"O Obedient One! All sentient beings will prove that innately they possess the nature of this Perfect Awakening. When they meet a good teacher, according to his method of practice, they will approach to the state of causal Dharma. When they practice, some of them will realize the result suddenly and some will realize the result little by little. If they encounter the highest Bodhi of Buddha and the path of their practice, without regard to the capacity of their natures be they great or small, they will attain the state of Buddha-knowledge. Even though sentient beings seek the good friend, if they meet one who has an erroneous View—they cannot attain the true apprehension of Awakening. Such sentient beings are called 'those who possess the seed of a heretical birth.' The erroneous teachings of a wrong master are not the errors committed by the sentient beings themselves. They are the result of the five varieties of sentient nature."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The important point in these lines is that according to their innate nature, every sentient being has the capacity to awaken if he meets a good teacher and practices the true method. But that, as the result of the five varieties of nature, there are those who will follow the erroneous teachings of a wrong master. These cannot have faith in the highest teachings of the Buddha—to them it is "tasteless." However, they can enjoy the teachings which entertain their erroneous minds.

This has been true since ancient days in the history of Buddhism, when few came to accept the true teachings, but preferred to go to erroneous teachers. When the Buddha was living, he had 1,500 disciples, while the majority of the citizens of Sarivasti and other big cities did not even know of the Buddha's existence! When they heard his name and opened their eyes to the wonder of his teaching—it was about two centuries later! As Confucius said, "A true word is always repulsive to erroneous minds!"

Perhaps a religion as simple as Buddhism is very difficult to
evening for each capping words, the entire three cases requiring twenty-seven evenings for completion.

In the Soto school, the seventeenth century was also the most active period in the production of the missan-style documents known as kirigami. The popularity of kirigami transmission in the Soto temples apparently continued unabated throughout most of the Tokugawa period, despite the criticism of reformers, who viewed it as a degenerate legacy of the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century, the practice was denounced by the Soto reformer Menzan Zuiho (1683-1769), who in his work Denbo shitsuennai mitsuji monki calls for its abolition. Menzan states that the kirigami are considered secret documents and are being transmitted privately within the Soto temples. He insists that they are utterly worthless, and worries that if seen by priests of other Zen sects, they will only make them laugh and embarrass the Soto school. Some kirigami, he adds, even contain Yin yang type materials.

Although not generally remarked, the missan transmission thus seems to have persisted in Japan throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, with the seventeenth century especially noteworthy in both sects for the production of Missancho. In the Soto school production of missan materials seems to have continued well into the early 1800s. And while it lost the commanding position it held in the rinka and sorin temples of the sixteenth century, the missan system nonetheless proved a durable and peculiarly Japanese adaptation of Zen.

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(translation and copyright by Peter Haskel)
Tonight, I have only my old students who have been attending a long time so I can speak without concealment. This world is ruled by such a simple law—you can make everything very simple.

"O Obedient One! All sentient beings will prove that innately they possess the nature of this Perfect Awakening." —When I was fifteen years old, I lost my father. He was buried very near to the town. I came back from the funeral and passed through the temple yard covered by pine trees. Childishly, I wondered—"Where is my father now?" I could not believe that his soul was existing anywhere on the earth or under it. I looked at the sky and thought, "My father's soul is scattered all over—like heat or light." And then, as I stumbled over the root of a pine tree—"If my father is all over, he will be in this pine tree root—the tip of my tow and the tip of my tongue." I returned home without tears. Today I realize that that fifteen-year-old boy was not quite a fool! He had gathered all his philosophy at the grammar school—and come to that conclusion! Quite reasonable, wasn’t it?

In my Buddhism today, I should say that it has not developed much beyond that fifteen-year-old boy. Of course I was the child of a Shinto priest and had heard about the "soul" every day; it was, to me, a big question.

It is because of this innate nature of Perfect Awakening that I believe people will at some time give up their traditional faith and come back to natural faith; really find the common ground on which to build their temples! Before this time, we must encounter many tragedies—struggles, wars.

Your modern science was introduced into our country when I was very young—your theories of light, heat, energy. Our teacher explained that, although all forms will be destroyed, energy will never be destroyed! Wonderful, that theory of the preservation of energy. All the children of the fifth grade believed it! So I came to this country in the belief that people really understood this theory. I was not only astonished but broken-hearted to find them still sticking to the old type of religion! Science gives us new theories every day—but it cannot give us a new theory of heat or the preservation of energy.

"When they meet a good teacher, according to his method of practice, they will approach to the state of causal Dharma." —As to "method of practice," philosophy is one method, meditation is another, and reciting the name of Buddha is also a practice. There is the method of going into the desert and fasting, speaking no word—assimilating the great existence. Sometimes it has been said of such, "He realized it, entered it — and came back to the city to who started it or when. They can't think of anything but the fact that unless their students get through the prescribed cases, they won't complete the course of study and become teachers or abbots. The result is that they fail to understand what actual value the koans possess."

"When I was young, I met up with this destructive teaching. Later on, I encountered a true teacher and realized its errors. Now, fearing that future students may also experience such confusion I have spoken out like this. Those who style themselves study hall monks, gathering together large numbers of students, teaching this consecutive study of koans and uselessly wasting people's time—are they to be called sages or heretics'?"

Choon is a somewhat complex figure, whose career includes an indictment for forgery of religious documents, and it is difficult to judge whether his comments here on missan Zen are drawn from firsthand observation, reading in earlier sources or mere hearsay. The truth may lie somewhere in between. He has clearly been influenced by the Ikkyu's "Jikaishu" (presumably available in manuscript by this time) and is at pains to denounce the same sorts of abuses attacked by Ikkyu. At the same time, however, he mentions specific features of the missan system not noted in Ikkyu's work: the "kazoesan," or "quantitative" approach to koan practice, involving consecutive study of a large number of cases; the written records of missan transmissions concealed in special containers; and the distinctive missancho collections referred to as "Hekizen, Hekigan and Hekigo." Choon notes that such practices began in the Middle Ages, but insists they are still rampant in his own day, having become so entrenched that no one any longer questions how they first emerged.

Whether missan Zen remained as pervasive in Choon's day as he claims is unclear. However, viewing Choon's comments together with other evidence of missan study in the seventeenth century such as the compilation of missancho at Daitokuji, Engakuji and in various Soto groups, it becomes obvious that, at the very least, missan Zen did not end abruptly with the beginning of the Tokugawa period.

