

ZEN NOTES



Demon Miso

Kaizenji

(Cover illustration from *The Religious Art of Master Hakuin*)

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FORTY-SEVENTH LECTURE

Wednesday June 21st, 1939

Maitreya was delighted with the Buddha's consent, and the multitude made ready to listen to the sermon in silence.

"O Obedient One! Blinded by all kinds of afflictions and desires, all sentient beings have been transmigrating from the beginning of time. Every species of living beings in the world, those hatched from the egg, those born from the womb, produced in humidity or generated by metamorphosis, have been brought forth by sexual affinity. You must know that thirst (trisna) is the original factor which drives you on to transmigration. Desires of all kinds kindle passionate thirst in you and impose upon you continuous life which passes from birth to death."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

Maitreya was delighted with the Buddha's consent. The Buddha had consented to give a sermon on the subject of transmigration—what is the cause of transmigration and how to eradicate the cause.

... and the multitude made ready to listen to the sermon in silence. — "Silence" means the deep samadhi when everything is eradicated from the mind.

In this sermon there are two elements in the Buddha's answer to Maitreya's question: The first principle is to cut off the wheel of transmigration; the second is to practice compassion with wisdom. Compassion without wisdom is not true compassion, and wisdom without compassion is not true wisdom, it is dry. The Buddha taught them to practice wisdom and compassion. You must remember what I am saying here! It is only a few words.

In the first element there are two principles, concerning the method of cutting off the wheel of transmigration, and then the urging of this for others.

To understand what is the cause and what is the result, we must study the nature of each type of transmigration, and to eradicate it, we must understand what part of transmigration must be eradicated.

We must urge people to eradicate the wheel of transmigration. According to these items, the Buddha gave his sermon.

"O Obedient One! Blinded by all kinds of afflictions and desires." —According to the Buddha, there are five desires: to eat, to generate, to become prominent with properties, to become famous with abilities, to take rest. These are the five profound desires of sentient beings; all desires which we have can be classified under these heads.

When I was very young, I asked my teacher a question: "I come to listen to you; you are my teacher. How do you classify my desire to come and listen to you—under these five desires?" He answered: "You desire to come here to sleep!"

To take a rest is one of the great elements of religion. To take a rest physically, one goes to bed; to take a rest mentally, one goes to a temple or back to the mother.

But to find the true rest—you must come to profound religion. Of course most people don't want this kind of rest; they prefer to go to night-clubs, dance, drink. To such people, religion is some kind of superstition. But do not be discouraged—there is true religion in the world!

"... all sentient beings have been transmigrating from the beginning of time." —From the beginning of the world! Desire is the cause of this transmigration. To satisfy one desire you acquire another desire: You hope to marry some girl, so you must make money; to get money, you may steal; to steal, you may kill! In such a way people gather karma, and when you make karma you must pay for it. Therefore, you must transmigrate from one state to another.

How do we look at this in Buddhism? Where does this desire begin in the human mind? The Five Skandhas are the cause of desire, called "Panca-upadana-skandhas." There is rupa skandha, vedana skandha, samjna skandha, samskara skandha, and vijnana skandha.

The cause of samskara is vijnana—and the cause of vijnana is avidya, the original darkness. So the beginning of transmigration is in the first state of the Twelve Nidanas. This is original ignorance; one is ignorant in the state of original nature!

How to eradicate this transmigration? What part is the basis which we must eradicate? How to eradicate this first darkness? By attaining wisdom and awareness of the state of your original nature. So those students who are enlightened have already eradi-

cated the cause of transmigration; but they are still in transmigration if they wish to play with transmigration.

One who takes the world very seriously and dies in a deluded state, and one who does not take the world seriously and dies in an awakened state—these are two entirely different types of men. How are they different? One is a blind man and the other has opened his eyes!

The enlightened one—"Well, good-bye children, I have enjoyed you and I have enjoyed my life even though I have suffered much." But the blind one—"Oh, I don't want to die—and I hate those who have made me suffer!" I should hate to die like that! Speaking personally, my life is not easy—but I enjoy it just the same.

"Every species of living being in the world, those hatched from the egg, those born from the womb, produced by humidity or generated by metamorphosis." —These are, in Buddhist terms, the four species of living beings. Of course, in comparison with modern scientific knowledge, these classifications are not correct—but this is the ancient classification.

The beings in Devaloka and in Jnanaloka are generated by metamorphosis. These Devas, like Christian angels, have no sex. Metamorphosis means "transformation." In Christianity, it is called "transfiguration." Keeping this physical body, man transforms himself into an omnipresent world—a body which can go through this world, through a keyhole, walk over water! It is a kind of metamorphosis. It is as when we go from Dharmakaya to Sambhogakaya.

