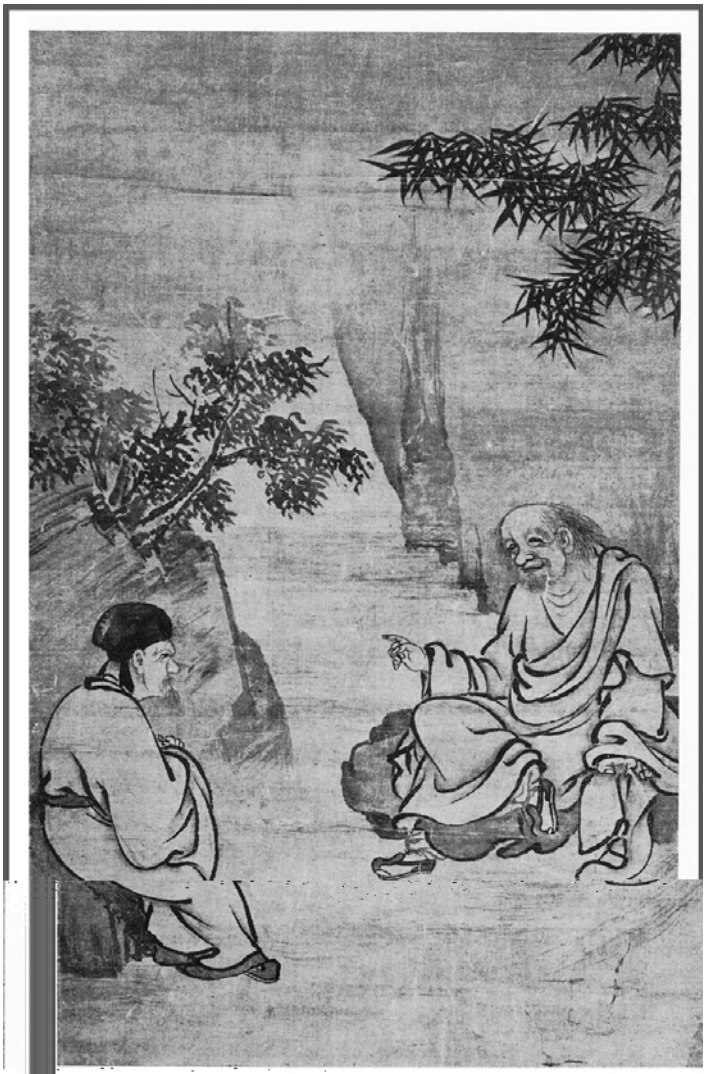
Zen Notes



Ma-tsu answering layman P'ang

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

THIRTY-EIGHTH LECTURE

Saturday, April 16th, 1939

"*Unless you cleanse the filth of your mind you will not return to your original state, though you meditate upon the Perfect Awakening of Buddha; and you will harbor the three kinds of doubt.*

O Obedient One! It is as you see the flowers in the sky because of the illusory films in your eyes. When the illusory films are erased, you will realize that there is not a word for you to speak about the flowers in the sky. After these illusory films have vanished, when will those illusory visions appear again? Why do you ask this question? There is no connection between the films in the eyes and the flowers in the sky. When they vanish there will still be nothing for you to speak about and there will be no object in asking whether you can see the phantom flowers in the sky again."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

"*Unless you cleanse the filth of your mind, you will not return to your original state, though you meditate upon the Perfect Awakening of Buddha;*" -- "Filth of mind" is a term with which I think my audience is fully acquainted. The Five Skandhas are "filth of mind" and also the three Venemous Elements of mind. From the severe Buddhist view, all activities of mind materialized by original ignorance are "filth of mind." Therefore, all kinds of unenlightened activities of the mind are filthy.

This Buddhist view of filth of mind is analogous to the Christian view of sin. To them, all activities of the mind are sin, and of course all activities of the heretical mind are sin. Your will must be completely one with the mighty will of God -- then your sin will be cleaned! In some old-style Episcopalian sermons you will find such speeches.

In Buddhism it is said that if you are not enlightened by the knowledge of your own original nature -- your activities are limited and unnatural. To purify the "filth of mind," you must pass through the fire of original nature. The fire of that know-

ledge will cleanse your mind... (long pause) Of course, when you realize your original nature through this enlightened mind you will return to your original state -- otherwise your meditation on the Perfect Awakening of Buddha does not means anything to you at all.

It is very hard to take this fire which cleanses the filth of the mind. We call it the "soft mind" and the "boundless mind" -- both meaning the enlightened mind.

My teacher always drove me into many corners but he always left me an avenue of escape. He would lose his temper but he left enough room for a little mouse to escape! I realized, therefore, his humanity; through such actions, I could really peep into his mind. I would smile to myself -- "After all, he is a man of Zen!" That is the natural activity of my mind; that really cleanses the mind.

