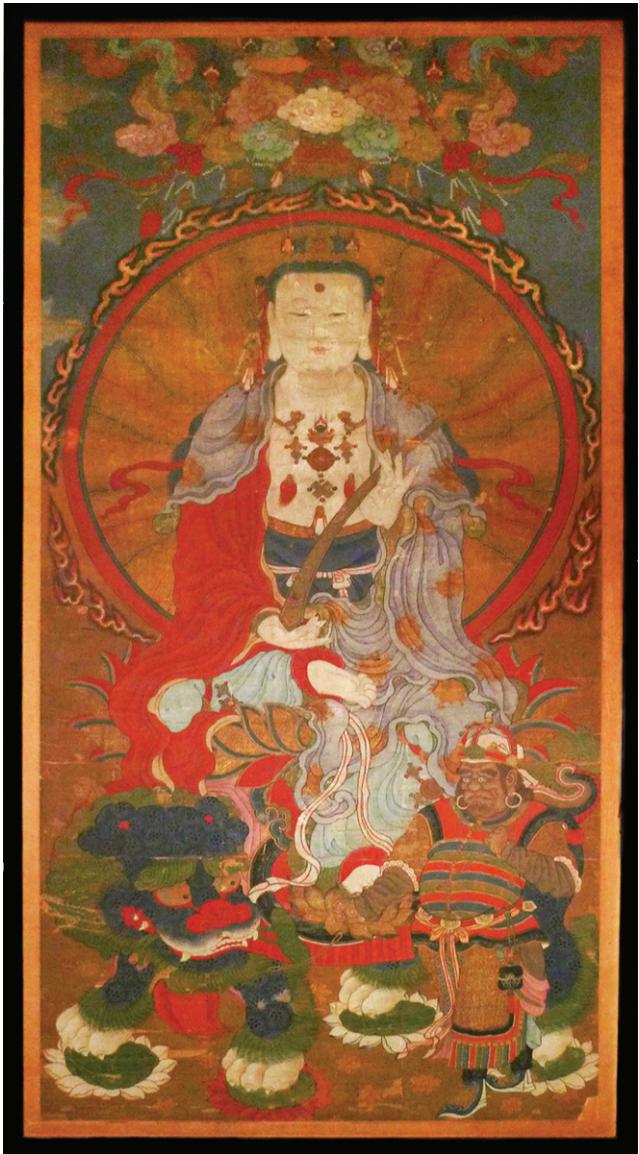


# ZEN NOTES



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# THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

## FIFTY-THIRD LECTURE

Wednesday October 4th, 1939

*"O Obedient One! Because of great compassion alone, bodhisattvas suffer themselves to return to the various lives of the world. In order to cultivate the minds of unenlightened sentient beings, by such expedients as manifesting many kinds of appearances and circumstances, either favorable or unfavorable to their wishes; and mutually cooperating with them in the pursuit of their daily life, the bodhisattvas cause the sentient beings to attain Buddha's enlightenment. The bodhisattvas, as the result of the pure vows which they have taken in the beginningless past, regard living beings thus compassionately. If the sentient beings of the future world desire to make further and further progress in the attainment of the great Perfect Awakening, they must vow thus: 'May we reside in the Buddha's Perfect Awakening, and may we meet a good friend who possesses true knowledge.'"*

### SOKEI-AN SAYS:

In this part of the sutra are many important Mahayana doctrines. The sutra was written in India, according to chronologists, about six or seven hundred years after the Buddha's death—so it was written between the second and third centuries A.D. The Buddha was born 2,500 years ago and he died in his eightieth year.

*"O Obedient One!"* —The Buddha is addressing his disciple Maitreya. The significance of this name is the meaning "sympathetic friend." Maitreya knows that the law in the universe, in nature, an in man are operated within the same law—and Maitreya obeys the law. Therefore the Buddha calls this enlightened gentleman "Obedient One."

*"Because of great compassion alone, bodhisattvas suffer themselves to return to the various lives of the world."* —European scholars think "bodhisattvas" are Buddhist angels or demigods! But to us, bodhisattvas are enlightened gentlemen and ladies. "Bodhi" means "enlightenment" and "sattva" means "human being." Europeans translate this word from the Christian

viewpoint—but to us, the bodhisattvas are living right here among us.

The line "*suffer themselves to return to the various lives of the world*" suggest that the bodhisattvas are waiting somewhere in the sky—but the meaning is not so metaphysical or mythological as that. These bodhisattvas were ignorant men in the beginning, leading the usual worldly life. Then they attained enlightenment, Perfect Knowledge—not some queer knowledge—but Perfect Knowledge. They are now living among the people.

When you have gone through primary school and high school and the university, have become a teacher—you will come back again among the children. You must not harbor some queer notion about enlightened men. Many of you have superstitious ideas about supernatural powers; you carry them from Christianity into Buddhism.

