Zen Notes

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FORTY-FIFTH LECTURE

Saturday, June 3rd, 1939

"O Lokanatha! If the Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world desire to visit the Buddha's Ocean of Nirvana, how can they extirpate the basic nature which causes them to transmigrate? How many ways of transmigration are there? How many different methods of practice are there for the attainment of the Buddha's Bodhi? For the deliverance of sentient beings from their involvement in suffering, how many kinds of teaching must be devised?

O Mahakaruna! Savior of the world who never forsakes us! I entreat you, permit the Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world who practice your Dharma, to cleanse the Eye of Wisdom, to polish the mirror of the mind, and to attain the Tathagata's highest knowledge!"

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

Bodhisattva Maitreya asks this question of the Buddha: How to extirpate the cause of transmigration so that men will be delivered from their sufferings.

This is a very important question in Buddhism! When the Buddha gives his answer, you must remember this question asked by this Bodhisattva otherwise you will not understand the answer.

"*O Lokanatha!*" -- One of the ten names of the Buddha. It means "Most Honorable One" in the world.

In this assemblage there were ten Bodhisattvas but Maitreya means many Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world. (We are the beings of the future world.)

"*If the Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world desire to visit the Buddhas Ocean of Nirvana,.* " If they wish to "attain" Nirvana, how must they extirpate their affliction? The writer of this sutra made a little fancy description here! But Nir-

vana had been explained by many previous teachers as analogous to the ocean so it appears in this sutra as "the ocean of Nirvana."

The word "Nirvana" is used in the West as meaning "annihilation" but it is very difficult to grasp the real meaning! To grasp the state of Nirvana is almost impossible without the guidance of a teacher, even though you practice meditation by yourself. This state is truly beyond imagination! But there is a false state of Nirvana that may appear true.

Now I shall explain this true state-how it feels after you have meditated a long time. In deep, intense meditation (your eyes should be half open), you will transcend this existing world. Your body becomes light as a feather and your spirit pervades all space. There is neither time nor space, neither light nor darkness. This is the state of Nirvana which is here called the "ocean." You and the universe are interfused; you can find the entire universe within yourself!

The famous Chinese poet, Secho, said of this: "How many times have I gone down into the Serpent's Cave!" He describes the state of Nirvana as the cave of the "Dragon." He continues; "Looking at the bottomless cave, I failed to find a word to describe it. The night of the three thousand worlds is deep! For whom am I going down into this bottomless cave?"

Secho is a Zen poet but this is a rather dilettante view of Nirvana! Everyone is fooled by such descriptions but this type of Nirvana is nothing but your own imagination! In the true state of Nirvana there is nothing to describe. And it appears always, not in some interval between the waking and the sleeping mind!

To attain the state of Nirvana is the highest study of Buddhism. But if you are not guided very carefully in your meditation, you will fall into the false state of Nirvana such as that described in the poem by Secho. I would say it is better to go to bed and have a quiet mind than to have this type of imagination! It is when you extirpate all imagination that you will see the ocean!

When you really see the Ocean of Nirvana there is no time for you to close your eyes nor to say a word! And when you have seen it once you cannot get out of it all your life long!

Therefore it is a lie if anyone says that he has been in the state of Nirvana and now he has lost it. There is no such thing!

"*... how can anyone extirpate the basic nature which causes them to transmigrate?*" --The basic nature which causes you to transmigrate is the dark, tranquil state of consciousness. In the be-

ginning of your meditation practice, you remain in the state of the present mind; later you will come into a deeper state. You will review your history from childhood to today. Then your consciousness goes deeper still and your mind moves as swift as lightning! It seems as if you have been only a few minutes. In this state the mind moves with terrible speed. This is the basic nature of transmigration. There are different "qualities" of transmigration and different types. You transmigrate at every moment. Life perpetuates the mind. But all transmigration arises from the deep, dark meditation. "*How many ways of transmigration are there?*" I have explained three different ways of transmigration but there are really five.