There is a story about Hakuin. A village girl had conceived a child before marriage. She knew who was the father of the child, but when her father accused her, she said "Hakuin is the father of my child."

About three days after the child's birth, the grandfather of the baby carried it into the temple and thrust it into the arms of Hakuin while he was giving a sermon to his disciples! "O wise one, stop talking on holy subjects and take this baby of yours!" Every monk began to whisper and some stood up and left the temple. Hakuin took the baby in the arms and, without changing his expression, continued his sermon.

After this, no one made contributions to the temple, no one sent gifts -- no one entered. Rain came through the roof and the monks carried umbrellas to the lectures.

Hakuin carried the child through the village, begging milk from the mothers.

After three years, the mother wished to see her child again. She finally confessed to her father about her lie. The child's real father was Kintaro, a carpenter in the next village.

Then the child's grandfather crawled on his hands and knees through the mud to the temple to make apology!

But Hakuin said, "Oh, it does not matter. This is my baby anyhow!" And he did not return the child to its mother, but kept her in the temple until she grew to womanhood.

This is called "boundless mind." Without attaining this bound-

less mind, your meditation upon the Perfect Awakening of Buddha does not mean anything.

Instead of attaining enlightenment, you will harbor the three kinds of doubt. First, I am no good; second, my teacher is no good; third, the teachings are no good. All these are doubts. Doubting himself, he goes away; doubting his teacher, he goes from one to another -- spends his life hunting a teacher; and finally, "This teaching is no good. I cannot believe this kind of teaching!" He has become a beggar. He goes to the Baptist Church, the Quaker, Vedanta! Finally he comes to the Buddhist Society of 70th Street! But then off to Gurdjieff -- then to Bh'ai! To such we give a penny's worth of teaching -- but never the diamond.

"*O Obedient One! It is as you see the flowers in the sky because of the illusory films in your eyes.*" -- See with the eyes which have the shadows of five different colors.

"*When the illusory films are erased, you will realize that there is not a word for you to speak about the flowers in the sky.*" -- On the day when the eye operation is completely and successfully completed -- the bandage is taken off and you look at the sky. There is no word that you can speak!

When you realize the aspect of Reality -- you stand holding your breath. You cannot say that Reality is uniform, is time or space, matter or spirit. You act like a deaf-mute. You cannot call it "God" and you cannot call it "Self." The earth supporting you has disappeared and the sky covering you has vanished. You must have this experience once.

"*After these illusory films have vanished, when will those illusory films appear again?*" -- This question was asked by Bodhisattva Vajra-garbha. Some Zen students will say, "Well, I attained enlightenment, but that enlightenment has vanished. When I opened my eyes and cooked my potatoes -- that enlightenment had gone." Such enlightenment -- spoiled by a couple of potatoes! You had better call it a dream!

If you truly attain enlightenment -- that Reality is always with you from morning to evening, evening to morning. Go to Japan and see the Zen monks -- 80, 85 years old, standing straight -- never get into dotage. And the mountain monks with their white whiskers who never grow old.

"*Why do you ask this question? There is no connection between the films in the eyes and the flowers in the sky.*" -- The deluded one thinks there is a connection -- but the enlightened

one knows that films in the eyes are films in the eyes, and that flowers in the sky are flowers in the sky! To the deluded one, the film in the eye is the cause of the flowers in the sky, and when one vanishes the other will also vanish. But to the enlightened one, there is no film in the eyes or flowers in the sky.

"*It is as the phantom flowers vanish in the sky. When they vanish there will be nothing for you to speak about, ...*" -- When you destroy this imaginary attainment which you think of in terms of original nature, then the real attainment comes. You don't keep your eyes closed -- you need not keep yourself in any cave. But in that moment of the Perfect Awakening of Buddha -- there is no word to speak.

You must experience it by yourself once.

I experienced it once, a long time ago -- I went through the experience -- but I do not tell this story.

An American teacher once told me how he attained Reality. He was in Europe, standing on the shore of a river; everything was covered by mist -- earth -- river -- all was mist! I laughed. What an attainment of Reality! When the mist clears up the attainment will disappear. This is a poetical feeling -- not an attainment.

"*... and there will be no object in asking whether one can see the phantom flowers in the sky again.*" -- When you destroy all those illusory phantoms and realize the true state of Reality, that attainment is always with you. You cannot throw it away any more than you can get rid of our hips or cut off your neck. When you are eating, reading, sleeping -- you are always in it. That is so-called enlightenment.

What is the illusory vision? Looking at the clouds -- the moon sails. Standing on a bridge over a quick-running stream -- the bridge is flowing.

Born into and living in this body, you think you are getting older every day, and in the end you will die. Your body is getting older but not your self.