The Bodhisattva re-enters the world as you return again to the immature children; he does not attain knowledge and shine somewhere in the sky! If you think in this way, the latter, you will distort your Buddhism.

These sutras are written in an impressive, elevated style and the people of that day understood.

*"In order to cultivate the minds of unenlightened sentient beings,"* —In these days we have University education—and then you study by yourself the rarer cultures and the highest philosophy. But in those days there were no schools; the people lived almost like animals. However, there were shining men among them.

*"... by such expedients as manifesting many kinds of appearances and circumstances, either favorable or unfavorable to their wishes;"* —The bodhisattvas work in the most advantageous ways to give the sentient beings perfect awakening. They will sometimes appear as a fish-monger, a warrior—sometimes as a monk or a diplomat. As Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva appears in many ways, both male and female—transforms into thirty-two different shapes. This is "*manifesting many kinds of appearances.*"

Universal knowledge, knowledge itself, exists and it appears in a man as the light appears in a lamp. Knowledge is a power that exists in the universe and appears in many different forms. And in "*circumstances either favorable or unfavorable.*" Sometimes we are living in very favorable circumstances, and sometimes they are unfavorable. Today, it is unfavorable because there is war everywhere and there are no jobs in the city; but it is favorable that you and I are good friends and that we love one another.

*"... and mutually cooperating with them in the pursuit of their daily life, the bodhisattvas make the sentient beings attain Buddha's enlightenment."* —The Bodhisattva has four ways to approach the human beings: the first is charity, giving; the second is affability, to know the right word spoken tenderly; the third is to help and to share with people; the fourth is to be together as friends. So there are four ways, and giving is the first.

*"The bodhisattvas, as the result of their pure vows which they took in the beginningless past, regard the living beings thus compassionately."* —The "thus" means as written in the previous lines. And the "beginningless past" —they begin with the vow; it is intrinsic—it is not taking any vow in this life as, all of a sudden, "I take a vow to enlighten all sentient beings." It does not spring from a desire, "Oh, take all this agony away!" It is natural. Otherwise it will not be pure.

Artificiality must not come into your relationship with others. You must not contrive anything: "I am a Buddhist; I must convert people." "I will become her friend, send her flowers, and enlighten her." This is not natural; it is impure. A Bodhisattva knows what he is doing; but the unenlightened human being does not—he is unnatural.

There are many Bodhisattva stories. One Bodhisattva appeared as a very beautiful girl who sold fish from village to village. Because of her beauty and melodious voice, many young men followed her—thirty asked her hand in marriage.

She said, "I am one woman so I cannot marry all of you." Then she added, "But I have here a sutra. If any one of you can read it, I shall marry him."

Among the thirty gentlemen, there were ten who could read the sutra. So she said, the next day, "I am one woman and I cannot marry ten men—but if any one of you can explain the meaning of the sutra, I shall marry him." Three of those gentlemen could explain the sutra, so the next day she said, "I am one woman and I cannot marry three men, but if any one of you can realize the meaning of awakening in deeds and manifestation, I will marry him"

One young man revealed to her that he had the capacity and understanding to realize and manifest his awakening. So she accepted his proposal, and the bridegroom came to her parents' village. The parents said, "Yes, she is waiting for you in her room. Please go in!" He was delighted—and entered.

On her bed lay her seashell dress — but he failed to find her!

Then he saw an open window and her footprints below. He followed the footprints to the shore of the river, and there he found a pair of golden shoes on the bank! Standing there and listening to the sound of the waves, the young man remembered all the words of the sutra. And suddenly he realized that his love was not a woman—she was Kwannon! He also knew that her love was an "expedient" to lead him to enlightenment.

*"If the sentient beings of the future world desire to make further and further progress in the attainment of the great Perfect Awakening,"*—I have explained perfect awakening many times—but I shall speak about it briefly again. As a man must have two kinds of knowledge, to know cause and to know result—this true knowledge of cause and result is essential.

As you stand on the sea-shore and watch the waves, it is not the waves that come to the shore—it is energy. And if you throw a piece of wood upon the waves, it is energy that comes to the shore. What makes energy? Modern science says that it is made by heat. Well, what is heat? We know common heat, but in interstellar space...

You must get your own faith. Even without knowing, you must have faith. "Because my mother said..." "Because my father said..." No! You must have your *own* faith.

There is a law which is operating, a law of "regulation." There are many laws; but when we understand this law of cause and effect in our own nature, then we have perfect awakening!

*"... they must take the vow thus: 'May we reside in the Buddha's Perfect Awakening, and may we meet a good friend who possesses true knowledge.'"* —The Buddhist teacher gives you but one thing: he lets you know the cause of this queer thing with a nose, two eyes, two ears, two arms, two legs, a trunk, and a head. To know the result, you must attain awakening by yourself. And to get that knowledge, you must "meet a good friend." This means a good teacher.