"*How many different methods of practice are there for the attainment of the Buddha's Bodhi?*" Buddha has awakened to the state of Reality! The philosophical conclusion of the state of Reality is that it cannot be demonstrated by any method or described in any words. It transcends any experience through the five senses, nor is Reality the object of our intellect. This is the usual explanation.

But the Buddha's answer is different! When you study Zen through your sanzen, you will attain the Buddha's Reality which does not fall into either of the two states; one being dark and undemonstrable, and the other being materialistic and matter-of-fact! Some day I shall try to explain this to you but now I find no way.

In our training, we temporarily use two expressions: the negative side of Reality and the positive side but we use these words as devices..... (Tells the story of Nansen and the cat.).....

Two groups of temple monks were quarreling about which group owned a cat. Nansen, hearing of this, held the cat up before these monks and said, "If anyone can say a word, I will spare the cat; otherwise I will cut him in two with my sword!" As no one of the monks could speak. Nansen cut the cat in two. Later, Nansen asked this question of Joshu: "Had you been there what would you have said?"

Joshu put his shoe on his head and walked out, whereupon Nansen said, "Had you been there, you would have saved the cat!"

This is a koan. Here Nansen's cat is not negative and Joshu's cat is not positive but if you grasp the meaning of this story will begin to understand Buddha's Bodhi. To us, studying Zen, it is the only reason we are living! It is the Buddha's Bodhi.

"*For the deliverance of sentient beings from their involvement*

in suffering, how many kinds of teaching must be devised?" Everyone believes in many different sufferings so the Buddha must devise many ways of teaching. What kind of devices and what kind of medicine?

"*O Lokanatha! Savior of the world who never forsakes us! I entreat you, permit the Bodhisattvas and the sentient beings of the future world who practice your Dharma, to cleanse the Eye of Wisdom, to polish the mirror of the mind and to attain Tathagata's highest knowledge*."--This "highest knowledge" has already been explained many times in previous lectures on this sutra. One must attain the highest state and gain the eye to see the acquiescent state. Then one will obey the Law. The Buddha calls this Bodhisattva "Obedient One" because he knows how to obey the Law.

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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 I, #15)

(Continued from the Fall '07 Zen Notes)

The Daio-line

The biography of the Daio-line founder Nampo Jomin (Daitokuji reading is Jomyo) bears certain resemblances to that of Dogen. Nampo had studied in China with the Southern Sung Zen Master Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu (1185-1269) of the Sung-yuan (J: Shogen) line, an illustrious Lin-chi teaching line whose members would include Ku-lin Ching. After becoming Hsu-t'ang's heir, Nampo returned to Japan in 1267 and settled in Kyoto, where he attempted to teach the form of pure Sung koan Zen that he had studied in China under his teacher. As with Dogen, Nampo's refusal to compromise the orthodox character of his teaching with elements from Heian Buddhism roused the ire of the Hiei monks. Nampo's temple was burned, and he was forced to flee to Kamakura, where, under the protection of the Hojo regents he was able to resume his teaching activities. A year after his death, he became

the first *kokushi*, or "National Master," receiving the posthumous name Daio "Great Response," by which he is commonly known. The Daio roku, the record of his teachings, is framed in difficult and often abstruse language, and reflects the strong influence of Chinese literary traditions associated with koan Zen in both the Northern and Southern Sung dynasties. Particularly conspicuous is Daio's reverence for the literary Zen of the Yun-men (J: Ummon)-line Master Hsueh-tou Ch'ung-hsien (J: Setcho Joken) (980-1052) and for Yuan-wu K'o-ch' in's Blue Cliff Record

Under Daio's heirs, his teaching line was finally installed in Kyoto, where its principal temples, Daitokuji and Myoshinji, were established and maintained in large measure through the patronage of the Emperor and the Imperial Court. Unlike Dogen and his followers, the early leaders of the Daio-line never permanently abandoned the cities for the countryside, and although the line eventually expanded into provincial Japan, its headquarters temples in Kyoto always remained focal points in its development. This factor, combined with the continued importance of Imperial patronage and the line's initial membership in the Muromachi Gozan, appears to have lent the Daio-line a particular prestige which distinguished it to some extent from other branches of the rinka.