And the Pretas! Some are generated by metamorphosis and some are born from the womb. There is the story of Hariti; She wished to see the Buddha passing through the street—and she ran after the crowd. But she was carrying a child in her womb—bore her child in the street—and died! She became a beautiful Preta who hated Buddhist monks and the Buddha himself. There are many such stories.

And the Garudas—the birds who flew through the surface of the water, dividing the water so that the bottom of the ocean appeared! These are those which are hatched from the egg, one of the four ways of birth.

"... have been brought forth by sexual affinity." —He is speaking about the devas in Kamadhatu—angels in the world of desire. The four kings who stand at the four corners of the universe, and the god Indra, who is the master of the Tryastrimsa, be-

get children like man; the gods in Yamaloka beget by embracing; those in Nirmanarati beget by smiling—and in the highest Kamaloka, they beget by looking into each other's eyes. And the gods in Tushita who beget by grasping the hand.

These are the six attitudes of sexual affinity in Buddhism. We in the Orient regard shaking hands, looking into another's eyes as sexual affinity. That is why it seems like bad etiquette.

"You must know that thirst (trisna) is the original factor which drives you on to transmigration." —In the Chinese, "trisna" is translated as "love" —but the Sanskrit meaning is "thirst."

"Desires of all kinds kindle passionate thirst in you.. " —Desires of the five kinds: Food belongs to earth. It is the root of life. Generation belongs to water; it nourishes and gives growth. Fire is motion; it gives action to sentient beings. Wisdom is air; by that we hear. The eye is connected to fire, light; the ear is air—that is sound—the words by which we make things intelligible.

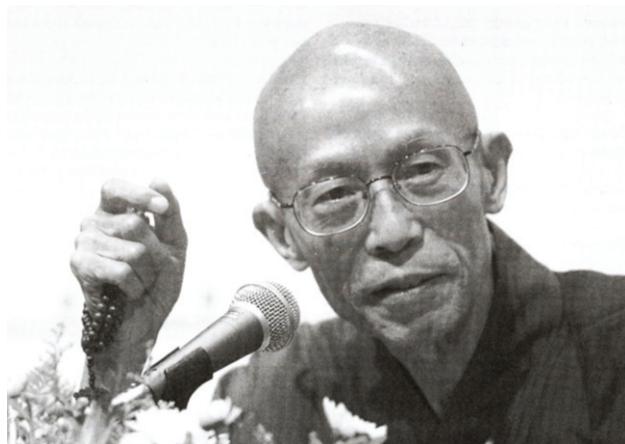
"... and impose upon you continuous life which passes from birth to death." —Such people never know that there is eternal life. Without knowing that state of Reality, you are like a dreamer who dreams without awaking; you never know that you are dreaming! Unless you awaken—you will die in the dream.

* * * * *

Master Sheng Yen Dies at 79

By Guogu

(Reprint from Chan Magazine, Spring 2009)



Venerable Master Sheng Yen of Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan and the Chan Meditation Center in New York passed into Nirvanic bliss in Taipei on February 3rd, 2009, 3 am (Taiwan time: February 2nd, 4 pm) at National Taiwan University Hospital at the age of 79.

Master Sheng Yen was born into a humble farming family in Nantong County, near Xiaonlang Harbor, in Jiangsu Province on January 22, 1930 (December 4 of the lunar calendar). Master Sheng Yen became a monk at age thirteen. He began as a frail novice, yet he was destined to become one of the most influential Buddhist clerics in modern Chinese history and in the renaissance of Western Buddhism. Master Sheng Yen was a Chinese lineage holder of both the Linji and Caodong Chan Buddhist schools, the founder of the Dharma Drum Order of Chan Buddhism, the founder of the Dharma Drum Mountain Center for World Education, the first Chinese cleric to receive a Ph.D. in Buddhist studies from Rissho University in Japan, a stellar Buddhist scholar of Ming Buddhism and of Master Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655), and an active advocate of environmental protection.

Master Sheng Yen came to New York in 1976, soon after receiving his Ph.D. He might have confined his activities to the pastoral guidance of the immigrant Chinese community, but he instead embarked upon the more difficult challenge of teaching Chan to Americans. He overcame many obstacles: language, culture, prejudice, logistics and financial difficulties. Until 2006 when he became ill, he divided his time between New York and Taipei, training generations of Chan practitioners with methods skillfully adapted to the contemporary problems facing his students.