This part is very important. You must know how to read this sutra. You must learn the operation of this law—this pure law—in your daily life. But you must be natural if you would take this pure vow!

\* \* \* \* \*

## Dancing With Words:

### **Red Pine's Path Into The Heart of Buddhism**

By Roy Hamric

#### **Part 2**

( Continued from Fall '09 ZN )

Ultimately, a good translator must go beyond the words on the page. Someone once said that translation is the undressing of a poem in one language to dress it in another. Red Pine recalls one day when he was browsing through the pirated editions at Caves Bookstore in Taipei, and he picked up a copy of Alan Ginsberg's *Howl*.

"It was like trying to make sense of hieroglyphics," he said. "I put it back down and looked for something else. Then a friend loaned me a video of Ginsberg reading *Howl*. What a difference. In Ginsberg's voice, I heard the energy and rhythm, the sound and the silence, the vision, the poetry. The same thing happened when I read some of Gary Snyder's poems then heard him read. The words on a page, I concluded, are not the poem. They are the recipe, not the meal, steps drawn on a dance floor, not the dance."

"What I do now is more of a performance," he says. "Before, I was usually sort of reading the lines like an actor, but now I perform the book--what I do now is closer to dance. The words have to follow along my physical feel for the rhythm, the feeling of what's happening in the Chinese poem. I don't see the Chinese as the origin anymore. The Chinese was what the authors used to write down what they were feeling."

"I've gotten so used to the words I don't have to think about them anymore. I'm more concerned with the spirit. I don't think I have a philosophy of translation, but you have to be very open."

In *The Great Preface to the Book of Odes*, the Chinese character for poetry is "words from the heart," says Red Pine. "This would seem to be a characteristic of poetry in other cultures as well—that it comes from the heart, unlike prose, which comes from the head."

You're trying to get into the heart of another person. I'm fortunate I've found materials that present deep hearts. That's the way I've responded with the passion I have. I'm fortunate to have run into the Buddha, Bodhidharma, Cold Mountain, Stonehouse and the other Buddhist poets."

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In Port Townsend, Red Pine lives in a two-story Victorian house which sits on a high hill overlooking town. To the south is the Olympic Mountain range. Through the largest window in his workroom he can see the sea. Through another window he can see the branches of a plum tree. From another window, he can see pine trees and bamboo. On the walls are bamboo paintings, a Tibetan tanka, and a painting with calligraphy of a Wang Wei poem. The room is lined with books. He works almost every day with few breaks.

“I have an extensive library for me, but probably no bigger than what a college professor has in their office,” he says. “I’ve never been interested in knowing everything about everything. I only translate what I want to learn about. For the *Tao Te Ching*, I had about 40 commentaries.

“I only buy books that relate to the projects I’m working on and a couple of those books will usually be on the time period it’s written in. I hardly have any books at all in English.

“I’m not interested in what a Westerner has to say about these things, because that’s a secondary source. My library is in primary source material—a bunch of sutras, poems, commentaries.”

Red Pine’s interest in primary sources took a physical turn in 1989, when he began thinking about the Buddhist hermit tradition and wondering if any hermits were still practicing in China. Many of his Taiwan friends doubted real Buddhism even existed in China. By chance, he had a conversation with Winston Wang, the son of one of the richest men in Taiwan. Wang was fascinated by the idea of searching for Chinese hermits, and he gave Red Pine \$3,500 to finance an exploratory trip. His first trip was for one month, and he went back two more times.

“Most people who translate don’t have a clue to where things happen,” Red Pine says. “They really don’t have an awareness of the landscape. I visited the grave of every significant poet, and I’ve been to every significant Zen temple, but before that I’d never paid attention to it. I discovered the place, and that was exciting to me and since then I make sure I know where the work was done.

“I’d never been to China before,” he says. “We got there at the beginning of the Democracy Movement. We were caught in huge demonstrations. There were a lot of spies, informants, and we could tell something was about to happen. It was one month before Tiennanmen Square. The search for hermits centered around the Chung Nan Mountains in southern Yunnan. The trip brought home the true meaning of hermit life,” Red Pine says.

“I’ve never heard of any great master who has not spent some time as a hermit. The hermit tradition separates the men from the boys. If you’ve never spent time in solitude, you’ve really never mastered your practice.

“If you’ve never been alone with you practice, you’ve never swallowed it and made it yours. Now I can see the part it’s played in the history of China. If you don’t spend time in solitude, you don’t have either profundity or understanding—you’ve just carried on somebody else’s tradition.

“The hermit tradition is like graduate school—under-graduate school is the monastery—you should go through the first to get to the second.”

“The hermit tradition plays into the Chinese attraction to anarchism,” he says. “If I could choose one word to describe the Chinese character it would be anarchism—he, don’t respect authority unless it comes with power. It’s very Chinese to want to set up your own shop—the opposite of the Japanese. They’re very much like the cowboy. They respect people who are on their own, but to do that you have to be completely confident in what you’re doing.”