Daitokuji

Daitokuji was founded in 1333 by Daio's leading heir, Shuho Myocho (commonly known by his kokushi name Daito with the support of the Emperors Hanazono and Go Daigo. Established as a single-lineage *(ichiryu sojo)* temple, outside the open abbacy system, Daitokuji's abbacy was ostensibly limited to Daito's successors, though it later came to include other members of the Daio-line. Through the influence of Hanazono, who became Daito's disciple and remained his leading patron, Daitokuji at its founding was ranked among the Kyoto Gozan, and in 1334 was declared the equal of Nanzenji. at that time the Gozan's premier temple.

Daito eschewed the syncretism that had been a common feature of the Kyoto Zen schools, remaining faithful to his master's Orthodox teaching style. His Zen, like Daio's, seems to have combined an emphasis on koan study with a mastery of Chinese literary forms associated with Sung koan Zen. The entries in Hanazono's journal which deal with Muso, cited previously, make it clear that both Daito and Hanazono considered themselves committed to preserving authentic Zen in the capital against the encroachments of Muso's syncretic teaching. Hanazono was himself a pivotal figure in establishing orthodox Sung Zen in the capital, and was probably the first Japanese Emperor to undertake serious Zen study. His relationship with Daito was intimate, and together they took up cases from the *Blue Cliff Record* (Pi-yen lu) and

Gateless Gate (Mumonkan) with Daito engaging the Emperor in Zen dialogues (*mondo*) and having him present "capping words" (agyo) to which he would occasionally add his own corrections. The written record of one such mondo, inscribed in the hands of Daito and Hanazono and preserved at Daitokuji, is generally believed to document the Emperor's enlightenment and its authentication by Daito. Hanazono's enlightenment verse, included in the document, employs the key phrase "twenty years," which appears in Daito's own enlightenment verse and is traditional for such verses in the Daio-line. The Emperor is also known to have received from Daito the robe and bowl, symbols of the transmission, presumably in recognition of his Zen attainment.

Although formally affiliated with the Gozan for nearly a century, Daitokuji remained something of an outsider within the sorin. Despite Daito's command of Chinese poetic style, Daitokuji did not truly participate in the literary Zen of the Muso-line temples. In contrast with the rest of the sorin, it seems to have maintained a certain idealism with respect to Zen practice, and sanzen, zazen, and koan study continued to figure in its teaching program--albeit in altered forms--even as they were being abandoned by the Gozan. Consequently Daitokuji became a natural rallying point for monks leaving the sorin temples in search of a more authentic form of Zen. Its status as a single-line temple, moreover, effectively protected its abbacy from penetration by the Muso line and enabled the temple to continue under the direction of Daio-line masters whose teaching more closely resembled rinka than sorin Zen.

Perhaps in part because of its distance from the mainstream of Gozan Zen, Daitokuji failed by and large to receive the patronage of the Ashikaga Shogunate and remained in eclipse during the Muso-line's period of glory. Strictly political factors may also have played a role. Daito had been a supporter of the exiled Emperor Go Daigo, and the Ashikagas, engaged in a protracted guerrilla war with the partisans of the Southern Court, may have been wary of Daitokuji's historic identification with the Emperor. There does not, however, appear to have been any active persecution or hostility. The Shogun Yoshimochi is known to have visited Daitokuji to interview a priest on the koan "Who is it that does not keep company with the ten thousand things?"(*manbo furyo*) and while Daitokuji periodically became a focus for certain Court-Bakufu tensions, during the heyday of the Gozan, the temple may have been more ignored than abused by either the Muso-line or the secular power structure.'"""