When you observe the koan "Before father and mother gave you birth" you will return to your original nature. Before this time, you have been through a period of hibernation, but now you have destroyed your imaginary attainment and you open your eyes!

This is the Perfect Awakening of Buddha. Upon this you will sit down.

BANKEI AND HIS WORLD

by Peter Haskel

Like Bankei, many of his contemporaries in the priesthood in seventeenth-century Japan believed that the authentic transmission of Zen in their land 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 therefore 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 to 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 below is drawn from the pioneering research of Tamamura Takeji, a leading scholar of medieval Japanese Zen history. The discussion here focuses on the two principal groups identified by Tamamura as dominating Muromachi Zen: the sorin, the official Gozan temples patronized by the shogunate; and the rinka, those temples like Daitokuji, Myoshinji, Sojiji, and Eiheiji that remained largely outside the official system.

ZEN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD (Part 1, #9)

(Continued from the Winter '06 Zen Notes)

Fragmentation

The decline of the Gozan laid the ground for the developments of the sixteenth century and made the Gozan temples peculiarly receptive to the penetration of rinka Zen. Chief among these was the degeneration of the process of transmission within the teaching lines of the sorin, the transmission of the enlightenment experience from teacher to disciple which formed the core of Zen study and was regarded as the actual "lifeline" (*kechimyaku*) of Zen teaching across the generations.

As previously observed, the original system of transmission adopted from the Chinese Zen temples was strongly idealistic. Joining the priesthood itself, in China, was a long and often difficult procedure, strictly regulated by the government, which

required the aspirant to prove his sincerity by first spending an extensive period in a monastic community. During this time, a candidate shared the daily routine of the monks but was forbidden to take the tonsure or even to cut his hair. Only after completion of this trial period were applicants considered for formal admission to the monastic community, and there were often lengthy delays, so that some monks in the Sung Zen temples spent years and even whole lifetimes trapped in this curious limbo. In Japan, by contrast, the distinction between monks and lay Buddhists was often blurred, with many aristocrats taking the tonsure and receiving a monk's name (in addition to their lay Buddhist name), while continuing to live at home and to conduct themselves in most respects as secular persons.

This was a practice encouraged by the Buddhist sects, including Zen, but one which inevitably diminished the purity of the priestly vocation. It even became customary in Japan to give the tonsure and monk's name to laymen on the point of death as a kind of "last rite." In China, by contrast, the distinction between monk and layman was rigidly maintained, and in the Chinese Zen temples, the strict regard for the purity of the priesthood was matched by a commitment to preserving the purity of the transmission system.

A Medieval Chinese monk could exercise considerable freedom in determining his own religious affiliation, and the selection of one's actual teacher and lineage was considered a distinctly personal affair. After entering the priesthood and receiving preliminary training under his original teacher, he would generally set out on pilgrimage, traveling to practice under different masters, passing perhaps a year or two with each before moving on to the next and in this way often studying under a large number of Zen teachers. If a teacher approved such a monk's understanding, he might confer on him his sanction, and in the course of his wandering, it was possible for a promising Zen student to accumulate sanction from a great many masters. Such a monk would then have to decide for himself which of the teachers whose sanction he had received he wished to become heir to. This determination was expected to be based solely on his perception of who had brought him-to his deepest experience of enlightenment and to be unbiased by any personal or political considerations.

The symbolic culmination of the process occurred when the monk first assumed abbacy of a temple, on which occasion he would publicly state his teacher's name as part of the ceremony The integrity of the Chinese system of transmission was maintained by the early Kamakura temples, but as with so many of the original aspects of imported Zen, it too was radically altered during the ensuing age, assuming a form more closely attuned to Japanese

sensibilities. With an emphasis on secular norms of personal loyalty and vertical lines of authority that was essentially opposed to the ideals of Chinese Zen study, the Muromachi sorin began to insist that, whatever the results of their subsequent studies, monks eventually return to become the heirs of their original teacher. Whereas in China no fixed relationship was ever assumed between a particular student and a particular teacher, the individual monk being left free to choose according to his own conscience, Japanese Zen tended to ordain a particular teacher-disciple relationship from the outset and thus formalized the process of transmission.

Less than a century after the introduction of Zen to Japan, the practice of automatic succession to one's original teacher had become a conspicuous tendancy in the Gozan, and it continued to gain momentum. Even where the disciple had received only brief or cursory training from his original teacher before departing on pilgrimage, he was expected to return and become his heir.

Should the original teacher die when the disciple was only a child or before he had completed his training, the requirement still remained. Ultimately, a special form of transmission was evolved by which a monk could posthumously receive his original teacher's transmission merely by worshiping at the teacher's pagoda or, in certain instances, before his formal portrait, or *chinso*. Although probably based loosely on legendary Chinese precedents for "posthumous transmission," the Japanese practice became, in effect, a travesty of Zen transmission as it had been known in China.