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After the hermit book, Red Pine began translating a series of classic Zen texts. In 1995, he published *Guide To Capturing A Plum Blossom*, an ingenious picture-prose inventory of perception; in 1996, *Lao-tzu’s Tao Te Ching*; in 2001, *The Diamond Sutra*; in 2004, *The Heart Sutra*; and soon he will publish *The Lankavatara Sutra*.

“The Plum Blossom is the oldest art book ever printed,” he says. “It has an amazing concept of picturing and describing a plum blossom from so many points of view—like in deconstruction, it takes it apart--and it’s important in terms of its cultural connection and what it says about the Chinese spirit.” The *Tao Te Ching*, although known worldwide as a central text in Chinese philosophy, is only part of the Taoist world view, Red Pine says.

He doubts that Taoism has had a major influence on Buddhism or Zen. “All the early Chinese Buddhist disciples were not necessarily Taoists,” he says. “They were mostly Confucian. I think Confucianism has had a much greater role to play. Taoism itself is a religion that calls on people to become one with the Tao—it’s a religion that focuses on the dialectic of the yin and yang, whereas, at the core, Buddhism is non-dual. Its interest is in transcending duality.

“The Taoist concept of emptiness is totally different from Buddhist emptiness. Taoist are interested in the creation of an immortal spirit body that becomes one with the Tao—you have to do something—it entails doing something, but in Buddhism you have to not do something. It’s always been a current that’s run through Taoism. Every master has his own take on what the Tao is. Lao-tzu’s Tao was ethical, moral Taoism—about what to do in this life, not about the abstract state of how to become successful. And Lao-tzu’s Taoism is a very different Taoism than Chuang-tzu’s.”

Red Pine started translating the Diamond Sutra in 1999, shortly after he began teaching Buddhism and Taoism in exchange for room and board at The City of 10,000 Buddhas near Ukiah, California. He lived there two years before returning to Port Townsend.

“I had tried to translate the Diamond Sutra before, but it still didn’t make sense to me as a coherent whole,” he says. “But when I was in Taiwan I ran into this grammatical study of the Sanskrit in Chinese, and I saw things I’d never seen before—it all seemed to fit together. I based my translation on the Sanskrit text, but translated a lot of the commentaries from the Chinese masters.

“I always give sutras the benefit of the doubt and assume they were spoken by the Buddha. It [the *Diamond Sutra*] couldn’t have occurred at the beginning of the Buddha’s enlightenment. It was maybe when he was around 60 to 65 years old. Most people assume the Buddha’s teaching is about emptiness where the *Diamond Sutra* is just about the opposite of that. Most of the Perfection of Wisdom texts take this point of view, whereas the *Diamond Sutra* takes the opposite point of view. I sort of think the Buddha was thinking that day that maybe a lot of people are getting attached to emptiness, so today I’m going to teach everything is a body, but everything is also a part of the body of Buddha.”

“This is a very big body—but the Buddha is trying to teach people that through the body of the Buddha you gain a great body of merit and that will be your body and this body is also no different than the body the Buddha gained when he became enlightened. But that body itself can become an attachment if you don’t get beyond that. All of it is based on the idea that the quickest way to practice is about giving, about being compassionate.” A highlight of the sutra’s commentaries are the words of Te-ching (Han Shan Te-ching, not to be confused with Han Shan aka Cold Mountain).

“He’s not widely known or translated in the West,” Red Pine says. “But all the Chinese put him on a pedestal. I used his commentaries on the Tao Te Ching and the Diamond Sutra. He cert-

ainly ranks as an equivalent to Hui-neng. I always turn to him first. He was fearless and very unique in his insights.”

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Under his given name Red Pine, Bill Porter has become the eminence grise of translators and commentators on Zen and Taoist poetry and texts. However, he's now also something more. In his two travel books, he has stepped out from the shadow of the translator to become himself; in the first, *Road to Heaven*, he searched out the Taoist hermits in the Chang An mountains, and in his most recent travel book, *Zen Baggage*, he chronicled the past and the present life of the monasteries of the Chinese Zen patriarchs. The hermit book was a revelation to Westerners and seems to have fascinated many Chinese as well: the Chinese translation of the book is now in its sixth printing under the title *Hidden Orchids of Deserted Valleys*.

Porter's personality comes through most vividly in *Zen Baggage*, which offers generous sketches of his life in Taiwan, his frequent travels to China, and, most revealingly, his on-the-road manners and methods during his six-week, 2,500-mile, temple-hopping pilgrimage, which was largely a catch-up journey to supplement his many previous visits. He was already on intimate terms with many of the temple abbots and others that he met with on his trip.