Master Sheng Yen was a dedicated scholar and prolific writer. His collected work, *Fagu Chuanji*, amounts to over 100 volumes, covering topics as diverse as Tiantai and Huayan philosophies, vinaya, Buddhist scriptural commentaries, Indo-Tibetan and East Asian Buddhist histories, Chan Buddhist studies, and comparative religions. He also wrote many popular books introducing Buddhist teachings to both beginners and those with a more advanced understanding of Buddhism.

He spoke out for what he called spiritual environmentalism: the essential task of purifying our environment by first purifying our minds. This is more than just philosophy. It is a call for personal commitment coupled with practical goals that will benefit all the peoples of the world. Many in Taiwan and in other countries have responded to this exhortation with great enthusiasm.

Master Sheng Yen was one of the foremost contributors to the

vital Humanistic Buddhism or Taiwan that blossomed in the 20th century. He was an exemplary leader of contemporary Chinese Buddhism, combining a deep understanding of Buddhadharma with an equally profound concern for the welfare of all sentient beings. He was a warm, insightful, and inspirational teacher to his many students around the world. All who encountered him were touched by his personal concern and his remarkable ability to communicate difficult ideas simply—always with wit, compassion, and a profound sense of humor. Master Sheng Yen will be deeply missed by Buddhist practitioners, scholars of Chinese Buddhism, and everyone who had the good fortune to meet him.

As a conclusion, I compose the following verse:

*Busy with nothing, growing old.
Within emptiness, weeping, laughing.
Intrinsically, there is no “I.”
Life and death, thus cast aside.*

Bhikkhu Sheng Yen Founder, Dharma Drum Mountain

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, #17)

(Continued from the Spring'08 Zen Notes)

Myoshinji (part1)

Myoshinji was founded by the Emperor Hanazono in 1377 as a Daitokuji branch temple. At Daito's urging, Hanazono offered the temple's abbacy to Kanzan Egen, one of Daito's leading heirs, who thus became Myoshinji's founding priest. Little is known of Kanzan or his teaching. He studied under Daio for one year just prior to the latter's death in 1309, but then returned to his native village in present day Nagano Prefecture, where he remained for the next twenty years. At the age of fifty, Kanzan traveled to Kyoto to become the student of Daio's heir Daito at Daitokuji. Two years later, he attained enlightenment and received Daito's inka after passing the koan "Yunmen's Barrier," the same koan by which Daito experienced enlightenment.¹

Thereafter, he retired for eight years to a rural area in Mino Province now Gifu Prefecture. Here he is said to have worked by day as a humble laborer, passing his nights in meditation on a rocky promontory. In 1337, he was summoned to Kyoto by Daito, and assumed Myoshinji's abbacy, a post which he held until his death in 1360. Kanzan apparently espoused a pure koan Zen similar to that of Daito, and his austere practice was admired even by the monks of the Gozan. Yet virtually no authentic records of his teaching survive. The final testament of Kanzan, traditionally recited at the Myoshinji, has been shown to be a forgery of the Tokugawa period, and even Kanzan's reputed inka to his successor, the former courtier Juo Sohitsu (1296-1380), appears to be a fabrication by Juo's attendant.

Though lacking any connection with the Ashikaga or the mainstream Gozan temples, Myoshinji seems to have gradually prospered under the patronage of the emperor and the court, its ranks swelled by dissidents from the sorin. Certain ceremonial forms borrowed from the Gozan were incorporated at Myoshinji by the temple's third abbot, Muin Soin, who like many other Myoshinji abbots, had originally studied in the Gozan; but otherwise, contact with the official temples was rare. Even with Daitokuji, relations seem to have been far from intimate. There are indications in several documents that Kanzan incurred Daito's displeasure, and that at Daito's dying insistence, Myoshinji monks were barred

¹ Case 8 of the *Blue Cliff Record*, "Ts'uui -yens' Eyebrows.": "At the end of the summer retreat, Ts'uui-yen said to the community, 'All summer long I've been talking to you, brothers; look and see if my eyebrows are still there'...Yun-men said, 'A barrier.'" Thomas and J.C. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record* (Boulder:1977), I, 53.

from assuming the abbacy of Daitokuji for one hundred years. Whatever the historical accuracy of these accounts, they clearly reflect a certain antagonism on the part of the Daitokuji establishment which throughout much of the Muromachi period appears to have rejected the Kanzan line as a heretical deviation from the main Daitokuji line of Daito's heir Tetto Giko. (1295-1369).