Unlike their Chinese counterparts, who were free to become heirs in any lineage of their choice, Japanese Gozan monks found themselves increasingly restricted to their original teacher and his line. For those who attempted to flout this convention, the consequences could be serious. It was, for example, Chugan Engetsu's determination to uphold the purity of the transmission system, as he had witnessed it in Yuan China, (see part 8) that led to his expulsion from the Wanshi Hakuun-an and caused his difficulties in the Rinzai Gozan temples where he later served as abbot.

Originally, those returning from studies on the continent had freely established new lines, and this regular infusion of fresh influences from outside had maintained within the sorin a certain vigor that now began to fade. As noted earlier, however, new lines could only be established in the Gozan through the erection of sub temples (tatchu), and their unchecked growth over the course of the Kitayama period left the main temples without space for additional buildings, simultaneously limiting the number of lines

within the sorin and barring the further introduction of new lineages from the continent. Thus, Japanese teachers arriving home from China were now obliged to return to one of the existing lines rather than establishing new branches of their own. This was not however, due entirely to the impossibility of erecting new tatchu; a principle cause was the growing insistence on allegiance to one's original line, a virtue commonly expressed by the phrase "not forsaking one's roots."

Sealed off from the introduction of fresh influences and generally enjoining routine succession to one's original teacher, the lines that remained within the sorin tended to grow stultified. Overshadowed by the preeminent Muso line, the various lineages lost their distinct character and adopted a common Muso-line style of Zen. Yet, curiously, even as their teachings merged, the formal divisions between the Muso groups sharpened, and their tendency to factionalism increased. Nowhere was this more evident than within the Muso line itself. Though the syncretic and strongly literary teaching style identified with the Muso school remained a potent force in the Gozan, the organizational cohesion of the powerful and broadly based Muso line itself was a temporary phenomenon that failed to significantly endure beyond the lifetimes of Muso and his immediate disciples.

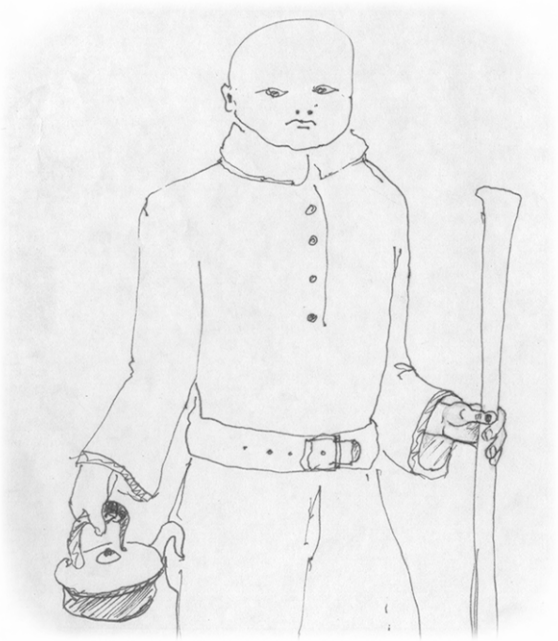
From the outset, the various grous in the line had been characterized by disparate tendencies, with no strong unifying identity beyond the founding figure of Muso and the recognition of certain common political and economic interests. As even these limited areas of common concern diminished, the Muso line ultimately found itself reduced to a collection of individual and essentially independent groups functioning in an exclusively vertical pattern of organization, with only the barest consciousness of lateral bonds uniting them with one another.

Indeed, the tendency for each group within the Muso line to adopt its own warrior patrons and to become identified with particular clans over the generations became a chief factor in the splintering of the organization after Muso's death.

By the Oei period (1394-1428), contact had ceased between the Kyoto and Kamakura branches of the Muso line, the result of a gradual process of estrangement rather than of any particular enmity between the two. Despite Muso's early training in Kamakura, the Kamakura Muso line, from the beginning, had evinced only a half-hearted allegiance to the leadership in Kyoto, which remained the unquestioned spiritual and organizational center of the line's activities. Even between the Kyoto Muso-line temples themselves, however, relations were virtually non-existent. As a result of Ryushu and Shunoku' s rupture following the

Rinsenji dispute, described earlier, contact was severed between the two foremost temples of the line, Tenryuji and Shokokuji, while Kenninji and Nanzenji, too, tended to pursue their own development in isolation from the other principal Muso-line establishments. Thus, a sub-line of a Tenryuji line based in Shokokuji would follow its own independent course, as these two temples, though nominally members of the same teaching line, were no longer in communication with one another.