*Zen Baggage* is soaked in wisdom so subtle it is almost invisible. Three-quarters of the way through, you realize that you've absorbed a chronology of the major Chinese Zen patriarchs along with Zen's distinctive starts and stops that collectively make up its birth, its philosophical debates, its divisions, its flowering in the 6th century, and then its slow decline and diffusion into the larger world. Whether he's interviewing an abbot at Hui-neng's old temple or eating sweet cakes at a truck stop, he lashes it all together in details that illuminate the stories, metaphysics, koans, and esoterica of early Zen.

His work to date most closely resembles the books of his mentor John Blofeld (1913-1987), the British writer and translator who helped him during his first translation, *Cold Mountain Poems*. Porter is using his unique talents as a translator and a writer to bring to life Buddhism's past and present. Along with his 12 translations, his two travel books are singular achievements that have broken new ground in our understanding of Zen and Taoism in contemporary China. They showcase his two greatest assets: his independence as a scholar and his personal understanding of Taoism and Zen.

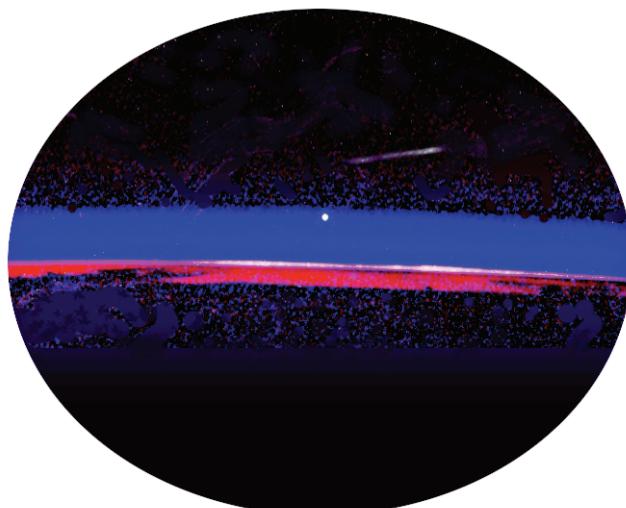
In 2004, Red Pine presented a paper on translation at an inter-

national conference on Chinese poetry at Simmons College in Boston, in which he takes the reader to the very bottom of the art of language, poetry and translation:

“We live in worlds of linguistic fabrication. Pine trees do not grow with the word ‘pine’ hanging from their branches. Nor does a pine tree ‘welcome’ anyone to its shade. It is we who decide what words to use, and, like Alice, what they mean. And what they mean does not necessarily have anything to do with reality. They are sleights of the mind as well as the hand and the lips. And if we mistake words for reality, they are no longer simply sleights but lies. And yet, if we can see them for what they are, if we can see beyond their deception, they are like so many crows on the wing, disappearing with the setting sun into the trees beyond our home. This is what poetry does. It brings us closer to the truth. Not to the truth, for language wilts in such light, but close enough to feel the heat.”

(This is an updated version of an article that originally appeared in  
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**Morning Star** - NASA

# **Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger**

Sokei-an's commentary on

## **The Record of Lin Chi**

### **Discourse XII, Lecture 1**

*The Master said to his followers: “Brothers, Buddha’s Dharma requires no effort. There is nothing further for you to do but be yourself, as you are. Stand or sit. Dress yourself, eat, defecate and urinate. Sleep when fatigued. The ignoramus derides me, but the wise man understands. The ancients said, ‘Those who devise ways and means to deal with the external world are stubborn idiots.’”*

#### **SOKEI-AN SAYS:**

When Master Lin-chi tells his disciples that Buddha’s *Dharma* requires no effort, he is talking about a principle called in Chinese *wu-wei*, or purposelessness. In other words, you cannot use Buddhism for any purpose. Of course this is said by those of the stature of Lin-chi whose understanding is like that of the Buddha. But for those of us whose attainment has not reached such a high level, Buddhism is a wonderful device with which to govern our everyday lives. Lin-chi is speaking from his own understanding and his own view of Buddhism.

From the viewpoint of Shintoism, you are not living, you are not doing anything. If you think you are, you are doing something, and you are profaning the power of God, because the entire substance of the universe is the body of God. In Shintoism there are eight million gods and goddesses because all the elements of the universe are gods and goddesses, and it is the body of the human being that is the shrine of those deities. We cannot see them, but they see us.

A Shinto priest once told this story: “One day a very old pine tree in a garden was drying up and beginning to die. The gardener seeing this happen, dug around the old tree and put fertilizer near its roots. Later, he overheard the tree talking to another old tree, “Well, somehow I feel a little peped up today. Looks like I’ll live for a while longer.” The other tree said, “My, isn’t it wonderful we still have some strength left in us after so many years!”

The tree did not know, of course, of the gardener, as we do not know of the invisible [force] guarding us from outside our bodies

and giving us thoughts of encouragement. We think such thoughts are coming from inside, but it is not so.