Eventually, Daitokuji declined to the secondary rank of Jissatsu, and in 1431, as previously described, the Bakufu granted the temple's appeal to withdraw from the sorin altogether, on the

abbots from the Muso-line. Ashikaga power, however, had begun to decline, and with it, the fortunes of the sorin. Daitokuji now found itself in a position to supplant its rivals. Denied Bakufu support, which was virtually monopolized by the Muso-line, Daitokuji, like the other rinka temples, had cultivated the patronage of new groups coming to the fore in Medieval Japan. Merchants, doctors, lesser samurai and masters of various arts such as tea and Noh became the temple's patrons, and as they prospered, provided a secure economic base for Daitokuji's revival. Under the Zen Master Keso Sodon 1352-1428) and his two leading disciples, Yoso (1379-1458) and Ikkyu Sojun, Daitokuji was finally restored to eminence, and through the support of the Emperor Go Hanazono (1419-1470), was ranked once again as an equal of the Nanzenji. In approximately 1463, the purple robe was awarded to Daitokuji's abbot at Imperial behest, over the objections of the Bakufu, which had not been notified and opposed the action. Nanzenji, which had shared with Tenryuji exclusive possession of the purple robe, was outraged. But its protests to the Bakufu were unavailing, and by the late fifteenth century the practice of awarding the purple robe to abbots of the Daio-line temples had become common. Eventually, all relations between Daitokuji and Nanzenji were severed, and the two remained at odds till the dispute was forcibly resolved by warlord-unifier Hideyoshi at the end of the following century. Perhaps more dramatically than any other event, the purple robe episode demonstrated the resurgence of the Daio-line and the declining power and influence of the official temples and their traditional supporters, the Ashikaga bukke.

Amid the chaotic conditions of the sixteenth century, the Daitokuji line, like the other rinka lines, extended its teaching into provincial Japan, attracting patronage from the sengoku daimyo and even absorbing branch temples of the Gozan. The Daito-line was particularly successful among the prosperous merchant classes Sakai and Osaka , leading port cities which became the site of important Daitokuji branch temples. The celebrated connection between Daitokuji and the art of tea, or cha no yu, with the burgeoning merchant community. In its initial phase, the tea cult was a product of merchant connoisseurs' enthusiasm for Ming wares being imported from the continent; only later, under the influence of tea masters like Murata Juko (1422-1502) and Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591), did it gradually become identified with the more austere Japanese aesthetic now associated with the art of tea. In the late Muromachi period, strong links were forged between the tea cult and Daitokuji Zen, with many successful merchants who doubled as cha no yu devotees becoming Daitokuji patrons. Descendants in Sen no Rikyu's school continued to take sanzen under Daitokuji teachers through the Tokugawa period, while Daitokuji masters frequently became proficient at tea and supplied scrolls for the decoration of tea huts.

Generally speaking, Daitokuji Zen seems to have been more closely involved with the arts than the Zen of other rinka lines -- perhaps as a result of the literary accomplishments of its founders, its original membership in the Gozan and its ties with the Imperial Court, where aesthetic concerns were of great importance. However, Zen practice itself at Daitokuji differed little from that throughout the rinka during the late Muromachi period. The origins of missan Zen at Daitokuji are obscure, but by the mid-fifteenth century, the missan style of secret koan transmission had become firmly entrenched at the temple and was apparently in general use. In contrast with the demanding and refined Sung style Zen of Daio and Daito, missan Zen was readily accessible to the new class of Daitokuji patrons, and probably contributed significantly to broadening the temple's base of support. With the advent of the missan system, Zen study at Daitokuji was no longer restricted to an elite of monks and patricians. Merchants, nuns, professional entertainers and even masseurs were admitted to sanzen with Daitokuji masters and received private instruction in the "secrets" of koans, written out in kana, the Japanese syllabary (as opposed to the more complex Chinese characters of the original), for their convenience. In return, these groups supplied Daitokuji with crucial financial support.

Transcribing a Book

Kawanabe Kyosai (1831-1889), Freer Gallery of Art, Wash. D.C.

