great SILENCE! In Sanskrit this "unspeakable" Reality is called *avyakrita* for it is unrecordable. When you reach here, you understand that all phenomena *are* Reality.

"He is at liberty to go or to stay." That is, he can live in any of the three stages of understanding at will. The three stages have many divisions, comprising all the abodes of sentient beings constantly transmigrating through them. These stages form the backbone of Buddhism. All ascending and descending experiences are to be found here, and he who understands may go or stay as he wills. The mass of mankind, however, knows only the first two stages, the world of desire and the world of form. Even the stage of formlessness, the third world, is still in the realm of conception. It is, however, the highest point for man.

"He does not seek the extraordinary, but gains it naturally." He has attained the stage of Buddha's true understanding and has proved his buddhahood. Yet, at the same time, he is able to enter into the life of any sentient being with sympathy.

"Brothers! The ancients had ways of making men." Previous Zen masters knew how to make good disciples with their sticks. Under their blows one proved one's cognition of nonexistence, bearing any shame or torture as so many feathers. It is under the shout of a Zen master that one suddenly opens one's Eye to Reality—that existence is nonexistence.

"What I want to point out for you is that you should not be confused by others. If you wish to use [true understanding], use it! Do not hesitate!" Once the Buddha told his disciples to do so-and-so and another time he said to do something else. What do you do then? Lin-chi is telling you not to be confused by others but to believe in your own judgment. Use it and do not hesitate. But are

you able to use it in everyday life? And what is this "it"? [Here, Sokei-an held up his *nyo-i*, a small scepter symbolizing his rank as Zen master.] Do you understand? "It" is the power that you attain through true understanding.

Lin-chi is speaking to those, of course, who are of a capacity for enlightenment equal to his own.

> *"Why, students of today, are you unable to attain true understanding? What infirmity renders you unable to attain it? It is because you lack self-confidence. Unless you have self-confidence, you will lose the very thing that is essential to you. At a loss, you will be involved in circumstances and inverted by innumerable phenomena. When your mind ceases to bustle about, you will in no way differ from Buddha. Do you wish to know Buddha? He is none other than the one behind your face, listening to my sermon.*
>
> *"It is difficult for students to have faith in this, so they busy themselves with external matters. They may gain something, but it will only be words. In the end, they will fail to grasp the vital point of the Patriarchs' teachings."*

Lin-chi is asking you what sickness prevents you from having confidence in your own ability to attain buddhahood? Truth is not to be sought outside yourself; though, of course, if you deny the outside, you have to deny the inside as well, for it is relative to the outside. Truth is neither the one nor the other. So where is it at this instant? As Lin-chi has repeatedly said, "There is no time for hesitation."

Faith is important in any religion. The Buddha said that faith is the mother who brings you to earth, the existence of Reality. If you wish to reach the highest point of Buddhism, your task is like that of an alpine climber struggling from the foot of the mountain to its peak. If you decide to attain the truth of the world, or beyond the world, see Reality in both phenomena and noumena. In other words: you must seek IT in yourself until IT manifests its power in the mirror of your shrine. If you do not have confidence in the power you have intrinsically, you will have no ground to stand upon, you will be at a loss, and you will not know what to do.

A Zen teacher does not teach Zen. If you plant a seed and it sprouts, all of nature has answered you. When you dig into the ground of your soul, all phenomena answers you as well and tells you that the thing that you manifest in your mind is true, and the eighty-four thousand buddhas and *bodhisattvas* will acknowledge

your attainment.[2] But the man whose observation of the world is inverted, who sees mutable things as eternal and feels agony as joy, is just like the crow that looks to constantly changing clouds to guide him to the tree where he has stored his food. It is the same with human beings and their mutable pleasures. Attachment to the mutable is like slipping into quicksand. But if you discontinue the bustle of your mind, running around and pursuing mind-stuff, you will immediately prove that you are a buddha. And he who realizes Buddha in himself, "the one behind your face, listening to my sermon," lives in self-confidence. When you have heard the sound of the single hand, you have proved the microcosm in yourself and there is nothing more to talk about.[3]