You could say the faith of Buddhism is in this one word purposelessness or effortlessness. We think we are making ourselves strong, pursuing desire, or handling one particular thing tenaciously, but this too is purposelessness, if we understand the law of the universe that all one does is not one's own work. Some great power pushes. If an individual understands this, he does not struggle, but those who do not understand must be saved by devices, or as the Buddhists say, *upaya*, skillful means. The *bodhisattva*, to save someone lying on the ground, lies beside him. If someone is drowning, the *bodhisattva* enters the water. Buddha's *Dharma*, however, is motionless, not going, not saving. The Buddha said that it is not necessary to proclaim nirvana, there is no nirvana, no sentient being to be saved. This is said from the Buddha's understanding. So from that standpoint, Lin-chi says:

*"There is nothing further for you to do but be yourself, as you are."* That is, Buddha's *Dharma*! You must not misunderstand this. There is nothing further for a bird to *do*, nothing further for a cat to *do*. A bird flies in the sky, that is its natural condition. If fastened in a cage, it is not the perfect condition for a bird. When a cat dances, that is not its perfect condition. If any notion bewitches you to keep yourself apart in a mountain, it is not perfect Buddhism. Be as you are, nothing more. This is Lin-chi's standpoint.

*"Stand or sit. Dress yourself. Eat. Defecate and urinate. Sleep when fatigued."* Daily life. My teacher, lecturing on this subject once said many people believe that morality is religion, but that is not so he said. Religion is the foundation of morality.

Lin-chi is content with the necessities of life, but one has to struggle to reach that stage, using many methods, *sanzen*, and so on.

*"The ignoramus derides me, but the wise man understands."* Time will do it, I need not push. If you push, you will be pushed back; you will not be connected with Nature. You have to know the time, the place, and the conditions. To bring Buddhism to America we must await the time, the place, and the conditions.

*"The ancients said, 'Those who devise ways and means to deal with the external world are stubborn idiots.'*" Lin-chi is saying that we are trying to find a universal law *outside* of ourselves; we are not looking *in* ourselves. The three bodies are one body, but the human being who has this body searches for the truth outside somewhere. He is an idiot. Lin-chi says to search inside.

# **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. A fixture of the later was the missan system, a mode of secret transmission for koans beloved in late medieval Japan.*

## **ZEN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD (Part II, #1)**

(Continued from the Fall '09 Zen Notes)

### **Part II: Missan Zen: Form and Content**

While the accounts cited in the previous section offer certain clues to the history of the missan system in Muromachi and Tokugawa Japan, the missancho themselves are probably our best tool for examining the actual character of missan Zen. Generally speaking, the missancho constitute written records of a missan Zen teacher's secret oral transmission. In the Rinzai school, these manuscripts are also referred to by such terms as *missanroku*, *anken*, *missan gakucho*, and *gakucho*, while in the Soto school, the terms *monsan*, *honsan*, *hisan* and *densan* are common. The missancho were first introduced to modern scholarship by Suzuki Daisetsu in the early 1940s.

Of the surviving examples of missancho, many are undated,

or undatable, and at present too little is known to discuss in any detail the missancho's evolution how, when, and indeed whether they changed significantly in the course of their approximately four hundred year history.

The dated materials that remain allow us to say only that a particular style of missancho was extant as early as or as late as a certain era, but nothing more. Hence, any treatment of missancho must remain for the most part general and nonhistorical.

Though forming a distinct class of Zen document, the missancho are by no means uniform in character or content. Nevertheless, among the variations certain characteristic features may be identified. Certain missancho are simply transmissions of esoteric "mysteries" that deal only tangentially with koans. Most, however, are concerned primarily with koan study and focus on series of cases, apparently arranged according to stages. The koans tend to be drawn principally from three Chinese Zen texts: the *Record of Lin-chi* (*Linchi lu*, J: *Rinzai roku*), the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Pi-yen lu*, J: *Hekigan roku*) and *Gateless Gate* (, J: *Mumonkan*) sometimes referred to as the "*Hekirinmu*," after the first characters of their Japanese readings.

Certain missancho include koans from all three texts, while others deal with the koans of one text exclusively. One common type of missancho, previously noted, seems to have been based around the *Blue Cliff Record*. Such collections were arranged in three sections as those, presumably, to be studied before (*Hekizen*) and after (*Hekigo*) the one hundred koans of the *Blue Cliff Record*. The number of cases in the Hekizen and Hekigo sections of these manuscripts varies, and at times the same koan appears in both these sections of the same missancho.

As discussed previously, koan study in missan Zen concentrated primarily on the secret transmission of capping words (*agyo*) drawn from Chinese sources. Because of their difficulty, however, it became common to include with the capping words certain supplementary materials as an aid to their interpretation and understanding. At times, these materials were strictly linguistic, and one aspect of the secret transmission might be a line's traditional Japanese reading (*kanbun*) of the capping words themselves.

