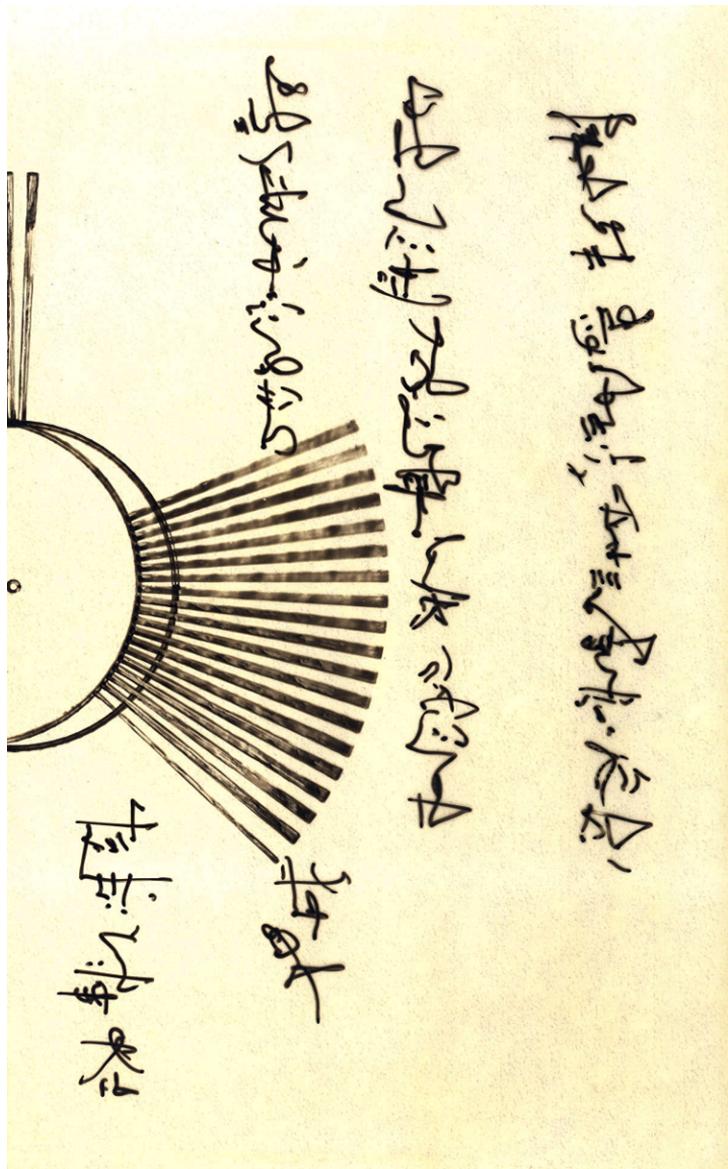


ZEN NOTES



{ ... }

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FIFTY-SIXTH LECTURE

Wednesday October 26th, 1939

Thereupon Bodhisattva Vimalamatih arose from his seat among the multitude and worshipped the Buddha, reverently lifting the Buddha's feet to his brow and going around him three times to the right. Then, kneeling down and crossing his hands upon his breast, he entreated the Buddha:

"O Lokanatha Mahakaruna! Grant us, we beg, the privilege of hearing your sermon upon supernatural matters of which we have never had any perception. Having been favored with your compassionate guidance, we now feel that our minds and bodies have become calm and immobile, receiving great benefit. For the sake of the multitude assembled here from all directions, we pray that we may once more be granted the privilege of hearing about the nature of the Perfect Awakening of the king of Dharma and how we can understand the distinction between the state of awakening of sentient beings and the Bodhisattvas and that of the Tathagata."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

This is the sixth chapter of this sutra; it is about the questions asked of the Buddha by Bodhisattva Vimalamatih. I shall take this opportunity to speak a little more about the arrangement of this sutra.

The first Bodhisattva to ask a question was Manjushri, who represents the first cause. The first cause is intrinsic wisdom, the nature of which is emptiness. We call it "Shunyata"—this form of emptiness—in other words "nothing." But this nothing is different from that "nothing" which is relative to "something."