In the case of Soto Zen, the continuity of missan practice was particularly conspicuous. The secret oral transmission in the early Tokugawa Soto temples was connected with a practice known literally as "evening interview", originating in the Medieval period. During the summer and winter retreats, students at Soto temples would take up three koans one for each of the Soto 'Three Stages', learning nine different capping words for each case, in accordance with the teacher's secret tradition. The capping words would be transmitted in a series of evening interviews with the teacher, one
gawa movements seeking to renovate Japanese Zen and gradually disappeared altogether in the late Tokugawa period. A contemporary description of missan Zen in Bankei's period appears in a 1672 work entitled "A Compass in the Foggy Sea" by the Obaku-sect teacher Choon Dokai (1628-1695). Choon details the iniquities of missan practice, which he regards as a continuing danger to the authentic teaching of Zen:

"For some two hundred years now, followers of Zen in both Rinzai and Soto schools have collected the comments and capping words given by Japanese teachers on the koans of the early masters. Arranging these in a fixed course of study, they take them up consecutively as the three hundred cases of the "Hekizen, Hekigan, and Hekigo," (i.e., the 100 cases of the Blue Cliff Record, plus 100 cases assigned, respectively, before and after the Blue Cliff cases) and then call this completing their training and realizing great enlightenment. Then they stuff it all inside a secret pouch or box and think that's what realizing the Great Matter is all about. If this box or pouch should catch fire or get washed away, their whole affinity with enlightenment is instantly wiped out! Among the worthies who teach this consecutive study of koans are some eminent and erudite fellows; but they're tripped up by their arrogance and longing for fame and fortune."

"No one is able to recognize this for the fraud it is and destroy it. It's like a kite (bird) who gets hold of a dead rat and treasures it with the greatest care. This is by no means an attempt on my part to go about spreading slander. You can find this same advice in the injunctions of the old teachers and the scriptures of the buddhas and patriarchs. So better pay attention!"

"Unable to fully grasp the true significance of even these capping words and comments, students are gradually instructed by the teacher in a given koan's original phrases and key words, and simply give back whatever the old masters said about it. Since they approach this just like children answering a riddle, their own original mind is obscured, with the result that the venerable priests who claim to have completed this training are no different from ignorant laypeople! What's more, flushed with arrogance over their 'spiritual accomplishments,' they look down on all the other (Buddhist) sects, and so slander the true Dharma. That's why for two hundred years now the lamp of Zen has been extinguished, and there hasn't been one man or even half a man of true understanding."

"This consecutive study of koans seems to have got its start with the Zen Master Yoso of Daitokuji, and there's a work by Ikkyu called Jikaishu in which it's attacked. Nowadays, though, the venerable priests who are teaching this haven't the faintest idea of talk about it. His tongue was like a flame and his eyes were shining—but those who heard him were blind and deaf."

Teaching must be given with great care. The teacher must pound the student very carefully as one would temper gold; pound it—put it on the fire—pound it again! Zen is the fire. When you attain it—you beat your own mind. But before this time—you will stand before your teacher with many impure particles in your mind. The teacher will shout at you, beat you, take all the coarse particles out of the gold. But make no mistake—all this is to attain causal Dharma, which is Dharmakaya.

"When they practice it, some of them will realize the result suddenly (like the Sixth Patriarch's school of Zen) and some will realize the result little by little, (like the Tendai sect) If they meet the highest Bodhi of Buddha (the Eightfold Path) and the path of true practice, without regard to the capacity of their nature, great or small, they will attain the state of Buddha-knowledge.

—Sometimes—without meditation or philosophy—at once we will attain. But this is rare.

"Even though the sentient beings seek the good friend (I translate this "good friend" but in the Rinzai Record, "O Virtuous Scholar") if they meet one who has erroneous View, they cannot attain the true apprehension."

—So you very slowly and honestly seek enlightenment, carefully avoiding a poor teacher. (Beware of a yogi with a white towel on his head!)

"Such sentient beings are called 'those who possess the seed of a heretical birth.' —They have created so much karma that they cannot break the shell!

"The erroneous teaching of a wrong master is not the error committed by the sentient being." —I translate this exactly as it is written in the Chinese. It means that it is not the error of the student, but of the master. But if there was no erroneous student—an erroneous master could not exist. So both are erroneous! However, neither one is to blame because it is the karma of both. (It is like my cat: I carried him in a box to the Catskills, and he could not escape. But when I opened the box—he immediately got out! So, when you have the chance—get quickly out of that shell!)

"They are the result of the five varieties of sentient nature." —I have given commentaries on these five varieties. Perhaps you will find them in your notes. However, you need only concern yourselves with the last three to pass from the Pratyeka-Buddha into the Bodhisattva and, finally, to awaken into the state of Buddha.

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Dancing With Words:
Red Pine’s Path Into The Heart of Buddhism

The is an updated version of an article that originally appeared in The Kyoto Journal by Roy Hamric.

Part 1

“All great texts contain their potential translation between the lines; this is true to the highest degree of sacred writings.”—Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator".

When I first saw Red Pine’s translation of The Poems of Cold Mountain, I remember thinking, “This is something important — who’s this Red Pine?”

That was 1983. Two years later came the book that really shook up the Buddhist literary community, Red Pine’s stunning, self-published translation of The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse, a tough spirited book of enlightened free verse—300 poems chronicling the pains and pleasures of Zen hermit life. The Stonehouse (Shih-wu) and Cold Mountain (Han-shan) translations put a spotlight on Zen autobiographical poetry unlike any books before.

Red Pine’s elegant hand-sewn, self-published translation of The Zen Teachings of Bodhidharma, in a Chinese-red cover, followed in 1987. Over the years, I avidly bought each new Red Pine translation: Guide to Capturing a Plum Blossom (Sung Po-jen), which won a PEN/West translation prize; Lao-tzu’s Tao Te Ching; and his own Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits, which put contemporary flesh on Taoist/Zen hermit life.

* (cf. end)

My curiosity about the man who called himself Red Pine grew with each new book. But facts about his life were clouded in dust jacket blurbs: he lived in the mountains overlooking Taipei in a small farm community called Bamboo Lake; he was connected somehow with Empty Bowl press in Port Townsend, Washington. Eventually his American name, Bill Porter, appeared on one of his books. Red Pine: Bill Porter. But, no more information—none of the American Buddhist magazines, which proliferated during the '80s and '90s, were of any help.

From the first, his translations seemed inspired. I read his books differently. There was a feeling of verisimilitude, rare in translation. His choices and love for the writers he translated filled a gap in my view of Chinese Zen writers. I felt connected to his poets as real people.

My admiration also grew for the role of the translator who substituted something of a backwater in the world of Japanese Zen, where missan study was preserved throughout the seventeenth century, side by side with various cultural activities associated with the temple during the Muromachi period. Even Takuan Soho, an important transitional figure who embodies many of the new trends that distinguish early Tokugawa Zen, is curiously ambivalent in his attitude toward missan study, which had apparently remained a fixture of Daitokuji’s teaching program. There survives, for example, an undated missancho composed by Takuan and the description of a hypothetical mondo in Takuan’s Fudochi shinmyoroku is remarkably similar in style to missancho passages cited by Suzuki, with their prominent emphasis on capping words employed as fixed responses.