In this way, the various branches of the Muso line founded by Muso's leading disciples gradually split apart; relations ceased between the different Muso-line temples, and even within the temples, the assemblies were generally divided into yet smaller, independent and often rival sub-units quartered in various subtemples. While Muso's immense prestige as founder apparently remained secure, the ideal of a shared teaching line actively uniting all the Muso temples had given way before the countervailing pressures for fragmentation, leaving the Muso line a plethora of small and frequently isolated units, each jealously guarding its own traditional prerogatives.



Twenty five Zen Koans

Selected and Translated by Sokei-an Sasaki

Third Koan

(January 22, 1938)

Layman P'ang-yun (a lay Buddhist scholar) came to pay homage to the Patriarch Ma (Ma-tsu). He asked the Patriarch a question:

"Who is the one who has no relation to any existences of the Dharma?"

The Patriarch said: "I shall give you the answer when you can drink all the water of the Western Lake in one gulp."

Upon these words the layman was suddenly enlightened. He extolled his enlightenment in a poem:

All living beings of the multifold direction
Are in this assembly.
Every one of us has attained
The great purpose which is purposelessness.
Within this place
We select our Buddha.
I have been admitted into the mind
Of perfect emptiness.
Now,
I take my leave.

Sokei-an:

This koan, this Zen question, is quite an old one. Ma was a disciple of Yejo (Nan-yueh Huai-jang, Jp: N.angaku Yejo 677-744). Yejo's teacher was the Sixth Patriarch So this happened somewhere in the end of the 7th century or first part of te 8th. Ma was a man of Kiang-shi. His family name was Ma, so everyone called him Ma-taishi -- Great Master.

He was a very big man. The story is that he was 8 feet tall... I doubt it! ... But he was decidedly bigger than other Chinese. His eyes were like a tiger's eyes. He walked like an ox and he became a famous Zen Master.

This layman, P'ang-yun, was the governor of Kiang-shi-- a prefecture, just like a state. He studied Zen and became a lay

disciple of Zen.

Layman P'ang came to pay homage to the Patriarch Ma. He asked the Patriarch a question: "Who is the one who has no relation to any existences of the Dharma?" "The existences of the Dharma" is the existence of all-- all things in the world. In English, just "existence," or "entities" in the world. Not only this small world but the world of multifold directions.

And this "*Who*" is not a human being -- it cannot be a man because man has a relation to every existence. If we say, "Well, this will be universal consciousness." this universal consciousness has a relation to the mind. So this One is even higher or more superior than the universal consciousness. Is there such a thing in the Universe? This layman P'ang asked the Master a strange question. He was pointing to the real fundamental of Buddhism.

In Chrisianity God creates the Universe. God stays outside of the Universe, but in the sky looks over all. Is there any outside?... For this is infinite -- there is no end.

We cannot see any outside of this, and if there is any outside, it must be intelligible to the human mind. If it is not intelligible and conceivable and demonstratable, we cannot grasp it. It does not exist because our mind has nothing to do with it and it has nothing to do with our mind. It simply does not exist -- this outside! But God is in the outside of the outside of the Universe and created the outside! Strange, isn't it? The outside does not exist, and from the outside he cannot create.

From the Buddhist view the idea of the outside of the Universe is very clear. Expressed in a word, it is a metaphor. I am not speaking sarcastically, for there is a true meaning in it. The Buddhist in one word calls it emptiness or Nirvana.

So this P'ang is asking about emptiness from Patriarch Ma:"*Who (personified) is the one who has no relation to any existences of the Dharma?*" In one word, "What is emptiness?" But this question is not so simple as that. There is more intricacy of thought in this question.

P'ang had asked this question of another Zen Master, Sekito (Shih-t'ou) who was a direct disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. At this time Shih-t'ou was an old man. When he was six years old he had met the Sixth Patriarch, who was then in the later years of his life.

So this Governor, P'ang-yun, went to see Shih-t'ou with great air and asked this question -- a favorite question with him. He carried this question all over China and asked Zen Masters about it

and made them disconcerted. But Shih-t'ou wasn't such a Zen Master: "*Who is the one who has no relation to any existences of the Dharm...?*" Before the word came to an end he covered the mouth of P'ang.

Do you understand? This is Zen. There is nothing to explain and no way of explaining. If anyone would ask of me this question, "What is emptines?" I would cover their mouth immediately!

A couple of days ago about forty-five Christian ministers came into this house and one asked me: "On what are you meditating?"

I answered, "On nothing."

Another minister asked: "You say 'nothing' but what is the meaning of this 'nothing'?"

I replied, "If there is anything in it, it is not nothing."

A lady minister then asked: "Are you not wasting your time meditating?"

I answered, "If I do anything else, I am wasting my time."

They all laughed.

This layman P'ang stated it very beautifully, covering it with subtle words: "*WHO is the one who has no relation to any existences of the Dharma?*" If a Zen Master has something on his brain , he is puzzled by these beautiful words, but Shih-t'ou was a real Zen Master and covered P'ang's mouth. I hope P'ang understood it that time. He bothered many Zen Masters. He was very proud of his little enlightenment.