From the aspect of the world, there are two verities; something and nothing. But this Shunyata covers both; it is the so-called "out of the world view." I shall repeat once more. From the worldly view, we see two appearances: one is existence and the other is no-existence. We could call it zero and one.

But there is one more view which is called Shunyata, nothingness, emptiness. This view covers both existence and non-

existence—it is the transcendental view. So this absolute view (Emptiness) is the view taken by the Zen student; it is not the view taken by the man of the world. The view in the world and the view beyond the world must be discriminated! This Nothingness, this intrinsic wisdom, can be perceived by our pure intuition only. Our five senses fail to perceive that state.

Therefore, Manjushri's real state of wisdom is attained through pure intuition. The emptiness of this state is absolute emptiness. This is the most profound view of Buddhism—the very base of Buddhism. This world is existing upon this emptiness, and we are like sailors who are dancing upon the plank of the boat. Beneath the boat is absolute emptiness. It is called the gate of Bhutatathata in the first chapter of this sutra.

In our Zen study, the realization of this state is almost the last chapter! When you observe your first koan, if you begin to understand this state, then you will realize that you are standing in the sanctuary of Zen. And then you will walk in deeper—into the real understanding of Zen. The real conception of Emptiness is entirely different from the conception of the world.

The second Bodhisattva is Samantabhadra—wisdom itself. This is the intuitive wisdom that knows Manjushri's native state. So Samantabhadra represents the only wisdom in the universe. It is epistemological wisdom which proves the state of ontology. When you come into Zen you prove the state of Dharmakaya, but that state is unconscious. When you attain the eye of Samantabhadra, you see the real state of Dharmakaya. When this Eye is turned to the outside, then it is called the "All-seeing Eye."

The third Bodhisattva is Samantanetra. When you attain the wisdom which opens to the phenomenal world, for the first time in your life you realize that there is one more intuition which faces to the true Dharmakaya state. You see this side, and realizing this side, you will now turn to the great emptiness and then again to this world. Now you see both sides—this and that—and you have attained what we call the "Diamond Pestle." Like "mortar and pestle" it crushes all doubt.

The fifth Bodhisattva is Maitreya. He appears by the knowledge gained from penetrating the four stages. He represents the compassion for deluded human beings, and he asks the Buddha about transmigration and how they may free themselves from the endless round (birth and death).

Now the sixth, Vimalamatih, appears. He asks a question about pure wisdom. Why pure wisdom? Because it is the state of Emptiness, but does not attach to this state. Because, when it is in this

world, it is not stained by this world. It is by this Pure Wisdom that the Bodhisattva transforms himself into various appearances in this world and saves sentient beings from their agony—destroying their sufferings by the original Dharma. But in this state of Pure Wisdom, the Bodhisattva himself has no purpose. This is explained in the Maha-prajna-paramita Sutra. When he gives something, he gives nothing. And when he gives nothing to sentient beings, he is giving everything. You must understand this. To him, this performance of "giving" is not his own. Who gives? Nobody! Who receives? Nobody! As the Christ said, "When you give with your right hand, do not let your left hand know."

So these various Bodhisattvas, called by various names, each represent a standpoint of Mahayana Buddhism. In this sutra ten person appear and ask a question of the Buddha. Of course these profound principles of Buddhism cannot be explained in words. Each state must be realized through meditation and sanzen.

"O Lokanatha Mahakaruna! Grant us, we beg, the privilege of hearing again your sermon upon supernatural matters of which we have never had any perception." —Never heard with this ear; never seen with this eye. What are these "supernatural matters?" These terms are very misleading.

When you attain the state of Manjushri, it will turn into the state of Samantabhadra; the state of Samantabhadra will turn into the state of Samantantra; this state will turn into the state of Vajra-garbha—then into the state of Maitreya. Now we come to the state of Vimalamatih. In all it will make ten turns, but nothing has been changed! It always possesses the same taste; as a causal state, as a state of "result," or as a central state. So many shades but always one state. Therefore, it is called "supernatural matter." It is neither good nor bad. It has always one flavor—sometimes appearing as good, sometimes as bad. In the human mind, if it is good it cannot be bad and vice versa—this is the usual view.