But, as Lin-chi points out, it is hard for the student to have faith in this, for it means you must *prove* the Buddha in yourself. Everyone listening to his lecture is the Buddha, but not all of them believe it. They are seeking the truth externally, in books, in others' teachings, in superstitions. They are nothing but words, ideas, and notions. When the words change, their conceptions change with them. This is not true understanding, and it is not the vital point of Buddhism. The vital point of the Buddha's teaching is the Middle Way.[4]

Once a Brahmin asked the Buddha, "Without speaking, without remaining silent, please express your attainment." This question is something like a twofold door, isn't it? The Buddha answered by keeping himself in SILENCE. That was all, but it was as if he broke open those twofold doors with his feet. Bang! Crushing the twofold doors and throwing them away.

This moment of SILENCE has great significance. The Buddha did not fall into ordinary silence, nor did he fall into "speaking," neither into the negative nor the positive. As the first Zen patriarch Bodhidharma pointed out, "Without using words, I point out man's soul directly. It is not necessary to talk about it." Later, when the second patriarch Hui-k'o as a student came to see him and said, "My soul is not yet relaxed, please make my soul relax," Bodhidharma said, "Where is your soul? Show it to me.

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2 Eighty-four thousand is a symbolic number based on the numbers "eight" and "four"—Eightfold Path, eight divisions of the *sutras*, Four Noble Truths, four elements, etc.

3 "The Sound of the Single Hand" is a *koan* created by the Japanese Zen master Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769).

4 The Middle Way is a term used to denote the avoidance of all philosophical, psychological, and spiritual extremes; a school of Buddhism founded in India by Nagarjuna in the second to third century.

Quick! Quick!" This is the vital point.

Once, after being asked, "What is Buddha?" Ma-tsu Tao-i [709-788] said, "Mind is Buddha." Later he said after the same question, "It is neither mind nor Buddha." Here he kicked down both doors, threw everything away, and showed us fathomless nirvana directly as though breaking through the blue sky and seeing the sky above the blue. Bodhidharma's soul is like an iron ox, which is another famous *koan*, so you have to realize why.[1]

These higher koans are always pointing to fathomless nirvana. As Ma-tsu said, it is neither mind nor Buddha. It is difficult for students to realize this.

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Sesson, Japan (1480-1560)

Cover Picture

The cover picture by Susan Morningstar is her rendering of the monk in a famous painting by Chuan Shinko (mid 15th century) of a monk mending clothes in the morning sun.

1 See case twenty-nine, "Fexgxue's 'Iron Ox,'" in *Book of Serenity*, translated and introduced by Thomas Cleary (Hudson: Lindisfarne Press, 1990): "The mind seal of the Patriarchs is like the workings of the Iron Ox; when it's removed, the impression remains; when it's left there, the impression is ruined. Just suppose it's neither removed nor left—is sealing right or is not sealing right?" p.125.

BANKEI AND HIS WORLD

Like Bankei, many of his contemporaries in the Japanese priesthood in the seventeenth-century believed that the authentic transmission of Zen in Japan had been debased and finally destroyed during the preceding two or three hundred years. 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 latter part of what is referred as the Muromachi period (1333-1573), after the Muromachi district of Kyoto where the reigning Ashikaga shoguns had their palace. Much of the information cited is drawn from the pioneering research of Tamamura Takeji, a leading scholar of medieval Japanese Zen history.

ZEN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD (Part 1,#3)

(Continued from the Spring Zen Notes)

Chinese Influence and Japanese Transformation

As suggested in the last issue, soon after being imported, many basic elements of the Chinese *Wushan* (J:Gozan) system for Zen temples were being significantly altered to accommodate long-standing Japanese cultural preferences. Even where these elements had been faithfully copied in the initial phase of their adoption in the Kamakura temples, by the mid-Muromachi period their original character had been wholly transformed or simply betrayed. This, in turn, was only part of a wider process of "Japanization" within the Gozan, marked particularly by the spread of Esoteric Buddhist practices and of patterns of organization traditionally favored by the court and upper classes.