Twenty-Five Zen Koans

Selected and Translated by Sokei-an Sasaki

Eighth Koan

(Saturday, February 26, 1938)

Nehan Osho of Hyakujo Mountain in Chi Chou said one day to his monks:

"If you work for me, plowing the rice field, I will interpret the Great Teaching for you."

The monks, having labored in plowing the rice field, returned to the temple and begged the Osho to interpret the Great Teaching. Thereupon the Osho stretched out his arms with the palms of the hands upward,

———————————

This is the koan on which I shall give a brief commentary. There are many stories connected with this Nehan Osho. I choose several of these through which to understand the mind of this Osho.

———————————

Seeing the sun shining through the window into the room, an old monk asked a question of the Osho:

"Is the sun shining through the window, or is the window permitting the sun to shine through?"

The Osho said: "My dear Elder! I have a guest today. You had better go home."

———————————

This is the end of this story and there is another:

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When the Osho was going to the city, he met a government official on the way. The official proposed that they take a meal together. All of a sudden they heard a mule neighing. The official cried out: "Zuta!" (an expression sometimes used in addressing a Zen monk) *The Osho raised his head. The official pointed to the mule. The Osho neighed like a mule.*

Through these koans, I think you understand the type of Zen this Nehan Osho represents. He was a disciple of that famous Hyakujo who was a disciple of Ma Taishi who was a disciple of Eno, the Sixth Patriarch.

It was Hyakujo who, on a journey one day with his teacher Ma Taishi, saw a pheasant fly up from some bushes into the sky. I think you know that beautiful Chinese bird, the size of a hen, with a long long tail and with a cry (imitates)-- not so beautiful, but it pierces the sky.

Ma Taishi said to Hyakujo: "What was that?"
Hyakujo said: "It was a pheasant."
Ma Taishi asked: "Where has it gone?"
Hyakujo answered: "It is gone"
Ma Taishi punched Hyakujo's nose.
"Gone!... why don't you go!"
Upon that Hyakujo was all of a sudden enlightened.

All these ancient people were enlightened in some queer situation. They were enlightened any time, anywhere, but it was the result of much daily practice. Twenty minutes of practice every day is enough in its accumulation. The strength you attain in the practice of meditation is the base; without it there is nothing even though you pass your koan. When I practice meditation three-quarters of a minute three times a week before these lectures, it gives some substantial food to my consciousness.

Commentary

Nehan Osho of Hyakujo Mountain in Chi Chou said one day to his monks: Nehan Osho was a disciple of this Hyakujo. Hyakujo Mountain was on the southern shore of China. Hyakujo Mountain was famous in this period of the T'ang Dynasty. This Nehan Osho was always giving lectures on the Nirvana sutra, so they called him Nehan Osho. His true name was Pai-chang Nieh-p'an, but no one called him by his true name. Everyone called him by his nickname.

"If you work for me, plowing the rice field, I will interpret the 'Great Teaching for you." The monks, having labored in plowing the rice field, returned to the temple and begged the Osho to interpret the Great Teaching. Thereupon the Osho stretched out his arms with the palms of his hands upward.

That was his answer. That was all. If you try to make any meaning out of it you will fail to understand Nehan Osho. Well,... if I put useless legs on the snake, I will say this much:

"*If you work for me, plowing the rice field, I will interpret the 'Great Teaching for you.*" To plow the rice field is itself the great teaching of this profound religion. You do not need to search for any religion any more. It is the conclusion. It is the ultimatum. If you are an official, be an official. If you are a carpenter, build a house. If you are a school teacher, teach the children. If you are a banker, count the money. If you are a butcher, cut the meat. If you are a farmer, work in the field. That is all.

But "*the monks, having labored in plowing the rice filed*" all day long -- those unenlightened monks did not know what they were doing. They thought that they were laboring, and that religion or Zen was something else. Therefore "*they returned to the temple and begged the Osho to interpret the Great Teaching*,"

So the Osho interpreted the teaching. He was very kind! He gave it no name, such as "omnipresent body," nor any silent answer. Do not call it by any name or put any tag on it, as those department stores put those little tags with their prices on everything, or as a museum has all its objects tagged. This is not the symbol of anything. If you understand this, you understand Zen. Those monks should have understood this before they came back from the rice field!