Finally he came to Ma and asked a question. This is the question:

"*Water has no muscles and no bones. How can it support a great boat?*" Wonderful question! He said "water," but he doesn't mean water. His idea of water which has no muscles and no bones within--no matter, no strength--in modern terms, no dynamic, or essence--then it means etheric space, emptiness. So, if it is emptiness, how can its force support this appearance? So, the idea in his mind was: "If this is emptiness, whence comes this appearance?" This guy was quite subtle--he puzzled Zen masters with his beautiful words!

Ma said: "*There is no water, no boat. What are you talking*

about!" Crazy! If it is empty in the beginning, there is nothing to talk about! But this is very difficult to understand. Everyone puzzles between this existence and that emptiness.

The next summer, when his own office had no job, he came to the temple to bother the monks and he asked Ma the same question he asked Sekito: "*Who is the one who has no relation to any of the existences of the Dharma?*" Ma's answer was quite different from Sekito's. Ma was a big-hearted monk, an easy-going, kind man. He said: "*I shall give you the answer when you can drink all the water of the Western Lake in one gulp.*"

This is the koan, the center of the question, and I cannot talk much about it. It is as if I say: "I shall give you the answer when you can drink all the Hudson River in one gulp." In the West there are may great lakes. There is a big lake in China. As if you "can swallow Texas at once"--if you can gulp all that water at once.

But you must not attach to the words spoken by Ma---he vomited this word: "Swallow all the water of the Hudson River and I will tell you the answer."

Upon the word P'ang was enlightened all of a sudden. He extolled his enlightenment in the following poem: "*All living beings of the multifold directions/ Are in this assembly.*" Do you understand what he means? ALL living beings--not only sentient but insentient--in America, France, Germany, Spain, Africa, China, Japan, Soviet Russia, are in this "assembly." And stars and moons and all the planets and sun.

"*Everyone of us has attained/ The great purpose which is purposelessness.*"/ The "great purpose" means: Why does this universe exist? Why is this universe created--what for? For instance, why does this water exist?

"Well," you will say, "God created this for human beings and those plants and everything."

"But this will make a deluge and kill all the sentient and insentient beings. What is the purpose?"

"Well--evolution; it gets better and better and better and better and better and still better and still more better! Now we cannot hear something downtown or see behind the wall, but with one more sense we can hear more, with one more sense we can see more, with one more sense we can go all over--"

"Well, all right, but then what? Conflagration will come

and destroy everything existing. And what is the purpose?"

"Well, next time there will be a better world...."

"But create and destroy, and destroy and create, what is the purpose?"

The great purpose--it is a big question! The utilitarian talks about this purpose and thinks everything furthers his own utilitarian idea--that everything must be utilized. Utilized for what? But in Buddhism this question was answered a long, long time ago. The great purpose, which is purposelessness, is, in a word, nature, which does everything without purpose. The mother gives milk to her baby--not for money or to be supported in old age but for her love. Love is not the object of purposelessness. The real purpose which is purposelessness--all will attain it...

Within this place/ We select our Buddha. Like all citizens elect their president, we select our Buddha. But not that Buddha of 2500 years ago. We select the Buddha which is within us. This whole world is the temple in which we select our Buddha.

I have been admitted into the mind Of perfect emptiness. "I have been graduated into the Empty University." P'ang attained this perfect emptiness when Ma said, "Swallow all the water of the Western Lake at one gulp."

Now I take my leave. "I will go back home." For when he attained emptiness there was nothing to study any more. Go home, stretch yourself, enjoy your life. If there is some purpose in your life, you cannot enjoy yourself. As a traveler going somewhere in three, four days, you must travel very quickly--cannot stop to take notice and visit anywhere... For sixty, seventy, eighty years, for some purpose, you live in a great hurry, running, panting, and you die, and you have seen nothing. Purpose makes you one million dollars... Everyone makes some goal and does the best he can, but that goal is not the absolute end. The end is endlessness.

I enjoy every step in my life. I go around the world every day. Every day is my traveling day. I will see paintings, sculpture... every day is my journey. Every day is my joy. But this attitude can be attained only *after* you you attain absolute emptiness. Before that your mind has no freedom. Emptiness is a great word. Many Western scholars in ancient days and many Eastern sages in ancient days thought that to attain emptiness was the aim, and then to come back to daily life and enjoy this daily life.

Rang bell.