But the view of the Bodhisattva is as a mirror reflecting another mirror—but no shadows are reflected. As the mirror turns there is the state of this and that. With this knowledge all doubt disappears. With this knowledge, observing this and that at the same time, one can go into the burning hell and into the freezing hell without ever being touched. This is Vimalamatih. He is like a mirror, like an actor who plays many roles but who remains the same. I love Zen because I can enjoy all these viewpoints. No other religion can bring such joy, such delight, such subtle views.

"Having been favored with your compassionate guidance, we now feel that our minds and bodies have become calm and immobile, receiving great benefit." —Anyone who discovers this kind

of teaching certainly will have the desire to hand it down to endless posterity.

"For the sake of the multitude assembled here from all directions, we pray that we may once more be granted the privilege of hearing about the nature of the Perfect Awakening of the king of Dharma;" —This Buddhism is too profound for their perception! The King of Dharma, Shakyamuni Buddha, created two gates to build the system of Buddhism and then he destroyed the whole system! He built Buddhism, destroyed Buddhism, and thus made Buddhism complete. He built it with the concepts of the Shravaka and Pratyeka Buddhas and then put it into eternal emptiness. He destroyed it.

When you work with a koan, you build your own Buddhism. And then, you take an advanced koan, you destroy all that you have built! You enjoy building it, but it is more enjoyable to destroy it. Now, you will understand the state of the King of Dharma.

"... How we can understand the distinction between the state of awakening of sentient beings and the Bodhisattvas and that of the Tathagata.. " —By your own experience, how can you know that your understanding is exactly the same as that of the Buddha? This is the question which was asked by Pure Wisdom. The state which you attain is, according to your capacity, in four or five different forms. The Buddha speaks of four states—but it is actually just one state. I shall explain this some other time. There are certain things too profound to speak before a new audience.

TWENTY-FIVE KOANS:

(TWELFTH KOAN)

Delivered by Sokei-an, March 26th, 1938

Once Etsu of Tosotsu made three barriers of questions to test the monks' attainments.

First: “Your explanation of mystery along the path buried under the weeds is only for the purpose of finding reality in your soul.”

Second: “If you find the reality of your soul, you can liberate yourself from the state of birth and death. How do you deliver yourself from the moment when the light of your eyes drops to the ground?” [Meaning the agony of death].

Third: “If you are delivered from the state of birth

and death, you will know where to go. Where do you go when the four great elements disperse?"

Mujin made three poems in reply to these questions:
[Sokei-an: He was one of the famous laymen of Buddhism].

I

*A cuckoo cried in the dark summer wood;
When the sun breaks through the floating clouds
the sky becomes serene.*

*Do not ask Sosan about Soseki.
It is customary for the good son not to speak
his father's name.*

II

*The messenger of hell comes and takes men.
The flowers of the angel's crown also withers.
Now is the time to transfigure yourself
But do not let the King of Hell know of it.*

III

*The funeral drums sound for the wife of Li of the eastern village
Through the fields in the western wind go the mourners,
their robes wet with tears.*

*In the green reeds and red weeds on the southern shore of the
river
The mourners sow chosan and angle with their rods.*

Sokei-an:

In the Zen temple these answer will be observed in *sanzen*. The answer itself is a koan. I shall give a brief commentary on these koans.

This Etsu of Tosotsu was a monk of about the eleventh century. He was the fifteenth generation from Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch. These three are famous Zen questions that all students observe today. They are very important koans.

In the Sixth Patriarch's time the monks asked questions of the teacher. For instance: "What is the Buddha?" Or, "Has a dog the Buddha-nature?" Today the Zen teacher will test the monk when he comes to the temple to make his entrance: "Whence do you come?" "I came from such and such a part." "What line of Buddhism have you studied?" "I have studied primitive Buddhism." One teacher said: "What do you mean, primitive Buddhism?" "I mean Buddhism which was not developed." "O, you go home! I have no time to speak anymore. Get out! What do you mean! Primitive Buddhism is quite deep!" The teacher gives such opportunity, but the pupil's brain is so dull he thinks it is all a usual statement. Such a monk is no good for a Zen test. Get out

of here!