When Ananda questioned Mahakasyapa after Buddha's death, he asked:

"*Mahakasyapa, I understand that Buddha transmitted to you three things: his robe, his bowl -- but what was the other object?*"

Buddha had transmitted three things to Mahakasyapa before he entered Nirvana; his robe, his bowl and his esoteric teaching, the unwritten teaching. Ananda understood two of these, but the third he had not understood, so he asked this question.

Mahakasyapa said: "O Ananda!"
Ananda replied: "Yes?"
Mahakasyapa said: "Put up the awning from the window."
And Ananda exclaimed: "Oh! I realize what was transmitted from Buddha to you!"

Very simple, wasn't it! But Ananda should have understood that before. Mahakasyapa said, "*O Ananda!*" But he failed to understand. Mahakasyapa was very kind! "*Put up the awning...*!" Is there any mystery?

As those monks went to the rice field and plowed, they should have immediately understood. But they "*returned to the temple and begged the Osho to interpret the Great Teaching.*" If this Osho

were Rinzai, he would shout and drive them all out with his staff.

Well, this much I can speak of. I am not hiding anything from you, but there is nothing to speak about any more.

Now I shall give several examples. This one first:

Seeing the sun shining through the window, an old monk questioned the Osho: "Is the sun shining through the window, or is the window permitting the sun to shine through?" Is the physical body permitting the spirit to shine through, or is it the spirit which comes first? This was the Zen Question and it is very subtle. If you do not know this mind you cannot understand.

A gentleman came in here one day and stood in the center of my room and looked all around.

"What is this?" he asked.
I said, "Nothing."
He asked, Do you bow to these images?"
I replied, "Yes, I bow."
He asked, "Why?"
I said, "I bow."

He then asked me if he could come to my lectures. I said, "Yes, if you do not fear that your mind will be vitiated."

Returning to our story... *Nehan answered: "My dear Elder! I have a guest today. You better go home."* But if I were he, I would say. "Get out of here!" If you like, put one more word in it! (He repeated the koan again) The Osho said, "Go home! Don't stay around me!" From this you know him. You find his type of mind. A Zen Master cannot take this attitude in the beginning. This attitude is the end of his long, long word. If he were a half-baked Buddhist monk, he would fall into a violent argument with this monk and the guest would say good bye! Couldn't stay there!

Second: *When the Osho was going to the city he met a government official on the way.* -- The official would be on horseback with his attendants, riding slowly along the dusty road. In those days the monks were adored by the laymen. When a layman met a monk, the layman gave the monk the center of the road. If you go to Siam or. Burma today, when the government officials there go to the temples, the monks will accept them lying down on the floor. This occurred not only in ancient days for today it still happens there. Those Buddhist gentlemen, though very rich and of high position, if in passing through any town or village, they hear the name of any monk who is known, they will pay him a visit. Perhaps this official was a count or a baron, but nonetheless,

he will very humbly visit a small temple.

The official proposed that they take a meal together. Perhaps you think he was invited to Delmonico's or the Ritz or some inn. But no! The Chinese eat their meal on the roadside; it is a public place, you know. When I went to Northern China, all ate on the street, would bring out their tables and bowls and all of the meal and sit there eating and talking -- no one was in the houses. An American gentleman in Japan once said: "There is no sociable place in Japan but the bath houses." It is true.

A*ll of a sudden they heard a mule neighing*. The Chinese donkey neighs in a shrieking voice, quite offensive. When you go to a village, often you cannot see the donkey but you hear him.

The official cried out: "Zuta!" Seems to me this official understood Zen! The Osho was eating.

The Osho raised his head. The official pointed to the mule. The Osho neighed like a mule. The Osho said "Ya-a-a-a!" That was all. You cannot see the simple thing because your mind is complicated, you have many troubles in your life. Keep that complicated mind, but at the bottom keep a deep quiet place...