Takuan writes: "... Suppose someone asks you, 'What is the ultimate meaning of Buddhism?' Before the words are even out of his mouth, you should answer: 'The flowering plum branch,' or 'The cypress tree in the garden .... '

Missan study seems to have been a familiar feature of Daitokuji Zen in Takuan’s period, and, like Takuan, many of his contemporaries and descendants at the temple composed missancho. Missancho by the following Daitokuji teachers are included in the holdings of the "Matsugaoka Bunko" and demonstrate the continuity of missan practice among seventeenth century Daitokuji masters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daitokuji Teachers</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Dates of missancho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takuan Soho</td>
<td>1573-1645</td>
<td>1 undated missan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryugaku Soryu</td>
<td>1557-1628</td>
<td>1625; 1 undated missan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koun Soryu</td>
<td>1599-1679</td>
<td>1628, 1645, 1649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten’yu Shogo</td>
<td>1586-1666</td>
<td>1641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denge Sosa</td>
<td>1608-1675</td>
<td>1660, 1663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyokushu Soban</td>
<td>1600-1668</td>
<td>1656, 1664, 1684, 1686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally speaking, in the Daitokuji and Genju lines, missan transmissions were preserved well into the Tokugawa period, and a large number of the missancho in the "Matsugaoka Bunko" bear dates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the Soto school a similar picture emerges. Although early Tokugawa Soto witnessed a movement to correct the abuses of the Middle Ages similar to that in the Rinzai Myoshinji line, many Soto missancho remain from this period. The seventeenth century seems to have been a particularly active period in the production of missancho in both sects. Yet in evaluating the position of missan Zen in early Tokugawa Japan, we can as yet do little more than document the fact of its survival. We may fairly suppose that as a relic of late Medieval practice it existed largely outside the Toku
self had been enlightened by this koan. Whatever its history, it appears that in the Myoshinji line, the missan for this koan was of primary importance, and that receiving it constituted realization of the essence of the line's teaching. It was this transmission, or secret oral transmission, for the koan that the Emperor evidently received from Daikyu.

The latter half of the sixteenth century was a particularly active period for missan Zen. As previously described, the dramatic success of the Soto, Daitokuji, Myoshinji and Genju organizations during the Sengoku period made the missan transmission a virtually universal feature of Zen practice in Japan, embracing both rinka and sorin, urban and provincial temples. While many Soto records remain from this period, dated materials for Rinzai missan study are scarce, and much of our datable information on missan Zen in the Rinzai school derives from the early Tokugawa period, specifically the seventeenth century. By this time, the missan transmission had apparently been abandoned at Myoshinji, the leading Tokugawa Rinzai Zen organization, reflecting in part a desire to restore integrity to the teaching of Zen in Japan. Elsewhere, however, missan practice lingered on, and surviving missancho of the early seventeenth century may probably be taken to reflect missan traditions of the period immediately preceding, i.e., the late sixteenth century.

One of the earliest dated Rinzai missancho is a 1633 missan for Lin-chi lu.(I: Rinzai roku) compiled by Kohan Shushin (n.d.), a late sixteenth early seventeenth century Engakuji Genju-line teacher who was a second generation descendent of Sanbaku Gen'i. In an inscription appended to the missancho, Kohan declares that he has assembled in the manuscript the fruits of studies conducted since his youth with various teachers of both Rinzai and Soto sects and cautions his students to preserve the book's contents in the strictest secrecy. Not even Zen masters who "hold the inka of the sect" are to be permitted access to it. Kohan's statement suggests that the practice of acquiring multiple transmissions and their synthesis into new, personal and exclusive transmission remained a part of Japanese missan practice at least into the Azuchi Momoyama period (1573-1615), when Kohan is likely to have been a student. The Kamakura Gozan, as noted previously, received the Genju line missan transmission at a relatively late stage, and continued to carry out the Genju line transmission during the early Tokugawa period. Kohan's 1625 missan for the Blue Cliff Record, the Hekigan roku Kohan missan, is a manuscript copy dated 1714, prepared by a descendant in Kohan's Engakuji line, indicating that missan practice remained a part of Zen in Kamakura throughout Bankei's period and into that of Hakuin.

Like Engakuji, Daitokuji in the early Tokugawa period con-
ior colleges."

After receiving a draft notice in 1964, he voluntarily enlisted and served a three-year Army tour in Germany. He returned to Santa Barbara to major in anthropology and was soon reading *The Way of Zen* by Alan Watts, and *Introduction to Buddhism* by Edward Conze. "It was then that I finally felt I’d found something that made sense to me about what was going on in this life. But, I was really still looking on these books as something I was doing on my own, on the side."

"I graduated in ’70, and applied to grad schools. The only one that gave me any money was Columbia University. I had checked the box on an application for a language fellowship, and I penciled in “Chinese”--and I got it."

At Columbia, Red Pine studied language and anthropology, approaching it from the point of view of what it could teach about the truth of life. He spent his junior year at the University of Gottingen in Germany. "Everything I was studying then started to dovetail with Buddhism," he says. "They all were saying the same thing to me in terms of how to discover what’s real. I was ready for Buddhism when it came along. But the thing about Buddhism was that it was so much broader in scope, far more poetic as well--a way of life as well as a way of thinking."

"When I went back to Columbia, I found I couldn’t write papers. My anthropological underpinnings had been wiped away. Suddenly, I was thinking everything was an illusion, or all categories are fictions. I was meditating on weekends with a Buddhist Hua-Yen monk, Shou-yeh, who had a temple north of New York City. Finally, I threw in the towel and decided to go to a Buddhist monastery."

"I knew another student who had been to a monastery in Taiwan, and he knew of a monastery that was just starting. I wrote them a letter and they said, ‘Come on over.’ His father gave him a one-way ticket and $200, and he arrived in Taiwan in 1972. He stayed for a year at the Fo Kwang Shan monastery with master Hsing Yun. "They had classes," he says. "It was sort of a Buddhist training monastery with Sanskrit classes and the study of different sutras, all in Chinese. I had been studying Chinese intensely for two years, but they sort of let me slide through. I had a nice room just off the Buddha Hall."

"All the people there thought it was the strangest thing to have a foreigner studying Buddhism. It was like being on a foreign planet. When the public came through the monastery it was sort of touristy and I got tired of being gawked at so I decided to go to a

Toyo, is perhaps best known for "Kuzoshi", a classic compilation of five thousand capping words drawn from various Chinese sources. In the late seventeenth century, "Kuzoshi", which had remained in manuscript, was edited by a former Zen priest identified only as Ijushi, who provided an additional one thousand Chinese phrases and included the sources for most of the collection's capping words. In 1688, the work, which now comprised six thousand phrases arranged according to the number of Chinese characters in each, was published with the title "Zenrin kushu". The "Kushu" today occupies a prominent position in Japanese Rinzai Zen, and students are commonly urged to select capping words from it to express their understanding of a given koan. But what role "Kuzoshi" played in Toyo's Zen, and its connection, if any, with the practice of transmission in the Myoshinji line during the sixteenth century is unclear.