Of particular importance was the placement of the punctuation marks that guide the Japanese student in the reading of the Chinese capping words. In certain missancho, this information is transmitted with the somewhat grandiose title of "punctuation of the authentic transmission." At times in the missancho, a teacher may even stop to point out to his student the different ways in which a certain Chinese expression may be read: one branch of the

temple says it one way, one, another though the meaning is admittedly the same. In addition, capping words and koans are frequently accompanied in the missancho by a variety of glosses, comments and "explanations," frequently phrased in colloquial Japanese and recorded in kana, or in a mixture of kana and Chinese characters. Variously referred to as *ben*, *heiwa* or *heigo*, such glosses may wander far from the original subject, but theoretically serve to elucidate particular koans or capping words, though at times may themselves consist of capping words.

Two basic formats can be identified for missancho dealing with koans. The first of these is a simple listing of capping words for particular koans, as given by teachers of one's own line, or even of outside lines. The second, and more complex, variety of missancho records a line's secret oral transmission for particular koans, including capping words and glosses, in the framework of a mondo between teacher and disciple. This mondo style missancho typically consists of a number of sections, each revolving around a single koan. Generally, the teacher (referred to in the missancho as *shi*) initiates the questioning (*satsu*) on a given case, and a dialogue then ensues, with the student (*gaku*) providing an capping words and comments. If he is still unsure of the student's grasp, the teacher may demand additional capping words or glosses. (In the various "family traditions" of missan lines there were frequently several capping words considered appropriate to each koan and several comments as well.) In certain instances, the teacher himself supplies capping words and glosses for the koan.

The glosses may vary in length, style and content, from brief statements, or even capping words, to elaborate and seemingly far-fetched "interpretations." Many of the missancho contain similar or identical mondo for the same koan, indicating that the responses of both teacher and student were largely stereotyped and ritualized. In a typical example, cited by Suzuki, the teacher questions the student on the koan "Chao-chou's 'Cypress Tree.'" The student says: "It is not merely the cypress; all the myriad trees and grasses are without mind. And the mind of man being the same, Joshu gives the answer: 'The cypress tree in the garden'.... When pressed for a capping word, the student replies: "The willow is green, the flower red." Later in the dialogue, the teacher asks the student to explain this phrase, and he answers: "The willow is not green, the flower is not red." In an entry for the same koan in another missancho, the student offers the capping words: "The pine is straight, the brambles bent," and when asked to explain further, replies: "The pine is not straight, the brambles not bent." These "answers" to "Chao-chou's 'Cypress Tree'" are close to those provided by the hypothetical student in Ikkyu's *kana hogo*, and are later passages from missancho dealing with koans such as "Chao-chou's "Cypress Tree"" that appear frequently in the texts, and

many show a similar pattern, with mondo containing common or analogous capping words and glosses. While a large number of the missancho are of unknown origin, those identified as belonging to Myoshinji teaching lines for the most part offer similar answers to the same koans. These, in turn, are very close to answers provided in Daitokuji-line missancho, which are also generally alike.

As previously noted, missan Zen seems to have been strongly influenced by Esoteric Buddhism. Outwardly, missan teachings preserved many of the distinctive features of Chinese Zen, such as koans, capping words and mondo; but the animating spirit behind missan study, with its ritualized transmission of esoteric "secrets," was often closer to Esoteric Buddhist than to Zen traditions. There seems to have been a progressive "esotericization" of missan Zen, such that in the sixteenth century, certain Zen transmissions in Japan completely assumed the form of an Esoteric Buddhist initiation, or *kanjo*. This is reflected in the many titles assigned to the missancho that are probably Shingon in origin: *kuketsu*, *kirigami*, *hiketsu* and so forth.

The role of Esoteric Buddhism in missan study was not limited to merely formal or procedural aspects. In certain instances, the content of the transmission itself was clearly influenced by Esoteric Buddhism, often presented in a corrupt form that drew upon Yin-yangtype beliefs incorporating sexual symbolism. Suzuki suggests that such sexual elements may have been influenced by teachings of the Tachikawa *ryu*, or school, , a heretical deviation from the Shingon sect that emphasized a combination of sexual practices and Yin-yang philosophy and was suppressed in the early fourteenth century. A more likely source of influence, however, is the *Genshi\_kimyodan*, a sexually oriented Tendai heresy which evolved under the influence of the Tachikawa schooland was particularly active during the heyday of missan Zen in the sixteenth century. The sect was popular on Mount Hiei in the late Middle Ages and was not outlawed till 1694. Apparently influenced by Zen, its transmission involved the giving of "koans" and the secret bestowal of "inka," while incorporating Yin-yang-style interpretations of Tendai doctrine. At times, Pure Land, Shinto, and even Confucian elements were incorporated in syncretic missancho, related to one another and to Buddhism and Zen in the form of elaborate "correspondences" that could be represented diagrammatically. Though it is not possible to judge their overall importance , such transmissions were apparently being carried out during the Sengoku and Tokugawa periods. Recorded in missancho of both Rinzai and Soto teaching lines, they may well represent the most radical extremes of syncretism in Medieval Japanese Zen.