COVER ART:

Several excellent portraits of Layman P'ang and his family have been preserved in Japan. Ma-tsu Answering Layman P'ang is by an unknown Chinese artist of the the thirteenth century. It is painted in ink on silk and is owned by Tennei-ji in Kyoto. On the left, the Layman is shown as an earnest seeker with his hands reverentially clasped. On the right is Ma-tsu, by contrast a study in self-confidence as he lounges comfortably, a smile playing about his lips, and points his finger as he effortlessly parries the other's question. An inscribed verse, by Yu-chi Chih-hui (ca. 1215-1300), a monk of the Ching-tz'u-ssu, indicates that the question being answered here is that given in the first dialogue with Ma-tsu. The verse, which is at the top and not shown here, is translated as follows by Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, in the exhibition catalogue *Zen Paintings and Calligraphy*:

What kind of man is he who is tied to nothing at all?
I am Ma, the winnow-mouthed.
And you are P'ang, the recluse.
While you contemplate the question,
The water of the Great River continues to flow East.

(From Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*, Translated by R.F. Sasaki, Yoshitaka Iriya, and Dana Fraser (NY:1971))*

Anatomy of Hatha Yoga, by H. David Coulter

Published in 2001 by Body and Breath, Honesdale, PA.. 623 Pages
(Book Reviewed by Ian R. Chandler)

If you really want to practice Zen meditation, there is no posture that beats full lotus. When I first started practicing zazen, it was nearly impossible for me to get into full lotus. I had heard from Sasaki Roshi's students of Japanese Monks getting into full lotus and then walking around on their knees as a way of strengthening the posture. I was also told that Sasaki Roshi could change from right sided to left sided full lotus without using his hands – a trick that I've seem some Indian yogis pull. Since I had thick, muscular legs, a tight pelvis, and an earnest desire to practice Zen meditation, I decided to explore hatha yoga. Mary Farkas recommended the Iyengar school of yoga – which teaches a vigorous form of hatha yoga. However, it was at the Himalayan Institute that I learned the asanas needed to work my way into full lotus.

One of the Himalayan Institute's Yoga teachers was Dr. David Coulter, a professional anatomist and a former assistant professor of Anatomy from the Columbia School of Medicine. Most of the available books on yoga are catalogues of different asanas, the

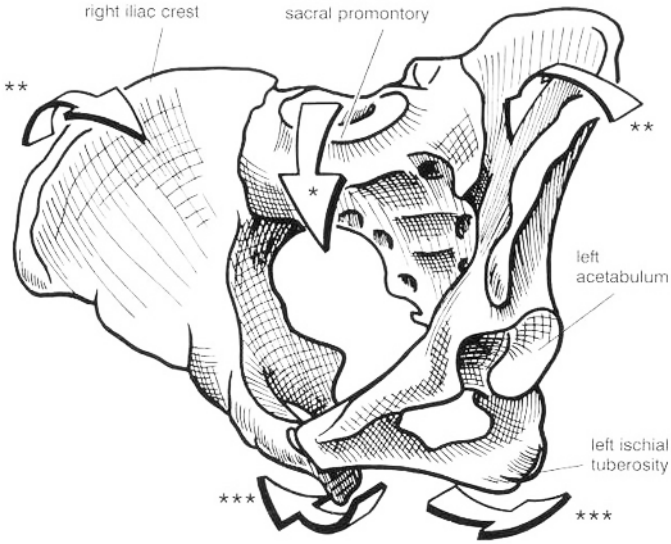
most prominent example being B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on Yoga*. As talented and capable a yogi as B.K.S. Iyengar is, he is not a professional anatomist. Dr. Coulter's *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga* discusses broad groups of asanas in relationship to human anatomy. It includes chapters on posture and balance, breathing, abdominopelvic exercises, standing postures, back bends, forward bends, twists, headstands, shoulderstands, relaxation and meditation. *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga* de-emphasizes the Indian Sanskrit terminology, but includes a good discussion of precautions to be observed in each posture – pitfalls to avoid – how to work your way into each posture without hurting yourself. The book is peppered with practical comments for physical therapists and yoga instructors. For example:

"What can be done to prevent and resolve minor knee problems? The answer is simple—regular and prolonged muscular tension applied to the extended knee joint. Under those circumstances all parts of the joint fit together perfectly, allowing it to withstand intense isometric contraction of the surrounding muscles. If you have knee pain which is not due to serious internal injuries, the following series of standing postures can be highly therapeutic."

Many people attempting full lotus for the first time think that the bending happens in the knees, but the real source of flexibility is the pelvis. Because of my tight pelvis and muscular legs, it took a fair amount of work for me to get to the point where I can sit full lotus comfortably – something which many women – whose bodies are designed for childbirth – can do quite easily without prior training. As I worked on pelvis-opening asanas, at some point, something "clicked" and it became much easier to sit full lotus.