If Myoshinji maintained a somewhat solitary position in the world of Kyoto Zen, it did not remain aloof from the political intrigues of its military patrons, and at the close of the fourteenth century, the temple nearly became a casualty of the power struggle in the capital. In 1399, the Ouchi clan, prominent supporters of Myoshinji, rebelled against the Ashikaga bakufu, or military government, and the temple's sixth abbot, Juo's heir Setsudo Soboku (n.d.), went to the Ouchi camp. This act implicated Myoshinji in the rebellion and infuriated the shogun, Yoshimitsu, who ordered the temple destroyed. Its grounds and estates were confiscated and its monks scattered.

Only Kanzan's tatchu, or funerary temple, was allowed to remain on the site. Even Emperor Hanazono's pagoda was removed to another location, and Myoshinji was made a branch temple of Nanzenji under the new name Ryuunji.

Till the beginning of the Eikyo era (1429-1440), Myoshinji remained dilapidated and nearly abandoned. It recovered only gradually, its final rehabilitation due chiefly to the determined efforts of two of its most celebrated abbots, Nippo Soshun (1368-1448), an heir of Muin, and Sekko Soshin (1408-1486). Ironically, Sekko's ancestors had been noted retainers of the Ashikaga, and like many leaders of the Kanzan line, he began his training as a sorin monk, studying at Kenninji. Dissatisfied with Gozan Zen, however, he left the sorin to study under Nippo, a famous Myoshinji master who had withdrawn to Owari (Aichi Prefecture) in the wake of the bakufu's persecution. Nippo enjoyed the patronage of Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430-1473), leader of the powerful Hosokawa clan, at that time second in power only to the Ashikaga themselves, and under Katsumoto's protection, he and Sekko were eventually able to return to Kyoto. They found Myoshinji in almost total ruin but with the support of Katsumoto, succeeded in restoring the temple to something of its former grandeur. After Nippo's death in 1448, Sekko became the heir of Nippo's successor Giten Gensho (1391-1462), founder of Ryuanji.

Sekko subsequently served as abbot of Ryuanji, then of Myoshinji and later of Daitokuji, which he left after only three days to return to Myoshinji. Soon, however, fighting in the capital resumed, and Sekko was forced to flee to the provinces. Along with Daitokuji and Ryuanji, Myoshinji was destroyed by the conflagra-

tion which engulfed Kyoto during the Onin War (1467-1477), a decadelong civil disturbance in which rival warlords vied for control of the capital. Sekko had taken refuge with Katsumoto, who erected a temporary Ryuanji beside his mansion, where he received Sekko's instruction in Zen even in the midst of directing his military campaigns. Katsumoto died before Sekko could fulfill his vow to rebuild Myoshinji, but in 1477 another important patron, the Emperor Go Tsuchimikado (reigned 1465-1500), formally decreed Myoshinji's restoration, simultaneously returning to the temple its original name. With Go Tsuchimikado's support, Sekko was able at last to complete the task of reconstruction begun by his teacher, and to establish a secure economic base for Myoshinji, recruiting patrons from both court and military circles.

Following Sekko's death, the Kanzan line was divided into four principal branches founded by Sekko's four leading successors. These lines, known as the "four subtemples" (*shi an*) were the the Shotaku line of Toyo Eicho (1428-1509), the Tokai line of Gokei (1416-1500),the Ryusen line of Keisen Soryu (1428-1500), and the Reiun line of Tokuho Zenketsu (1419-1506). These four branches were in turn divided into thirteen lesser lines, which, while centered on the four subtemples, expanded rapidly throughout the provinces. Each of the resulting branch temples came under the control of its particular line, while all four lines jointly supported the founder Kanzan's Missho line and the headquarters temple itself. Abbacy of Myoshinji rotated among the four lines. Initially, the abbots served three year terms, but this was changed in the midsixteenth century to one year. The "rotating" abbacy system was an important element of Myoshinji's success during the Sengoku period, consolidating the temple's base of support and fostering cooperation between the various lines, allowing them to participate directly in the administration of the main temple, while encouraging their continued expansion in the provinces.

(copyright by Peter Haskel)



Seiko Susan Morningstar

Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse XI, Lecture 3

“What is Dharma? Dharma is the law of your mind. The law of your mind has no external form, yet extends in manifold directions, manifesting its power before your eyes. He who has no faith in this chases after words and names, conjecturing about the Buddha’s Dharma. He and the Dharma are as far apart as heaven and earth.

“Brothers, what is the law that I am talking about? I am talking about the law that is the ground of your mind by which the mind enters the secular and the sacred, the pure and the profane, the real and the temporal.”