# How a Comic Book led me to the Zen Institute

by Naomi J. Reyes

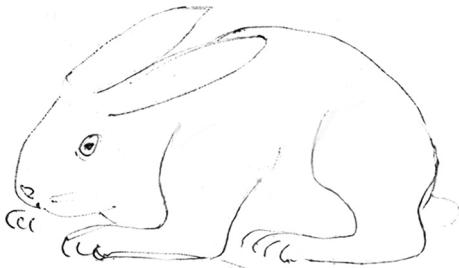
People come to Zen in many ways. Sometimes they're seeking, sometimes a friend introduces them, and sometimes they just walk by the building and get curious. I found Zen twice – when I was younger and my dad took me to Zen meditation at the university, and in a comic book. One of my best friends gave me Kabuki – The Alchemy- by David Mack during an extremely tumultuous time in my life – my dear father had just been killed by my mother, and I had dropped out of engineering school to both get a break and to pursue fashion design. *The Alchemy* is not your average super-hero, beat-em-up comic... it is actually the last chapter in a story about a fictional Japanese black ops agent. With the help of the mysterious letter-writer Akemi, she escapes a world of killing for a living to ultimately become a children's book author. The book is more like a portable gallery of watercolor collages, poetry, and David Mack's various treatises on the Artist's Way. It helped steel my resolve to come to New York and study fashion design as I had always dreamed.

After I moved to New York, I was flipping through *The Alchemy* and my eyes fell upon one of the many fan letter envelopes David Mack incorporated within the pages. The return address read "First Zen Institute of America". I realized that the address was mere blocks from my new abode, and in an unusual fit of bold curiosity, I walked over. When I came to the weekly open house, I was delighted to meet so many interesting people who have dedicated their time to studying Zen... as well as some interesting background to the comic. It turns out that Mr. Mack and Miss Fumiko, the granddaughter of the founder, Sokei-an, had exchanged letters for a while. In fact, some of the folks at the Zen Institute remembered David, but they had no idea they'd made it into his comic book! I started coming every week, making it part of my routine of rest, learning more. I wrote David a letter, telling him what I'd learned... which ultimately led to us meeting! It was amazing to talk casually with someone who had inspired me so much. I am so thankful that this book and the Institute came together to give me new friends and one more perspective on life and the mind.

## The Cover

The coverpicture is a scroll of Manjusri, gifted to the First Zen Institute by the late Anthony Tudor who was a former president of the Institute.

These wabbit ears are confused...  
Tuned to 2011, but picking up 2010?  
The thwee times are truly mysterious...



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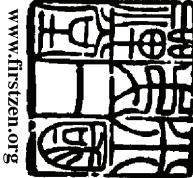
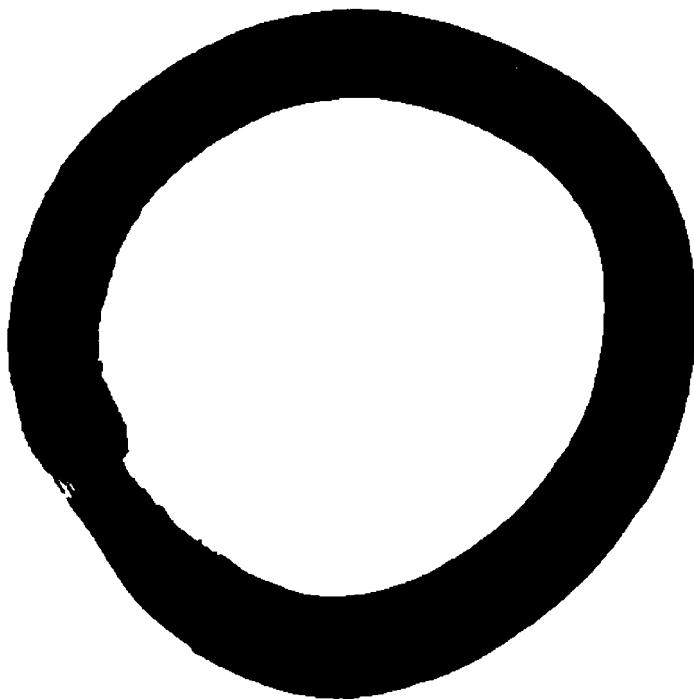
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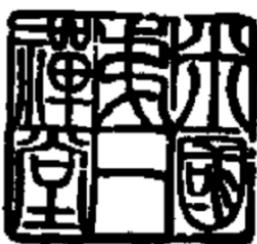


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