Rang bell

BOOKS REVIEWED

The Book of Rinzai: The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Rinzai (Linji). Translated by Eido Shimano. The Zen Studies Society. NY:2005.

Eido Shimano is a Rinzai Zen master and longtime resident of New York. Heir of Soen Nakagawa, he is founder and abbot of the New York Zendo Shoboji in Manhattan and Daibosatsu Zendo Kongoji in the Catskills. The *Rinzai* is, of course, one of the central texts of Zen, purporting to record the talks and encounters of the Tang Zen master known to the Japanese as Rinzai Gigen (CH:Linji Jixuan, or Lin-chi I-hsuan, d.867).

Shimano's translation opens with a brief introduction by Charles Vacher, filling in something of the background of the text. Many questions are being raised by contemporary scholars about the actual dates and origins of such works purporting to be the teaching of the Tang Zen masters, and Vacher sensibly urges "[A] cautious approach to these records...somewhere between the naive belief that these texts are the authentic records of the words and deeds of the masters and the conviction that they have been extensively fabricated by the Song Linji school (xvii)." He notes that Shimano's Rinzai translation is unusual in that it is by a Rinzai Zen master established in the West, but surveying the other modern English translations of the work, fails to note the earliest, Sokei-an's pioneering translation (and commentary) of the 1930s, perhaps because it remains unpublished outside of *Zen Note*s.

In his own brief introduction, Shimano states that his translation is an "interpretive one," while expressing his debt to the earlier Sasaki, Watson, and Cleary translations, among others. He has followed the excellent 1972 *Rinzai roku* (record) edited by the Japanese Zen scholar Akizuki Ryumin, and while providing in parentheses Chinese readings of proper names and Zen terms, explains his decision to keep these in their Japanese readings, the form in which he himself became familiar with them in the course of his Zen training in Japanese temples. His approach, he stresses, is not that of a scholar, but of a practicing Zen teacher in the Rinzai school, "someone who has been steeped in the living, breathing teachings of Master Rinzai for most of my life" (xxiii). As such, the book includes minimal but useful footnotes that clarify details without overwhelming the text and even include Chinese characters for many terms and phrases. There is a map of Rinzai's China, and Shimano provides the late seventeenth-early eighteenth-century Zen master-scholar Mujaku Dochu's text of the Rinzai record (including kanbun annotation) opposite the English translation. Printed in large, clear characters, Mujaku's text is superimposed over one of four traditional premodern im-

ages of Rinzai, a different one for each of the work's four sections, a device which makes it simple to orient oneself within the volume. (Sasaki, like Yanagida Seizan in his 1972 *Rinzai roku*, combines Shimano's sections one and two into a single section.)

Like Sasaki's translation and Watson's, Shimano's has benefited from the ongoing Japanese research on Tang Chinese usage and Tang Zen literature, and in common with both of these predecessors he makes effective use of colloquial American English to render the lively tone of Rinzai's discourses and the often pithy give-and-take of Rinzai's dialogues with various Zen monks and masters. Shimano's introduction stresses the Zen term *buji* (CH: *wu-shih*, literally, "no thing(s)," "no affairs," "nothing further to do," "free of entanglements,"etc.),which appears frequently in the Rinzai record and is given by Shimano a variety of creative translations, with the original term helpfully included in parenthesis as necessary. While in places Shimano's wording closely follows the Sasaki translation, elsewhere he arrives at different and at times tighter, more succinct solutions to particular passages. In other areas, perhaps in a gesture to political correctness, the neutral "person" is substituted for the more familiar "man," so that instead of "independent man of the Way," we have "independent person of the Way," "True Person Without Rank," and so forth, which, at least to my ear, has a peculiar bureaucratic ring.