SOKEI-AN:

Little of Shakyamuni Buddha’s *Dharma* or teaching was actually recorded at the time, for in his day what he said was recited by his disciples to others from memory, passed from lips to ears only. Two hundred years later, Maharaja Ashoka ordered the monks to engrave some of the important doctrines of the Buddha on stone and copper. We can still see these engravings in India. However, it was hundreds of years before the Buddha’s teachings were written down in Pali, so they did not come directly from the Buddha’s golden lips. The teachings we have come from the *sutras* told by disciples of the Buddha or by disciples of his disciples.

Now Lin-chi asks: “*What is Dharma?*” And then answers: “*Dharma is the law of your mind.*” The Sanskrit word *dharma* is difficult to translate into English. European scholars have often translated it as “law,” but *dharma* is not always used with that sense. Sometimes it means Reality, the nature of man, conscience, compunction, commandment, scientific law, sometimes noumenal existence as distinguished from phenomenal existence. Here, in this passage, Lin-chi is saying *Dharma* is the law of your mind or soul. Soul is not a good word, but I am using it here in the sense of consciousness, mind, and heart, as these words are commonly used for that something within us that masters daily life. Perhaps it could be called cosmic consciousness or cosmic law. And it was for this *Dharma* that the Buddha threw away his kingdom as he would a pair of sandals. For six years he suppressed all desire, lived on

one bowl of rice a day, and meditated in the woods. Of course, he was not always in meditation. He asked the sages questions. But it was at the end of six years of meditation under the Bodhi Tree that he enlightened himself.

In Sanskrit there are three terms you can use for soul: *amala*, *hridaya*, *citta*. The first, *amala*, means the soul in elemental existence—fire, water, sea, moon, stars, the pure soul of the universe. The second, *hridaya*, is the soul of sentient beings—trees, weeds, insects, man. The third, *citta*, means the intellect.¹ The first includes all beings, sentient and insentient; the second, includes only sentient beings. This can be expressed in English as heart, but not brain, which is the *citta*. A tree has no brain, but it has a “heart” that breathes, exposing itself to the sunlight, purifying the water from the root and bringing it out into the branches and leaves. When we sleep and are not conscious of ourselves, we are on the same level as the tree. The third is the faculty of mind or intellect. When Lin-chi speaks of the law of mind, he means all three meanings. This law is unwritten. It has no particular form. But if you pour water on fire, you can read it; and if you touch your face, the skin feels it.

“The law of your mind has no external form, yet extends in manifold directions, manifesting its power before your eyes.” The “manifold directions” means all directions, all the senses of the body, not just the five we usually refer to. The Buddha said that the body has eight million senses. Each spot has a different feeling. The whole universe is one body and one soul. It manifests “its power before your eyes” in crying, anger, gladness, or regret. From morning to evening, what you feel is the law. Perhaps it is not operating as the true law; superstition or misconception may be misguiding you, but the true function of the law is always in you. Finally, you will feel the real law written in your inmost heart. Agony is your unconscious effort to operate that true law.

“He who has no faith in this chases after words and names, conjecturing about the Buddha’s Dharma. He and the Dharma are as far apart as heaven and earth.” Such a splendid law you carry, yet you have no faith in it. You run to words and try to grasp their meaning. What is Reality? What is nirvana? That is Buddhism and Christianity, too. You think they are talking about different laws, but the one true law cannot be located in such a way.

“Brothers, what is the law that I am talking about?” Here, I, Sokei-an, have been speaking about Buddhism for a few years.

¹ *Citta* is generally translated as ‘thought’ but . . . may better be rendered ‘mind.’ *Studies In The Lankavatara Sutra*. by D.T. Suzuki. p. 398.

One of you asks a question, and I feel that my three years of effort is reduced to nothing. We have to know what we are thinking—talking about—that is the most important thing. Why study religion, for what reason? To invent something useful in daily life you must study something other than Buddhism.

"I am talking about the law that is the ground of your mind by which the mind enters the secular and the sacred, the pure and the profane, the real and the temporal." From the ground, trees sprout and flowers bloom. The Buddha was teaching for forty-nine years and five thousand forty-eight volumes of the texts of Buddhism sprang from this ground of soul. Where is it? In the stomach? In the brain? Where is this soul?

The Second Patriarch came to Bodhidharma and said, "I feel that my soul is not emancipated." Bodhidharma said, "Oh, you are asking me to deliver your soul? Where is your soul, show me." That is the Zen School, no philosophical explanations. If you speak of soul, show me! If you speak of Reality, show me! But you cannot show Reality. It is inconceivable. With what do you conceive phenomena? With the five senses? Well, are the five senses phenomenal or noumenal? The five senses are the connecting point between phenomena and noumena. Oh, so the connecting point is the five senses. Show me that connecting point. How do you explain this? If the conscious point is not in your eyes, where is it? If there is nothing outside, where is it? And if there is nothing outside, how can you prove consciousness at all? Well, without consciousness you cannot prove it.