At the same time, the intellectual life of the Gozan temples continued to be dominated by elements of aristocratic Chinese literary culture associated with the large Zen temples of the continent, so that a corresponding process of cultural sinicization simultaneously made its appearance in the Gozan. The result was the two contrasting but fundamental characteristics of mature Gozan Zen: a perfect familiarity with the "Zen" literary culture of the Southern Sung, Yuan, and early Ming dynasties, and a progressive Japanization of the actual life of the temples. Both

trends have their origins in the Kamakura period and were of key importance in determining the character of Gozan Zen. Broadly speaking, the rise of the Gozan was marked by identification with various aspects of aristocratic religion and culture, both native and continental. Chinese influence, however, tended increasingly to be limited to the intellectual sphere, and it was the process of Japanization which, in the end, became the major force in the development of Muromachi Gozan Zen.

As a recent import from the continent, Kamakura Zen attempted to conform to Chinese models in every detail, and from the outset, Chinese language and culture played an important role in the Gozan. The dominant intellectual influence in the Kamakura temples was Southern Sung and, later, Yuan Zen culture, with the Japanese temples following the changing trends on the continent as new Chinese monks arrived, or Japanese monks returned from studies with Chinese masters.

A strong emphasis on literary culture, and particularly on the composition of poetry, pervaded the Southern Sung temples, a result of their intimate connection with the beaurocratic elite and the overall "aristocratization" of the official Zen establishment. By the close of the dynasty, much of the poetry produced in the Chinese monasteries had become highly secularized, frequently indistinguishable from that of the worldly literati who were familiar figures at the leading temples, and Yuan Zen saw a reaction to what certain literary monks regarded as the degenerate culture of the late Sung Zen temples. These reformers insisted that poetry composed by Zen monks be concerned exclusively with Buddhism.

The leading figure in this movement was the Lin-chi Master Ku-lin Ching-mou (J: Kurin Seimo, 1262-1329), whose school was known as the Chin-kang-ch'uang-hsia (J: Kongotoka). It was common for Japanese monks visiting the continent to include in their itinerary a period of study with Ku-lin, and his school emerged as the dominant intellectual influence within Kamakura Zen, both through returning Japanese monks like Jakushitsu Genko (1290-1369) and Chinese adherents such as Chu-hsien Fan-hsien (J: Jikusen Bonsen, 1291-1348) who had settled in the Kamakura temples.

Enthusiasm for the Ku-lin school was not confined to the temples, During the late Kamakura period, monks of Ku-lin's line attracted many distinguished followers from the *bukke*, or warrior elite, who sought their instruction, not only in Zen but in the mastery of aristocratic Chinese culture, that is, literary elegance. It was common for eminent Chinese literary monks to be received as guests of the leading Kamakura samurai, both in the cities and the

provinces, often serving primarily as literary specialists for their patrons. Thus, already at this period, Zen monks were being patronized by the warrior class for their cultural and literary expertise, and for the prestige of the Chinese cultural "connection," and it is these monks who established the pattern for the role later assumed by the literary monks of the Muromachi Gozan.

The atmosphere at the Kamakura temples themselves was strongly Chinese in flavor. Even Japanese clothes were forbidden in the temple precincts. Most of the abbots and many of the monks were Chinese, and sermons as well as most ordinary conversations were conducted in their native tongue, a thorough knowledge of which was essential to any entering Japanese monk. In effect, without a command of Chinese and at least a fair degree of familiarity with Chinese culture, participation in the life of the Kamakura Zen temples was foreclosed. Added to this was the nature of the admissions procedure at temples like Engakuji, where the government had restricted the number of monks permitted to join the assembly, and the fierce competition for entry was decided by an examination in poetry composition to determine the candidate's ability to handle literary Chinese.

Under these circumstances, the Kamakura temples inevitably attracted a concentration of Japanese monks who were specialists skilled in Chinese literature, and thus perpetuated in Japan the role of the Sung and Yuan Zen priests as custodians of aristocratic literary culture. Though originally a matter of practical necessity for the Japanese monks studying in Kamakura, mastery of Chinese ultimately served as a stimulus for literary activity and contributed directly to the flowering of Gozan literature.