Such questions aside, there remains no doubt that Myoshinji, like Daitokuji, succumbed to the influence of missan Zen in the late Muromachi period. Suzuki Daisetsu's pioneering research uncovered missancho from all four of the principal Myoshinji lines. These documents closely resemble their counterparts from Daitokuji, and though undated, probably embody transmissions evolved during late medieval times, perhaps during the sixteenth century. Explicit evidence for missan practice at Myoshinji in the early sixteenth century is provided by the records of Emperor Go Nara's Zen study under Daikyu Sokyu, referred to earlier. Daikyu, who served three terms as abbot of Myoshinji, conferred inka on Go Nara in 1542. Daikyu's inka takes the form of a brief Dharma talk addressed to the Emperor. In it, Daikyu attests to Go Nara's realization, stating that the Emperor has studied with him daily for many years and has demonstrated a profound understanding of the koan 'originally existing perfect realization' (*honnu enjo*). In a letter of appreciation by Go Nara appended to the talk, the Emperor writes that he had been studying Zen for many years under other teachers, going through one by one the numerous cases handed down by the ancients and realizing each; in the end, however, it was only with his passing of the 'originally existing perfect realization' koan that he truly attained understanding, experiencing undreamt of realization. Go Nara's subsequent edict bestowing on Daikyu the title of *kokushi* (national teacher) confirms that he received inka after many years of study under Daikyu and mentions that his studies had included "missan."

It is not possible to identify the koan referred to here as 'originally existing perfect realization'. It appears, however, to have been associated with Kanzan. A message from Go Nara in 1557 on the occasion of Kanzan's two hundredth memorial service bestows on Myoshinji's founder the posthumous title "Honnu Enjo Kokushi;" and once again repeats the statement that Go Nara him-
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 re- traction 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, #22)
(Continued from the Summer 09 Zen Notes)

Missan Zen

Once again, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the missan transmission in Ikkyu’s period altered traditional Zen practice in the great rinka temples such as Daitokuji, Myoshinji, Sojiji, and Eiheiji. Clearly, missan Zen was important, but whether it triumphed to the complete exclusion of traditional Zen study remains to be determined. Despite the ritualization of mondo that accompanied missan study, mondo (dynamic Zen exchanges) of a more familiar, dynamic character seem to have persisted. Toyo Eicho’s biography of his teacher Sekko Soshin in *Shobozan rokusoden*, for example, describes such an encounter between Ikkyu and Sekko. In the account, Sekko arrives at the home of a patron to find Ikkyu already ensconced in the place of honor. He instantly challenges Ikkyu, and when Ikkyu attempts to strike him, throws the respected Daitokuji master to the ground, impressing his astonished host.

monastery in Taipei.” He eventually landed at the College of Chinese Culture where he became a graduated student in philosophy. He lived in the dorm with Chinese students and took classes in Taoism, Chinese art and philosophy.

"A professor offered a course on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead," he says. "The Chinese woman who later became my wife sat behind me in that class." While at the college, Red Pine studied the *Tao Te Ching* with Prof. John C. H. Wu, who in 1961 had published a valuable English translation of the work.

After one year, he was unhappy with academic life, and a friend suggested he go to Hai Ming Temple, a monastery 20 km south of Taipei. "Wu Ming was the head Rinzai monk. I stayed there 2-1/2 years. Wu Ming was Chiang Kai-shek’s personal master. That place had an artistic sense. He asked if I had any questions, but I’m the kind of person who’s not very curious. So I just studied and meditated. I had got hold of all these classic texts with both Chinese and English characters and I went through most of the sutras." Red Pine was still courting his future wife, Ku, and on Saturdays he often took the train to Taipei to see her. She introduced him to a coterie of intellectuals who met at the Astoria Bakery/Coffee shop.

"When it came time to decide if I wanted to be a monk, I decided to move out of the temple," he says. "But before I left, I took the lay precepts. Then I found this place on the top of Yang Ming Mountain near where all the rich people lived overlooking Taipei. I rented a converted stone farm shed in Chu Tzu Hu, or Bamboo Lake.”

About this time, he adopted “Red Pine” as his Chinese name, only to discover later that it was also the name of the Yellow Emperor’s Rain Master, a famous Taoist. After seven years, he and Ku married. A son, Red Cloud, was born in 1982, and a daughter, Iris, in 1987. For about six years he worked at International Community Radio in Taipei as a national news editor. “That’s the only full-time job I’ve ever had,” he says. Married 29 years, Red Pine and Ku only recently have been able to live together full time. Ku’s parents placed a condition on their marriage that she continue to take care of her parents, and she did that.

At Bamboo Lake, Red Pine began translating Cold Mountain poems. He sent about 100 poems to Shambala, Weatherhill and Tuttle publishers. They all turned him down. Frustrated, he sent some of the translations to John Blofeld, a renowned writer-translator, and asked him if he’d look at them. Blofeld replied he’d like to see more and a friendship formed. He became Red Pine’s mentor.
"He asked me to start sending him the poems," he says, "and he went over them with me and encouraged me to translate all 350 poems. That was my trial by fire. I never intended to be a translator—it just sort of happened."

"I have a couple of hundred letters," Red Pine says. "I'd send the poems each week and he returned them with comments and asides. They corresponded regularly for two years.

When Copper Canyon press accepted the book, Red Pine asked if Blofeld would write the introduction, and Blofeld invited him to visit him at his home in Bangkok, where he spent a week. Later, Blofeld visited Red Pine several times at Bamboo Lake, the last time in 1987 as Blofeld was confronting cancer.

"He was a very sincere Buddhist who practiced every night for several hours and loved what he did," Red Pine says. "I don't think he ever stopped learning." His Cold Mountain translations garnered attention, but The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse was the real revelation for most readers. A poet few people had ever heard of, Stonehouse’s singular poem-journal outlined Zen hermit life in chilling and thrilling clarity.

"Rare is the Chinese who knows Stonehouse," Red Pine says. "He’s a much better poet than Cold Mountain, but he didn’t have the fame Cold Mountain had. Within 100 years, Cold Mountain had a real reputation."

"As soon as Cold Mountain was published, I was dissatisfied with what I’d done. Stonehouse gave me a chance to re-confront the art of translation. It was so much more poetry." Red Pine says he’s still learning the art of translation with each new work.

"When I was translating Cold Mountain, I definitely didn’t have my own voice," he says. "With Stonehouse it was somewhere in between. I think I didn’t really discover my translation voice until I did Bodhidharma, which gave me a chance to find the rhythms of my language."

"Every project I’ve engaged in taught me an entirely different way of translation," he says. "I don’t view Chinese poetry today the way I did then. I use to count the words in my English lines and try to do my best to do the same thing they did in Chinese. I was also intrigued about things you can do in English that reflect the Chinese, not to make the English sound Chinese but to do things with it that to me at least seemed unique."