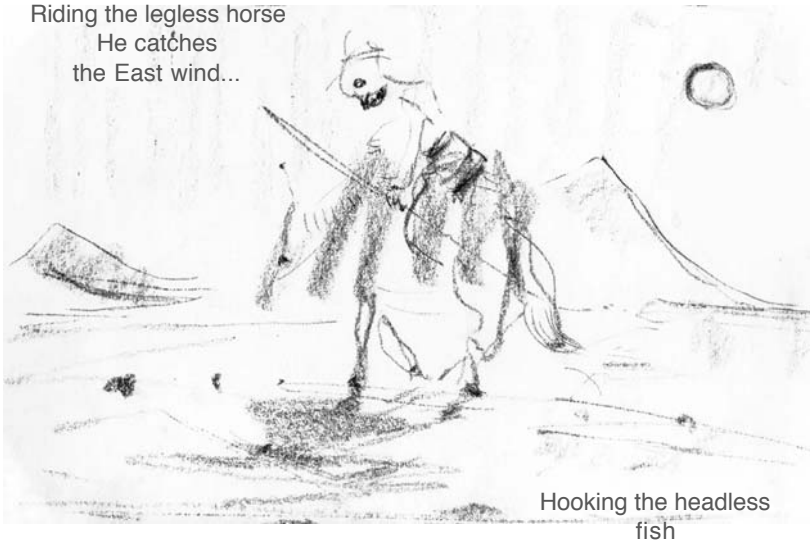
In *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga*, Dr. Coulter discusses sacro-iliac nutation: a motion of the pelvis relative to the spine which occurs naturally in childbirth. This motion occurs in deep forward bends, and one can actually feel the pubic tubercles separate slightly. When sacro-iliac nutation takes place, the pelvis really opens up, and it becomes possible to sit full lotus easily.

"Full sacroiliac nutation is what to aim for and hold in a classic meditation posture because it permits the lumbar lordosis to be maintained and even accentuated without depending so much on the iliacus muscles and an anterior pelvic tilt. And it's also helpful that spreading the ischia apart from one another during nutation shifts the origins of the adductor muscles laterally. That is practical and significant for everyone who is struggling with tight adductors, which we'll soon see are the muscles that protest meditative sitting postures the most."



Motion of the pelvis in sacro-Iliac nutation, from
Anatomy of Hatha Yoga, p. 329

I once asked Dr. Coulter whether, when muscle groups stretch, their sarcomeres elongate, or whether new sarcomeres are added. He replied immediately that new sarcomeres are actually added, and that doing repeated stretching over time actually causes muscles to become physically longer. It is this kind of anatomical intelligence which I found appealing about *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga*. Dr. Coulter joins the static science of *Gray's Anatomy* to the dynamic stretches and bends of the ancient Indian yogis to give a rigorous, complex presentation of anatomy in motion. You can spend hours pouring over the diagrams in this book and working through the precise relationships between muscles, bones, joints and ligaments. I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga* and found that it strengthened and enhanced the anatomy I had learned in medical school. As can be expected for a text of this complexity, *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga* is somewhat dense for people who lack training in human anatomy. Physicians, medical students, physical therapists, and professional hatha yoga instructors are likely to find *Anatomy of Hatha Yoga* an ideal text for learning hatha yoga and a book which nicely complements more traditional texts such as *Light on Yoga*.



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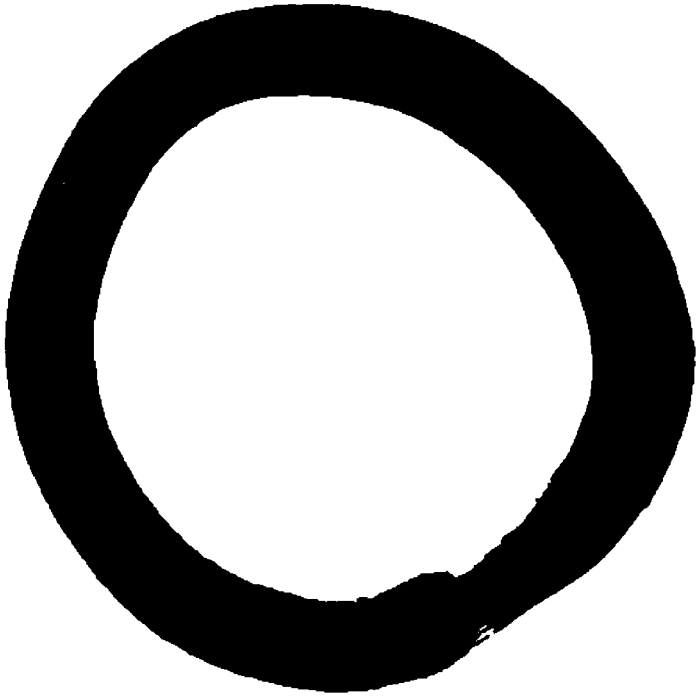

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