In almost every respect, Kamakura Zen represented a faithful replication of Sung and Yuan temple life. As in China, lines of transmission were strictly maintained, along with the strenuous regimen of the sodo or monks' hall, where the community of monks practiced together under the supervision of the abbot. The practice itself was largely pure Sung Zen, that is to say *kanna,* or koan Zen, combining intensive periods of zazen -- seated meditation -- and private interviews with the teacher.

However, the golden age of the Kamakura temples did not outlast the Kamakura period itself, and the arrival of the Muromachi period and the removal of the seat of government to the Imperial capital, Kyoto, signaled the start of a sweeping Japanization of the entire Gozan. The shift in political power with the installation of the Muromachi shogunate deprived the old Kamakura lines of their base of support, and they were soon overwhelmed by the Kyoto Gozan. The pure Sung Zen of their Chinese founders gave way to the strongly syncretic teaching of

the line established by Muso Soseki (1225-1351), even as the strictly cultural aspects of their existence, such as the preoccupation with literary Chinese, were absorbed, sustained and enhanced within the Muso-line temples.

The move to Kyoto itself gave a decisive impetus to the entire process of Japanization. Chinese abbots were to be found in the Kyoto temples as well, but there were far more Japanese abbots than in Kamakura, and the vast majority of monks were Japanese. Indeed, unlike the principal Kamakura lines, distinguished by their Chinese founders, the most successful lines of Kyoto Zen--those which dominated the Muromachi period --were all founded by Japanese masters.

From the outset, moreover, Kyoto Zen was intimately involved with Esoteric Buddhism, possibly a result of the presence of the old Buddhist sects of the Heian period (794-1185), which had remained a powerful force in the religious and political life of the capital, as well as the influence of the Imperial court, traditionally linked with Esoteric Buddhism. Myoan Yosai (1141-1215), Kenninji's founder, had originally equipped the temple for Esoteric practices, and the two leading Kyoto Zen lines of the Kamakura period, the Hotto and Shoichi, were both closely associated with Esoteric Buddhism and heavily patronized by the Emperors and the court.

The Hotto founder, Shinchi Kakushin (Hotto Kokushi 1207-1298), began his career as a student of Shingon (Esoteric Buddhism) before taking up Zen, completing his training in Sung China, and receiving inka, or sanction of his enlightenment, from Wu-men Hui-kai (J: Mumon Ekai, 1183-1260), the noted author of *Wu-men kuan* (J: *Mumonkan*). Shinchi's Zen stressed the *Wu* (J: *Mu*) koan advocated by Wu-men as well as zazen practice, while simultaneously incorporating rites for various Esoteric deities, rites that reflected his early interest in Shingon.

Shinchi's contemporary Enni Ben'en (Shoichi Kokushi 1202-1280), founder of the Shoichi line, followed a similar pattern, originally studying Tendai Esotericism before traveling to China and becoming an heir in the Lin-chi Yang-ch'i line. Returning to Japan, Ben'en established Tofukuji, where he taught a syncretic brand of Zen combining elements of Sung practice with Esoteric Buddhism. At Tofukuji, completed in 1271, Esoteric influences were conspicuous from the start. Special buildings were set aside for the performance of *kanjo*, or Esoteric initiations, while Esoteric deities were installed in others. Representations of the Indian and Chinese patriarchs of Zen at Tofukuji were joined by portraits of the patriarchs of Tendai and Shingon, while Tendai and Shingon monks figured in the assembly.

Another aspect of Esoteric influence was Tofukuji's establishment as a single-line temple. The preference for reserving temple abbacies for members of the founder's line was closely associated with Esoteric Buddhism, and served to exempt Tofukuji from the open system, excluding Chinese monks from the abbacy and thereby enabling the temple to maintain its syncretic character.