"I tried to do things that I saw happening in Chinese—the Chinese language is a very telegraphic, terse language—time is al-most irrelevant, their subject is also dispensed with. A line can be very ambiguous. So I started to play with that in English and still make sense."

"Words carry a lot on their surface, but a lot is under the surface that we don’t see when we see the word—a lot comes from contextual familiarity. People identify words with context. I was intrigued by the nature of Chinese poetry and its brevity—here were these flashes of meaning."

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Red Pine with Taoist monk in front of Lao-tzu's observatory.
"He asked me to start sending him the poems," he says, "and he went over them with me and encouraged me to translate all 350 poems. That was my trial by fire. I never intended to be a translator—it just sort of happened."

"I have a couple of hundred letters," Red Pine says. "I'd send the poems each week and he returned them with comments and asides." They corresponded regularly for two years.

When Copper Canyon press accepted the book, Red Pine asked if Blofeld would write the introduction, and Blofeld invited him to visit him at his home in Bangkok, where he spent a week. Later, Blofeld visited Red Pine several times at Bamboo Lake, the last time in 1987 as Blofeld was confronting cancer.

"He was a very sincere Buddhist who practiced every night for several hours and loved what he did," Red Pine says. "I don't think he ever stopped learning." His Cold Mountain translations garnered attention, but *The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse* was the real revelation for most readers. A poet few people had ever heard of, Stonehouse's singular poem-journal outlined Zen hermit life in chilling and thrilling clarity.

"Rare is the Chinese who knows Stonehouse," Red Pine says. "He's a much better poet than Cold Mountain, but he didn't have the fame Cold Mountain had. Within 100 years, Cold Mountain had a real reputation."

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A bibliography of Red Pine’s translations and books:


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Red Pine with Taoist monk in front of Lao-tzu's observatory.

(photo-Red Pine)
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, #22)
(Continued from the Summer 09 Zen Notes)

Missan Zen

Once again, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the missan transmission in Ikkyu's period altered traditional Zen practice in the great rinka temples such as Daitokuji, Myoshinji, Sojiji and Eiheiji. Clearly, missan Zen was important, but whether it triumphed to the complete exclusion of traditional Zen study remains to be determined. Despite the ritualization of mondo that accompanied missan study, mondo (dynamic Zen exchanges) of a more familiar, dynamic character seem to have persisted. Toyo Eicho's biography of his teacher Sekko Soshin in Shobozan rokusoden, for example, describes such an encounter between Ikkyu and Sekko. In the account, Sekko arrives at the home of a patron to find Ikkyu already ensconced in the place of honor. He instantly challenges Ikkyu, and when Ikkyu attempts to strike him, throws the respected Daitokuji master to the ground, impressing his astonished host.
ior colleges."

After receiving a draft notice in 1964, he voluntarily enlisted and served a three-year Army tour in Germany. He returned to Santa Barbara to major in anthropology and was soon reading The Way of Zen by Alan Watts, and Introduction to Buddhism by Edward Conze. "It was then that I finally felt I'd found something that made sense to me about what was going on in this life. But, I was really still looking on these books as something I was doing on my own, on the side."

"I graduated in '70, and applied to grad schools. The only one that gave me any money was Columbia University. I had checked the box on an application for a language fellowship, and I penciled in “Chinese”--and I got it."

At Columbia, Red Pine studied language and anthropology, approaching it from the point of view of what it could teach about the truth of life. He spent his junior year at the University of Greifswald in Germany. "Everything I was studying then started to dovetail with Buddhism," he says. "They all were saying the same thing to me in terms of how to discover what’s real. I was ready for Buddhism when it came along. But the thing about Buddhism was that it was so much broader in scope, far more poetic as well--a way of life as well as a way of thinking.

"When I went back to Columbia, I found I couldn’t write papers. My anthropological underpinnings had been wiped away. Suddenly, I was thinking everything was an illusion, or all categories are fictions. I was meditating on weekends with a Buddhist Hua-Yen monk, Shou-yeh, who had a temple north of New York City. Finally, I threw in the towel and decided to go to a Buddhist monastery."

"I knew another student who had been to a monastery in Taiwan, and he knew of a monastery that was just starting. I wrote them a letter and they said, ‘Come on over.’" His father gave him a one-way ticket and $200, and he arrived in Taiwan in 1972. He stayed for a year at the Fo Kwang Shan monastery with master Hsing Yun. "They had classes," he says. "It was sort of a Buddhist training monastery with Sanskrit classes and the study of different sutras, all in Chinese. I had been studying Chinese intensely for two years, but they sort of let me slide through. I had a nice room just off the Buddha Hall.

"All the people there thought it was the strangest thing to have a foreigner studying Buddhism. It was like being on a foreign planet. When the public came through the monastery it was sort of touristy and I got tired of being gawked at so I decided to go to a

Toyo, is perhaps best known for "Kuzoshi", a classic compilation of five thousand capping words drawn from various Chinese sources. In the late seventeenth century, "Kuzoshi", which had remained in manuscript, was edited by a former Zen priest identified only as Ijushi, who provided an additional one thousand Chinese phrases and included the sources for most of the collection's capping words. In 1688, the work, which now comprised six thousand phrases arranged according to the number of Chinese characters in each, was published with the title "Zenrin kushu". The "Kushu" today occupies a prominent position in Japanese Rinzaian Zen, and students are commonly urged to select capping words from it to express their understanding of a given koan. But what role "Kuzoshi" played in Toyo's Zen, and its connection, if any, with the practice of transmission in the Myoshinji line during the sixteenth century is unclear.

Such questions aside, there remains no doubt that Myoshinji, like Daitokuji, succumbed to the influence of missan Zen in the late Muromachi period. Suzuki Daisetsu’s pioneering research uncovered missancho from all four of the principal Myoshinji lines. These documents closely resemble their counterparts from Daitokuji, and though undated, probably embody transmissions evolved during late medieval times, perhaps during the sixteenth century. Explicit evidence for missan practice at Myoshinji in the early sixteenth century is provided by the records of Emperor Go Nara’s Zen study under Daikyu Sokyu, referred to earlier. Daikyu, who served three terms as abbot of Myoshinji, referred inka on Go Nara in 1542. Daikyu's inka takes the form of a brief Dharma talk addressed to the Emperor. In it, Daikyu attests to Go Nara's realization, stating that the Emperor has studied with him daily for many years and has demonstrated a profound understanding of the koan ‘originally existing perfect realization' (honnu enjo). In a letter of appreciation by Go Nara appended to the talk, the Emperor writes that he had been studying Zen for many years under other teachers, going through one by one the numerous cases handed down by the ancients and realizing each; in the end, however, it was only with his passing of the ‘originally existing perfect realization' koan that he truly attained understanding, experiencing undreamt-of realization. Go Nara’s subsequent edict bestowing on Daikyu the title of kokuishi (national teacher) confirms that he received inka after many years of study under Daikyu and mentions that his studies had included "missan."