When you are asked where your consciousness is, outside or inside, you can get lost in a maze of philosophy. Talking makes it more complicated. Without talking, we can know the truth, the ground of soul. The ground of soul is not created by anyone; it exists, has existed, and will exist forever. If I ask you, "Before father and mother, what were you?" how would you answer?

Through the conflagration at the end of the *kalpa* destroys all phenomena, the ground of soul will exist forever—not mine, not yours, but the soul of the universe. You cannot keep it privately. If you say, "It is mine," you are violating the commandment that you will not steal.

The ground of soul exists forever; its manifestation is as changeable as a cloud in the sky. When you understand that one thousand years equals one minute, it will decompose and disappear as you watch. You do not adhere to anything. If you do, you will always be struggling. Why attach a name to it? Why call it God, Buddha, Allah? If you do not know the ground of soul, you cannot understand the true meaning of commandment.

BOOKS REVIEWED:

THE RELIGIOUS ART OF THE ZEN MASTER HAKUIN,

by Katsuhiro Yoshizawa with Norman Waddell.
Counterpoint, Berkeley, 2009, 255pp., \$26.00.

A welcome new addition to the First Zen Institute library is *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, a handsome illustrated volume recently issued from Counterpoint and written by Katsuhiro Yoshizawa with Norman Waddell. Yoshizawa is a leading Japanese authority on Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769). His articles on Hakuin's Zen brush painting, or *zenga*, appear regularly in *Zen Culture (Zen bunka)* magazine, issued by Hanazono University, the Rinzai sect college in Kyoto, where Yoshizawa is a professor and director of the Hakuin study center. The present volume is principally a collection of Yoshizawa's articles on Hakuin's Zen painting, many included in his Japanese book *Hakuin--the World of zenga (Hakuin--zenga no sekai*, Tokyo: 2005). The articles have been translated and adapted for Western readers by Norman Waddell, an accomplished translator of Japanese Zen texts, including Hakuin's autobiographical masterpiece *Wild Ivy (Itsumadegusa; Shambala, 1999)* and the master's *Lectures on the Records of Sokkō (Sokkō roku kaien fusetsu; Shambala 1994)*. Waddell's deft translation and adaptation of Professor Yoshizawa's articles includes a brief but excellent introduction, incorporating the latest Japanese scholarship on Hakuin's biography.

Hakuin is regarded by many as Japanese Rinzai Zen's "second founder" for his and his followers revitalization of the koan system, and "Hakuin Zen" remains to this day the dominant teaching in Japanese Rinzai-school temples. Although, personally, Hakuin has always struck me as something of an enigma, a crusty and at times rather unpleasant character, there is no denying the striking originality and vitality of the master's brush painting, and Yoshizawa, as Waddell observes, places Hakuin's art in the context of both his teaching of Zen and the popular culture of the Japan of his day, the mid Edo, or Tokugawa, period (1615-1868). Waddell notes in his introduction that Hakuin's staggering output of brush painting--most produced after age seventy--reflects his well-attested dedication to the bodhisattva vow to bring enlightenment to all sentient beings. Hakuin's numerous writings (edited by Professor Yoshizawa in a fourteen-volume series), his public sermons and widespread teaching activities directed to both monks and laypeople, men and women, are all, Waddell concludes, aspects of this same project.

Yoshizawa's analysis of Hakuin's art often focuses on the master's so-called comic paintings, of all his works probably the least accessible to modern audiences, and particularly so to non-Japanese. Various themes recurring in Hakuin's comic works are taken up in detail to suggest the underlying Buddhist implications of these pieces. Professor Yoshizawa's explanations are fascinating and often ingenious, emphasizing both the artist's dedication to the bodhisattva vow and his vision of the oneness of the phenomenal world of men, women, plants, and animals, and the absolute world of enlightenment, what Hakuin called the "wondrous unborn sound of one hand clapping." Such elements, Yoshizawa contends, often escape the notice of art historians who deal with Hakuin's comic and genre scenes. Yoshizawa seeks to illuminate these same works with a wide variety of passages from Hakuin's writings and other contemporary texts, such as the diaries of the Dutch traveler Engelbert Kaempfer,, who visited Edo in the seventeenth century, and hitherto untranslated miscellanies and local gazetteers. In the process, we are introduced to a colorful parade of figures drawn from Edo-period village street life, from monkey trainers, plate-twirlers and other street performers to equestrian acrobats, prostitutes, brothel-keepers, and toy vendors. Professor Yoshizawa, in turn, suggests ingenious explanations for their "Zen" meaning in Hakuin's artwork, where these characters become salesmen for the master's broader agenda of conveying enlightenment as the source of all virtue and well-being-- of loyalty, filially, even wealth and longevity.