A monk asked Ummon, "What is Buddha?" He answered: "A muck-rake!" These catechisms of ancient day were used in the Sung dynasty. And the Japanese accepted the Zen of that time. And after the Sung dynasty came the Yuan and Ming -- three periods of civilization. And today the Japanese are keeping Zen as fresh as it had come from the Sung dynasty. Nothing is changed! So you are studying the same fashion of Zen from the Sung dynasty of the tenth, eleventh, twelfth centuries.

In the 12th century Europe was dark. The Mongols invaded Europe to Russia, Hungary, Persia, and Syria. Of course the Roman Empire was torn and there was much trouble... Buddhism was carried into Western countries at that time. In Constantinople and Bagdad, Christian and Buddhist monks were living side by side. Etsu was in the 11th century. So, now you understand the period in which he lived.

Osho Etsu made three barriers of questions to test the monk's attainments. First: "Your exploration of mystery along the path buried under the weeds."... This is the Chinese way of speaking. In your way of speaking you would say "Your investigation of esoteric Buddhism," or, "Your investigation of Madame Blavatsky's mysticism" which was that in the night angels came and changed the flowers in the vases and in the morning they would say, "What is this mystery of Madame Blavatsky!" This "exploration of mystery" is your exploration. And this "mystery" is difficult. It can be translated "seeking the path in the weeds," and also "to search the truth through the weeds of your brain." So this simple line has many double meanings.

"Only for the purpose of finding the reality of your soul." There isn't such a word in the Orient as "soul." People in the Occident think the soul is a green fire, jack-o'-lantern, that lives in graveyards by tombstones, and will embody it at the Judgment Day. NO! We don't think so. In Sanskrit there is a word, "*jnana*." It is translated in English as "consciousness." But "consciousness" is not correct, so in English I translate this word as "soul." *"The reality of your soul!"* I have explored this so many times, so I will not explain it tonight. We call it the reality of your soul. But to those who follow objective religion, wherein God is on the outside, not esoteric or subjective religion, the reality of the soul is God. Exoteric religions have God. Esoteric religions have reality of our soul. We become monks and give up family life, desire, eating fine food, wearing beautiful clothes because we desire to find what is the reality of our soul.

"If you find the reality of your soul..." You will say, "My sou-

lis here.“ Inside of your stomach? Don’t lie to me! “In my brain?” Do you think you have a soul in sawdust? Don’t be foolish! “At this moment”...it can be divided almost infinitely. What do you mean ‘At this moment?’ So, “*If you find the reality of your soul you can liberate yourself from the state of birth and death.*” Of course you can be emancipated so. But how? How do you deliver yourself from the moment when the light of your eyes drops to the ground?” This means the last moment of your life, when you cannot see, cannot hear, and cannot touch... when your hands and feet are numb. You think and that activity ceases; the blood is going out like the pouring out of water. Father and mother can hear voices, but they fade. They hold hands, hold feet, but they become dull and senseless.

I have experienced what I am talking about. You have to think in that moment that you die ignorant, like the dog and cat. Such questions must be solved before death. Do not forget that the human creature is a creature of wisdom.

Then Etsu directly asked the next question: “*If you are delivered from the state of birth and death, you will know where to go. Where do you go when the four great elements disperse?*”... The physical body consists of the four elements, earth, fire, water, and air. Today the chemists recognize many different elements, but in the ancient way of thinking there were four great elements and ether. When they scatter where do you go? This is a deep question.

When you pass these three koans your own salvation is done. You can help somebody else, but before you save yourself, how can you save others? And now I will explain these three briefly because of limited time.

Mujin made three poems in answer to these questions:

I

*A cuckoo cries in the dark summer wood.
When the sun breaks through the floating clouds
the sky becomes serene.
So do not ask Sosan about Soseki.
It is customary for the good son not to speak
his father's name.*

I don’t know your cuckoo, but in the Orient our cuckoo cries just like the tearing of silk [imitates]. We see the moon, but not the cuckoo, because it flies so fast. Not like that cuckoo in clocks [imitates]. No, not like that!