I have only a few additional and, admittedly minor quibbles with the translation. I prefer Sasaki's "Speak! Speak!" to Shimano's "Say quickly!" (7), which has a pidgin English flavor and seems less close to the two-character phrase of the Chinese original (though elsewhere Shimano adopts the Sasaki version). Ditto for the use of "deprived" for "taken away" ("Sometimes both the person and the conditions are deprived" [157]). Such "awkwardisms" should have been flagged immediately by Shimano's English-language editors. Certain usages seem overly colloquial, "you guys," for example (Sasaki: "all of you") for *chu jen* (J:*shonin*); others such as "addictions" (27) seem too contemporary (and here, in any case, more of an interpretation than a translation). One would also expect notes on some of the more opaque phrases in the text, especially those that Shimano translates differently from some of his predecessors. Example: "One is on a solitary peak and is unable to find the path. Another one is at a busy crossroads yet is free from preferences"(13). Perhaps befitting an "interpretive" approach, other celebrated, albeit difficult passages of the Rinzai, are , again, more glosses than translations: "On meeting a hungry ghost, it is a hungry ghost" (31) is interesting, but the word "is" here (CH: *shuoh*, J: *toku*) is a Chinese character meaning, literally, in a Buddhist context, to speak, teach, or preach (Sasaki has "persuade," which may also be a bit of a

stretch). Also, as a proper name, "Tokusan II" (103) sounds odd and seems unnecessary, when the "two" merely indicates the second-generation abbot of Mount Toku (Tokusan) monastery. Finally, when Rinzai visits Isan in Chapter VIII of "Pilgrimages," he asks the latter how many monks are practicing under him. Isan says fifteen hundred, to which Rinzai, in Shimano's translation, replies, "Too many!"(127). Again, the usual interpretation of the three-character phrase is, literally, "A great many" (Akizuki), or, as in Sasaki, "That's a lot!" Though the translation here is equally plausible, one would appreciate a word or two of explanation.

Altogether, however, Shimano is to be complemented on the *Book of Rinzai*. The Rinzai Record is my own personal favorite among the early Chinese Zen texts, and it's a pleasure to have available yet another careful and highly readable English translation of this essential classic of the Chan tradition.

--Peter Haskel--

A rare, good-humored portrait of Rinzai

From "The Book of Rinzai" frontispiece

Note:

.....(Cover photo of deck in back of Zen Institute by PL).....

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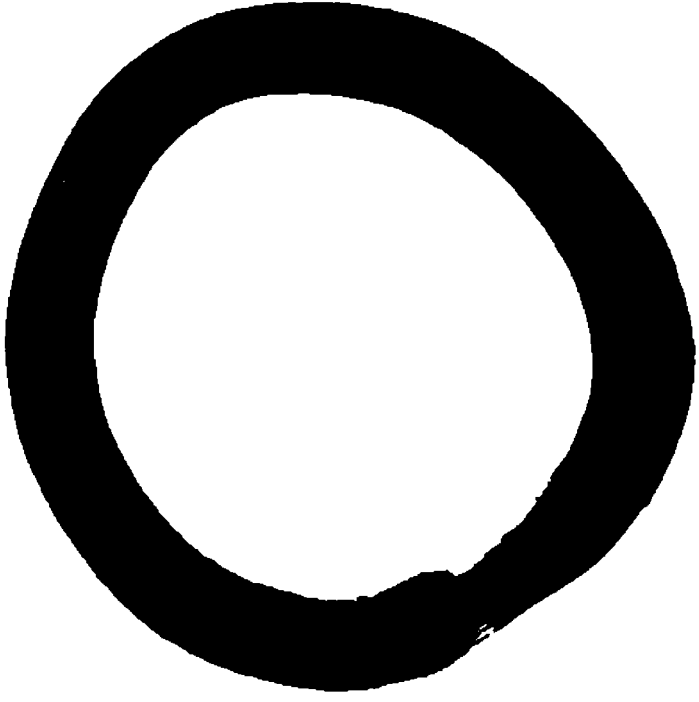

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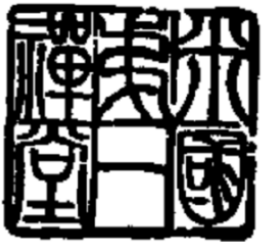

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