Professor Yoshizawa views Hakuin's brushwork as a mystery, which he proceeds to unravel for the reader. In one memorable example, Yoshizawa shows how Hakuin anticipated the mobius strip in a depiction of Hotei, the familiar "laughing buddha," who is encircled by a similar strip inscribed front-to-back with a koan (Jôshu's "Five pounds of flax") that expresses Zen's seamless manifestation of non-duality. Hakuin's various paintings of the Buddhist hells and their torments Professor Yoshizawa sees reflecting Hakuin's acceptance of the literal existence of the realms of rebirth, an acceptance common to nearly all Hakuin's contemporaries. But at the same time these paintings proclaim the Zen student's mission of breaking through even the darkest realms of consciousness to achieve enlightenment. Thus, in place of Yama, the king of hell, Hakuin depicts the souls of the departed being judged by Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, who radiates mirror-like wisdom throughout the universe in the form of a large transparent nimbus. Elsewhere, the demon-slayer Shoki, a popular Edo-period deity, grimly mixes "demon" miso (soy bean paste) by grinding several tiny, comically pleading devils in a traditional Japanese mortar bowl, exemplifying Hakuin's determination to "work for the sake of living beings by expelling and teaching others to expel, the demons of illusion that thwart Zen practice."

Professor Yoshizawa's interpretations are always intriguing, even if some can seem far-fetched at times. I am not convinced, for example, of his theory that the mysterious bulge that appears under the robe of Bodhidharma in many of Hakuin's depictions of Zen's founding patriarch is an abstraction of the Chinese character "mind" (*shin*), symbolizing the Zen transmission. Similarly, Yoshizawa's assertion that "...ordinary men and women became the primary focus of Hakuin's religious teaching" seems questionable in light of Hakuin's unflagging and intensive training of his many notable disciples. Also left unclear is whether Hakuin was the first Zen master to create such zenga, and whether his brush paintings form part of a broader tradition of popular Zen in the early and middle Edo period. Finally, an index for a book touching on so many varied themes and particulars would have been helpful. But altogether, Counterpoint Press and Norman Waddell have done Western students of Hakuin and his art a genuine service by presenting Professor Yoshizawa's thought-provoking and informative essays in this always highly readable translation.

--Peter Haskel--



Ocean Mind

"Sailing my own home-built boat across the oceans is an extreme ecstasy in life... I have always seen my journeys into the wilderness of the sea as a spiritual quest. My mission is to inspire the world while using love to adapt to living with the forces of the sea. As a spirit I feel like a Native American who survives alone as an initiation, a hermit in a cave in the mountains, the monk who takes a 1000-day walk or an Aborigine on walkabout. I could put up full sail and 'schoon' somewhere in no hurry, but we are perfectly happy where we are. Being here inspires and challenges me in many ways."



(Photo and quote... Reid Stowe)

Although Zen Notes primarily dedicates itself to presenting Rinzai Zen from traditional texts, occasionally we encounter Zen in action in some unusual places. We enjoy bringing these adventures to your attention as we did with "A Zen Tale" filmed at the Institute and our adventures with the Bushmen of the Kalahari as they attempted to reclaim their homeland.

About 4 years ago we encountered an extraordinary man, Reid Stowe, who was determined to make the world's oceans, in all their moods, his meditation practice. He was preparing his two mast, 76 foot, homemade vessel, the Schooner Anne, for a thousand day voyage without sight of land or setting port. In the process of repairing and preparing his schooner, which was moored on the Hudson river at the Chelsea piers in New York City, Reid demonstrated an uncanny ability to inspire and engage anyone who came near to join in his enthusiasm. Alcoholics, models, electricians, carpenters, crackheads, CEO's, students, professionals and the chronically unemployed, all became volunteers. Zen Institute members Peeter Lamp, myself, and Ana de Silva found ourselves

stringing new ropes, varnishing, doing various other deck hand chores as well as enjoying sunset sails on the Hudson River during which Reid would have the often more than 30 people on board take part in the task of sailing the schooner.