It is not possible to identify the koan referred to here as ‘originally existing perfect realization’. It appears, however, to have been associated with Kanzan. A message from Go Nara in 1557 on the occasion of Kanzan's two hundredth memorial service bestows on Myoshinji's founder the posthumous title "Honnu Enjo Kokuishi," and once again repeats the statement that Go Nara him-
self had been enlightened by this koan. Whatever its history, it appears that in the Myoshinji line, the missan for this koan was of primary importance, and that receiving it constituted realization of the essence of the line's teaching. It was this transmission, or secret oral transmission, for the koan that the Emperor evidently received from Daikyu.

The latter half of the sixteenth century was a particularly active period for missan Zen. As previously described, the dramatic success of the Soto, Daitokuji, Myoshinji and Genju organizations during the Sengoku period made the missan transmission a virtually universal feature of Zen practice in Japan, embracing both rinka and sorin, urban and provincial temples. While many Soto records remain from this period, dated materials for Rinzai missan study are scarce, and much of our datable information on missan Zen in the Rinzai school derives from the early Tokugawa period, specifically the seventeenth century. By this time, the missan transmission had apparently been abandoned at Myoshinji, the leading Tokugawa Rinzai Zen organization, reflecting in part a desire to restore integrity to the teaching of Zen in Japan. Elsewhere, however, missan practice lingered on, and surviving missancho of the early seventeenth century may probably be taken to reflect missan traditions of the period immediately preceding, i.e., the late sixteenth century.

One of the earliest dated Rinzai missancho is a 1633 missan for Lin-chi lu.(I: Rinzai roku) compiled by Kohan Shushin (n.d.), a late sixteenth early seventeenth century Engakuji Genju-line teacher who was a second generation descendent of Sanbaku Gen'i. In an inscription appended to the missancho, Kohan declares that he has assembled in the manuscript the fruits of studies conducted since his youth with various teachers of both Rinzai and Soto sects and cautions his students to preserve the book's contents in the strictest secrecy. Not even Zen masters who "hold the inka of the sect" are to be permitted access to it. Kohan's statement suggests that the practice of acquiring multiple transmissions and their synthesis into new, personal and exclusive transmission remained a part of Japanese missan practice at least into the Azuchi Momoyama period (1573-1615), when Kohan is likely to have been a student. The Kamakura Gozan, as noted previously, received the Genju line missan transmission at a relatively late stage, and continued to carry out the Genju line transmission during the early Tokugawa period. Kohan's 1625 missan for the Blue Cliff Record, the Hekigan roku Kohan missan, is a manuscript copy dated 1714, prepared by a descendant in Kohan's Engakuji line, indicating that missan practice remained a part of Zen in Kamakura throughout Bankei's period and into that of Hakuin.

Like Engakuji, Daitokuji in the early Tokugawa period con-
Dancing With Words:
Red Pine’s Path Into The Heart of Buddhism

The is an updated version of an article that originally appeared in The Kyoto Journal by Roy Hamric.

**Part 1**

“All great texts contain their potential translation between the lines; this is true to the highest degree of sacred writings.”--Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator".

When I first saw Red Pine’s translation of *The Poems of Cold Mountain*, I remember thinking, “This is something important — who’s this Red Pine?”

That was 1983. Two years later came the book that really shook up the Buddhist literary community, Red Pine’s stunning, self-published translation of *The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse*, a tough spirited book of enlightened free verse—300 poems chronicling the pains and pleasures of Zen hermit life. The Stonehouse (Shih-wu) and Cold Mountain (Han-shan) translations put a spotlight on Zen autobiographical poetry unlike any books before.

Red Pine’s elegant hand-sewn, self-published translation of *The Zen Teachings of Bodhidharma*, in a Chinese-red cover, followed in 1987. Over the years, I avidly bought each new Red Pine translation: *Guide to Capturing a Plum Blossom* (Sung Po-jen), which won a PEN/West translation prize; *Lao-tzu’s Tao Te Ching*; and his own *Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*, which put contemporary flesh on Taoist/Zen hermit life.

* (cf. end)

My curiosity about the man who called himself Red Pine grew with each new book. But facts about his life were clouded in dust jacket blurbs: he lived in the mountains overlooking Taipei in a small farm community called Bamboo Lake; he was connected somehow with Empty Bowl press in Port Townsend, Washington. Eventually his American name, Bill Porter, appeared on one of his books. Red Pine: Bill Porter. But, no more information—none of the American Buddhist magazines, which proliferated during the ‘80s and ‘90s, were of any help.

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From the first, his translations seemed inspired. I read his books differently. There was a feeling of verisimilitude, rare in translation. His choices and love for the writers he translated filled a gap in my view of Chinese Zen writers. I felt connected to his poets as real people.

My admiration also grew for the role of the translator who constituted something of a backwater in the world of Japanese Zen, where missan study was preserved throughout the seventeenth century, side by side with various cultural activities associated with the temple during the Muromachi period. Even Takuan Soho, an important transitional figure who embodies many of the new trends that distinguish early Tokugawa Zen, is curiously ambivalent in his attitude toward missan study, which had apparently remained a fixture of Daitokuji’s teaching program. There survives, for example, an undated missancho composed by Takuan and the description of a hypothetical mondo in Takuan’s *Fudochi shinmyoroku* is remarkably similar in style to missancho passages cited by Suzuki, with their prominent emphasis on capping words employed as fixed responses.

Takuan writes: "... Suppose someone asks you, 'What is the ultimate meaning of Buddhism?' Before the words are even out of his mouth, you should answer: 'The flowering plum branch,' or 'The cypress tree in the garden .... '"

Missan study seems to have been a familiar feature of Daitokuji Zen in Takuan's period, and, like Takuan, many of his contemporaries and descendants at the temple composed missancho. Missancho by the following Daitokuji teachers are included in the holdings in the "Matsugaoka Bunko" and demonstrate the continuity of missan practice among seventeenth century Daitokuji masters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daitokuji Teachers</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Dates of missancho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takuan Soho</td>
<td>1573-1645</td>
<td>1 undated missan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryugaku Soryu</td>
<td>1557-1628</td>
<td>1625; 1 undated missan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koun Soryu</td>
<td>1599-1679</td>
<td>1628, 1645, 1649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten'yu Shogo</td>
<td>1586-1666</td>
<td>1641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denge Sosa</td>
<td>1608-1675</td>
<td>1660,1663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyokushu Soban</td>
<td>1600-1668</td>
<td>1656,1664 1684,1686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally speaking, in the Daitokuji and Genju lines, missan transmissions were preserved well into the Tokugawa period, and a large number of the missancho in the "Matsugaoka Bunko" bear dates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the Soto school a similar picture emerges. Although early Tokugawa Soto witnessed a movement to correct the abuses of the Middle Ages similar to that in the Rinzai Myoshinji line, many Soto missancho remain from this period. The seventeenth century seems to have been a particularly active period in the production of missancho in both sects. Yet in evaluating the position of missan Zen in early Tokugawa Japan, we can as yet do little more than document the fact of its survival. We may fairly suppose that as a relic of late Medieval practice it existed largely outside the Toku
gawa movements seeking to renovate Japanese Zen and gradually disappeared altogether in the late Tokugawa period. A contemporary description of missan Zen in Bankei's period appears in a 1672 work entitled "A Compass in the Foggy Sea" by the Obaku-sect teacher Choon Dokai (1628-1695). Choon details the iniquities of missan practice, which he regards as a continuing danger to the authentic teaching of Zen:

"For some two hundred years now, followers of Zen in both Rinzai and Soto schools have collected the comments and capping words given by Japanese teachers on the koans of the early masters. Arranging these in a fixed course of study, they take them up consecutively as the three hundred cases of the "Hekizen, Hekigan, and Hekigo," (i.e., the 100 cases of the Blue Cliff Record, plus 100 cases assigned, respectively, before and after the Blue Cliff cases) and then call this completing their training and realizing great enlightenment. Then they stuff it all inside a secret pouch or box and think that's what realizing the Great Matter is all about. If this box or pouch should catch fire or get washed away, their whole affinity with enlightenment is instantly wiped out! Among the worthies who teach this consecutive study of koans are some eminent and erudite fellows; but they're tripped up by their arrogance and longing for fame and fortune."

"No one is able to recognize this for the fraud it is and destroy it. It's like a kite (bird) who gets hold of a dead rat and treasures it with the greatest care. This by no means an attempt on my part to go about spreading slander. You can find this same advice in the injunctions of the old teachers and the scriptures of the buddhas and patriarchs. So better pay attention!"

"Unable to fully grasp the true significance of even these capping words and comments, students are gradually instructed by the teacher in a given koan's original phrases and key words, and simply give back whatever the old masters said about it. Since they approach this just like children answering a riddle, their own original mind is obscured, with the result that the venerable priests who claim to have completed this training are no different from ignorant laypeople! What's more, flushed with arrogance over their 'spiritual accomplishments,' they look down on all the other (Buddhist) sects, and so slander the true Dharma. That's why for two hundred years now the lamp of Zen has been extinguished, and there hasn't been one man or even half a man of true understanding."

"This consecutive study of koans seems to have got its start with the Zen Master Yoso of Daitokuji, and there's a work by Ikkyu called Jikaiishu in which it's attacked. Nowadays, though, the venerable priests who are teaching this haven't the faintest idea of talk about it. His tongue was like a flame and his eyes were shining—but those who heard him were blind and deaf."

Teaching must be given with great care. The teacher must pound the student very carefully as one would temper gold; pound it—put it on the fire—pound it again! Zen is the fire. When you attain it—you beat your own mind. But before this time—you will stand before your teacher with many impure particles in your mind. The teacher will shout at you, beat you, take all the coarse particles out of the gold. But make no mistake—all this is to attain causal Dharma, which is Dharmakaya.

"When they practice it, some of them will realize the result suddenly (like the Sixth Patriarch's school of Zen) and some will realize the result little by little (like the Tendai sect). If they meet the highest Bodhi of Buddha (the Eightfold Path) and the path of true practice, without regard to the capacity of their nature, great or small, they will attain the state of Buddha-knowledge."

—Sometimes—without meditation or philosophy—at once we will attain. But this is rare.

"Even though the sentient beings seek the good friend (I translate this "good friend" but in the Rinzai Record, "O Virtuous Scholar") if they meet one who has erroneous View, they cannot attain the true apprehension." —So you very slowly and honestly seek enlightenment, carefully avoiding a poor teacher. (Beware of a yogi with a white towel on his head!)

"Such sentient beings are called 'those who possess the seed of a heretical birth.'" —They have created so much karma that they cannot break the shell!

"The erroneous teaching of a wrong master is not the error committed by the sentient being." —I translate this exactly as it is written in the Chinese. It means that it is not the error of the student, but of the master. But if there was no erroneous student—an erroneous master could not exist. So both are erroneous! However, neither one is to blame because it is the karma of both. (It is like my cat: I carried him in a box to the Catskills, and he could not escape. But when I opened the box—he immediately got out! So, when you have the chance—get quickly out of that shell!)

"They are the result of the five varieties of sentient nature." —I have given commentaries on these five varieties. Perhaps you will find them in your notes. However, you need only concern yourselves with the last three to pass from the Pratyeka-Buddha into the Bodhisattva and, finally, to awaken into the state of Buddha.

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Tonight, I have only my old students who have been attending a long time so I can speak without concealment. This world is ruled by such a simple law—you can make everything very simple.

"O Obedient One! All sentient beings will prove that innately they possess the nature of this Perfect Awakening." — When I was fifteen years old, I lost my father. He was buried very near to the town. I came back from the funeral and passed through the temple yard covered by pine trees. Childishly, I wondered—"Where is my father now?" I could not believe that his soul was existing anywhere on the earth or under it. I looked at the sky and thought, "My father's soul is scattered all over—like heat or light." And then, as I stumbled over the root of a pine tree—"If my father is all over, he will be in this pine tree root—the tip of my tow and the tip of my tongue." I returned home without tears. Today I realize that that fifteen-year-old boy was not quite a fool! He had gathered all his philosophy at the grammar school—and come to that conclusion! Quite reasonable, wasn't it?

In my Buddhism today, I should say that it has not developed much beyond that fifteen-year-old boy. Of course I was the child of a Shinto priest and had heard about the "soul" every day; it was, to me, a big question.

It is because of this innate nature of Perfect Awakening that I believe people will at some time give up their traditional faith and come back to natural faith; really find the common ground on which to build their temples! Before this time, we must encounter many tragedies—struggles, wars.

Your modern science was introduced into our country when I was very young—your theories of light, heat, energy. Our teacher explained that, although all forms will be destroyed, energy will never be destroyed! Wonderful, that theory of the preservation of energy. All the children of the fifth grade believed it! So I came to this country in the belief that people really understood this theory. I was not only astonished but broken-hearted to find them still sticking to the old type of religion! Science gives us new theories every day—but it cannot give us a new theory of heat or the preservation of energy.

"When they meet a good teacher, according to his method of practice, they will approach to the state of causal Dharma." — As to "method of practice," philosophy is one method, meditation is another, and reciting the name of Buddha is also a practice. There is the method of going into the desert and fasting, speaking no word—assimilating the great existence. Sometimes it has been said of such, "He realized it, entered it — and came back to the city to who started it or when. They can't think of anything but the fact that unless their students get through the prescribed cases, they won't complete the course of study and become teachers or abbots. The result is that they fail to understand what actual value the koans possess."