The lesson was not lost on those in Kyoto who wished to encourage the spread of pure Chinese Zen in the capital, and it was to guard against a repetition of such an experience at the founding of Nanzenji that the Emperor Kameyama (1249-1305) insisted the temple's abbacy be open-style and not limited to that of the founding Shoichi line. As a result, abbots drawn from the Kamakura temples were able to be installed at Nanzenji, and their presence, coupled with the arrival of teachers like Nampo Jomyo, allowed pure Sung Zen to secure a certain following in Kyoto.

(To be continued)

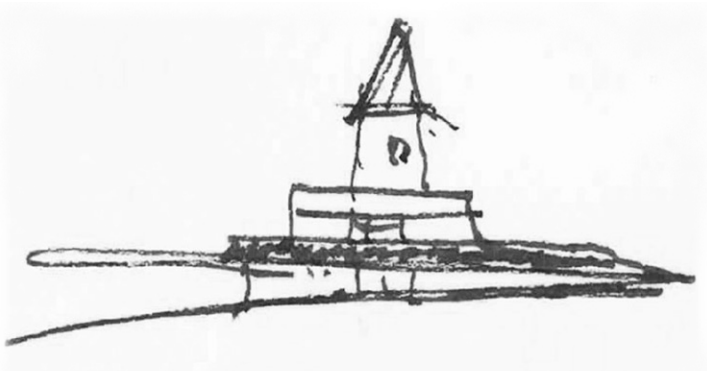
The Master and the Warrior

Hosokawa Mochiyuki (1400-1442) was among the powerful warlords who dominated Kyoto politics in the early 15th century. Among the Zen masters he patronized in the capital was Nippo Soshun (1368-1448), abbot of Myoshinji When Mochiyuki was about to die, he summoned Nippo to his bedside and asked, "The moment of birth and death is at hand. Tell me, how am I to escape?"

Nippo replied, "Originally, in birth, nothing is born, in death, nothing dies. Why, then, talk about escape?"

Mochiyuki, grasping the Master's meaning, joined his palms in thanks and passed away.

Translated by Peter Haskel



D.T. Suzuki at the Institute

(November 21, 1936.)

SOKEI-AN: "I was hoping to accept the brotherhood of Buddhists from Japan for a long time, Now we have the pleasure of having Dr. Suzuki here."

SUZUKI: "Not prepared to speak. My talk will have no beginning and no end, which is quite characteristic of Zen.

Sometimes I think of Buddhism as all one, in China, Japan, India, etc. But something is very distinctive of Chinese Buddhism. Seed of it came from India, But with the seed transplanted to different peoples, soils etc., it changes and adapts itself to different conditions. Mahayana scriptures known as later Buddhism or northern Buddhism are rich in metaphysical speculations and imaginings, different from primitive Buddhism. For them when the Buddha begins to talk he generally enters into a meditation, rays of light shine from his forehead. As he turns to east those rays illuminate utmost points of world and innumerable worlds, and all the inhabitants, sentient and non sentient, are revealed. They realize Buddha has appeared on earth and they hasten to greet Buddha. As they come, they ride on shining clouds. Buddha then turns to the north, west etc. When all those beings appear, this small room turns into a limitless space. All the mountains, rivers, trees, animals etc., all are in this room. It becomes the very cosmos whose ends no one can measure.

This conception of universe was not so acceptable to Chinese mind. For them, '*the world is limitless in time and space*,' is a hazy statement. Chinese mind lives on earth. It never goes to the starry heavens. It couldn't find its footing in Indian Buddhism at first. They wanted to make it practical. It had to be adjusted to the psychology of the Chinese mind.

This was done by developing the Zen form of Buddhism. In early T'ang dynasty, Buddhist schools developed in China but lacked good teachers after their founders to continue them. They were very much colored by Indian thought. Eno, a great Zen teacher, rose in Tang dynasty. Through him revolution of Chinese thought took place and many Zen masters arose in the T'ang dynasty. Then China could understand Buddhism much better. In its Indian form it was inaccessible and remote to Chinese mind.

Everyday thought, life, experience is Zen."

* * *

Founded 1930

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