Reid also inspired Peeter to make him new oak cleats, around which the mooring ropes are wound, help install the solar powered battery storage system but, in particular for his meditative and yoga pursuits, make a gimbal meditation platform on deck to maintain level in the relentless trade winds. Peeter designed and installed it with a Tibetan double dorje burnt into the wood. I added to Reid's library some Tibetan and Zen original source materials and, of course, a supply of Zen Notes for rainy days at sea.

What is remarkable about Reid is his ability to directly engage people without a trace of hesitation or pretense and get them rolling into action, including companies that donated or gave at nominal cost 3 years worth of supplies, services, as well as new rope and sail. Using the sky and sea as his meditation and making his home on the predominant feature of our planet makes him an old school explorer as well as a sea faring astronaut, for he also calls his trip the Mars Ocean Odyssey. Reid was always interested in NASA's projected Mars trip and a 1000 days is roughly the duration of a round trip to Mars. He felt that the isolation and upkeep of his journey would relate to the challenges faced on a Mars trip and NASA has taken some note of his present efforts.

We have followed Reid's voyage ([website:1000days.net](http://www.1000days.net)) over the past 900+ days which is full of adventure as well as mishap and expect him back in the Spring of 2010. We are hoping to do a more in-depth update before then. Perhaps his greatest challenge will not be thirty foot waves and the repair of sails torn in roaring gales, but returning to dry land and the world of not so human beings from a place of bright stars, a pristine, watery vastness where the Great Now is unavoidable and the straight-forward presence of countless sea dwelling companions.

Michael Hotz / Peeter Lamp



(Photos and artwork by Reid Stowe)



1987... Reid & crew letting Schooner sail free with wheel lashed
for 30 days from Falklands to St. Barth;

A limited number of complete sets of **Zen Notes**
(from Vol. I, 1954 to Vol. LV, 2007)
are available for sale. Price - \$300.00.
If you are interested, contact the Institute at the phone
number below.

zen notes

Copyright 2008

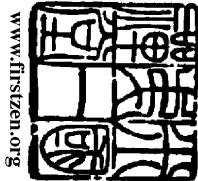
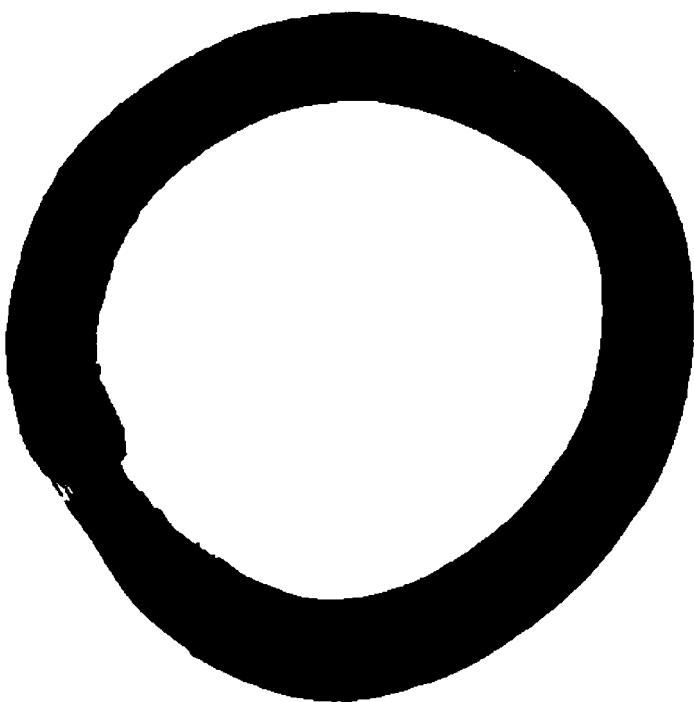
PUBLISHED BY

FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, INC.

113 East 30th Street
New York City, New York 10016
(212) 686-2520

VOLUME LV, NUMBER 3 SUMMER 2008
Editor, usually anonymous artist, poet... Peeter Lamp

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

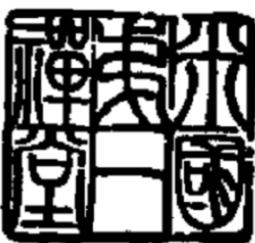


www.firstzen.org

First Zen Institute of America
113 East 30th Street
New York, New York 10016
(ZN Vol 55, No. 3)

Copyright of Zen Notes is the property of the First Zen Institute of America, Inc., and its content may not be copied or e-mailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download or e-mail articles for individual use.

Founded in 1930 by
Sokei-an Sasaki



First Zen Institute of America
113 E30 Street
New York, New York 10016
(212)-686-2520
www.firstzen.org

會協禪一第國美