"When I was young, I met up with this destructive teaching. Later on, I encountered a true teacher and realized its errors. Now, fearing that future students may also experience such confusion, I have spoken out like this. Those who style themselves study hall monks, gathering together large numbers of students, teaching this consecutive study of koans and uselessly wasting people's time—are they to be called sages or heretics'?

Choon is a somewhat complex figure, whose career includes an indictment for forgery of religious documents, and it is difficult to judge whether his comments here on missan Zen are drawn from firsthand observation, reading in earlier sources or mere hearsay. The truth may lie somewhere in between. He has clearly been influenced by the Ikkyu's "Jikaishu" (presumably available in manuscript by this time) and is at pains to denounce the same sorts of abuses attacked by Ikkyu. At the same time, however, he mentions specific features of the missan system not noted in Ikkyu's work: the "kazoesan," or "quantitative" approach to koan practice, involving consecutive study of a large number of cases; the written records of missan transmissions concealed in special containers; and the distinctive missancho collections referred to as "Hekizen, Hekigan and Hekigo." Choon notes that such practices began in the Middle Ages, but insists they are still rampant in his own day, having become so entrenched that no one any longer questions how they first emerged.

Whether missan Zen remained as pervasive in Choon's day as he claims is unclear. However, viewing Choon's comments together with other evidence of missan study in the seventeenth century such as the compilation of missancho at Daitokuji, Engakuji and in various Soto groups, it becomes obvious that, at the very least, missan Zen did not end abruptly with the beginning of the Tokugawa period.

In the case of Soto Zen, the continuity of missan practice was particularly conspicuous. The secret oral transmission in the early Tokugawa Soto temples was connected with a practice known literally as "evening interview", originating in the Medieval period. During the summer and winter retreats, students at Soto temples would take up three koans one for each of the Soto 'Three Stages', learning nine different capping words for each case, in accordance with the teacher's secret tradition. The capping words would be transmitted in a series of evening interviews with the teacher, one
evening for each capping words, the entire three cases requiring twenty-seven evenings for completion.

In the Soto school, the seventeenth century was also the most active period in the production of the missan-style documents known as kirigami. The popularity of kirigami transmission in the Soto temples apparently continued unabated throughout most of the Tokugawa period, despite the criticism of reformers, who viewed it as a degenerate legacy of the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century, the practice was denounced by the Soto reformer Menzan Zuiho (1683-1769), who in his work Denbo shitsunai mitsuji monki calls for its abolition. Menzan states that the kirigami are considered secret documents and are being transmitted privately within the Soto temples. He insists that they are utterly worthless, and worries that if seen by priests of other Zen sects, they will only make them laugh and embarrass the Soto school. Some kirigami, he adds, even contain Yin yang type materials.

Although not generally remarked, the missan transmission thus seems to have persisted in Japan throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, with the seventeenth century especially noteworthy in both sects for the production of Missan-cho. In the Soto school production of missan materials seems to have continued well into the early 1800s. And while it lost the commanding position it held in the rinka and sorin temples of the sixteenth century, the missan system nonetheless proved a durable and peculiarly Japanese adaptation of Zen.

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(translation and copyright by Peter Haskel)

appreciate. The reason for my own faith in Buddhism is that its foundation is Dharmakaya. It is like the sky—but invisible like ether, like air; it is dynamic and everlasting existence—existing by itself forever. It cannot be called by any name; it is neither god nor demon—but it is the source of everything.

Modern science believes that the real body of existence is energy—energy produced by heat. The heat will increase according to place and pressure. But when the heat is commonly distributed, it will exist as universal heat—and universal heat means no heat. It is the common ground of heat. This can be used to cite an illustration for the existence of Dharmakaya.

The Buddhist does not believe there is a God who manifests in the human body and human mind; but the nature of Dharmakaya will manifest itself in the human body, in the body of a dog, cat, insect, or weed—and take action according to this physical appearance. The dog will say, "Bow-wow!" and the cat will say, "Meow!" The human being will think a million things!

The manifestation of Dharmakaya in the human mind is like a wave, a storm, like lightning. Sometimes it is harmonized and sometimes it falls into great conflict. When it is harmony—the human being lives in peace; when it is not harmony, the human being lives in agony and struggle. It appears as law, and, subjectively, we call it morality. That is all. That is Buddhism.

So Buddhism is very simple; by studying it for almost forty years it taught me this much. It is as I pour water into the transparent glass and call this solid emptiness, "Dharmakaya." I shake it and produce many air bubbles in it—and call it human life! Dharmakaya manifests only one law and the one law manifests all existence. Therefore our life is operated by one law.

To the Buddhist, this is a religion. We do not need to join our hands and pray, "Oh God, give me bread and butter for tomorrow's existence!" But we work—and we sacrifice our own life—and we have bread and butter. We do not waste our time in useless excitement—and we do not take everything emotionally; emotion is a kind of conflict and we resolve it according to the law. This kind of teaching is very unfamiliar to most ears. People want excitement and entertainment; they regard the attainment of enlightenment as a kind of superstition. But when you come to the Zen school and apprehend this enlightenment, you realize what is true and what is false.

The Buddha said, "In true teaching there is no mystery!" If Buddhism was a mystery, it would not be a true teaching! Remember this.
"O Obedient One! All sentient beings will prove that innately they possess the nature of this Perfect Awakening. When they meet a good teacher, according to his method of practice, they will approach to the state of causal Dharma. When they practice, some of them will realize the result suddenly and some will realize the result little by little. If they encounter the highest Bodhi of Buddha and the path of their practice, without regard to the capacity of their natures be they great or small, they will attain the state of Buddha-knowledge. Even though sentient beings seek the good friend, if they meet one who has an erroneous View—they cannot attain the true apprehension of Awakening. Such sentient beings are called 'those who possess the seed of a heretical birth.' The erroneous teachings of a wrong master are not the errors committed by the sentient beings themselves. They are the result of the five varieties of sentient nature."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The important point in these lines is that according to their innate nature, every sentient being has the capacity to awaken if he meets a good teacher and practices the true method. But that, as the result of the five varieties of nature, there are those who will follow the erroneous teachings of a wrong master. These cannot have faith in the highest teachings of the Buddha—to them it is "tasteless." However, they can enjoy the teachings which entertain their erroneous minds.

This has been true since ancient days in the history of Buddhism, when few came to accept the true teachings, but preferred to go to erroneous teachers. When the Buddha was living, he had 1,500 disciples, while the majority of the citizens of Sarivasti and other big cities did not even know of the Buddha’s existence! When they heard his name and opened their eyes to the wonder of his teaching—it was about two centuries later! As Confucius said, "A true word is always repulsive to erroneous minds!"

Perhaps a religion as simple as Buddhism is very difficult to
Red Pine

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