“*Sky becomes serene*” --true sunyata.-- “*Do not ask Sosen about Soseki*”... Sosan was a child and his father was Soseki. He

was a good child and loved his father very deeply. He did not like to talk about him. I myself do not say "Mr. Sasaki." I say "my father." I think it is true that the good son does not like to speak his father's name, as you Christians don't talk much about God. This is similar to how we don't talk much about reality, as there is no way to talk about it.

II

*The messenger of hell comes and takes men
The flowers of the angel's crown also wither.
Now is the time to transfigure yourself
But do not let the King of Hell know of it.*

This is the famous story of the Lord of Hell who sent a messenger to a monk to take him down to hell. The monk had no time to prepare and asked for three days in which to attain enlightenment.

"Well, I suppose it will be all right. I will ask the Lord of Hell," said the messenger, and went back. When he heard it, the King of Hell said to the demon, "Go back quickly! He will attain enlightenment and then you cannot find him anymore!" The demon went back and looked at every face. He could not find the monk anymore, in terms of usual knowledge, names or in the form of any figures. So... "Don't let the King of Hell know about it."

The Christian is very subtle. "God is living outside of me and he created the universe outside of me." But where is the outside? It means outside of your knowledge. It is stated in a very friendly fashion, but most Christians don't understand. I wish to see a Christian who understands this.

III

*The funeral drum sounds for the wife of Li of the eastern village
Through the fields in the western wind go the mourners, their robes
wet with tears.-- I was in Northern China and saw drums and crying men often. You can find this in Chinatown today. Today it is a profession with professional crying and professional tears...*

Then he sketches something entirely different from this:
*In the green reeds and red weeds on the southern shore of the river
The mourners sow chosan and angle with their rods.*

When the four great elements are dispersed, where do you go?

Rang bell

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. The previous sections, therefore, concerned Japanese Zen during the late middle ages, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. "Tokugawa Zen" deals with the Zen of Bankei's own period and how it emerged amid the changed conditions of the new age. The Tokugawa period, which lasted from approximately 1600 to 1867, was of key importance in the development of Rinzai and Soto Zen as we know them today, and many of the features of Japanese Zen that we now take for granted evolved during the more than two and one half centuries of rule by the Tokugawa shoguns. Bankei's age, the seventeenth century, is a particular focus of this section. Bankei was an original and highly individual teacher, but as will be seen, he shared many characteristics with other Zen teachers of his day, not least the very originality and individualism of his approach. The concluding section, "Bankei's Story," will detail Bankei's biography and the manner in which he arrived at his distinctive teaching of the unborn Buddha Mind

TOKUGAWA ZEN (Part III, #2)

(Continued from the Summer'10 Zen Notes)

Buddhism Under the Tokugawas

Despite the anti-Buddhist bias of many Neo Confucian officials, the Buddhist establishment was treated by the Bakufu (military government) in much the same manner as other important elements of the polity; strictly regulated in every detail and integrated within the structure of the feudal system. With the exception of certain Confucian-inspired extremists, the government's main interest was in controlling and dominating rather than destroying the great temple organizations. Once the leading Buddhist groups had acknowledged the authority of the Bakufu, their legitimacy was confirmed in much the same manner as was the legitimacy of the various feudal lords within their domains.

The power of the militant Buddhist sects of the sixteenth century had, in fact, rivaled that of many Sengoku daimyo. The monastic armies of the great Shingon and Tendai temples as well as the forces fielded by the Pure Land and Nichiren sects were important power brokers in the volatile politics of the day, and like the contending warlords themselves, these groups presented serious obstacles to the task of unification. Nobunaga destroyed Enryakuji, the Tendai headquarters temple on Mount Hiei, in 1571 and succeeded in subjugating the forces of the Pure Land sect and of certain militant Nichiren groups. His efforts were continued by Hideyoshi, who disarmed the monasteries and attempted to permanently remove their potential for military activity by emphasizing strict discipline and encouraging Buddhist scholarship. At the same time, both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi were responsible for a massive confiscation of the vast estates that had formed the economic foundation of the temples' power since the Middle Ages.

Ieyasu, too, had been obliged to contend with the machinations of the powerful Buddhist temples, many of which had sided with the Toyotomi against the Tokugawas in hope of recovering their former privileges and estates. Once Ieyasu had consolidated his rule he immediately set out to restrict the power of the major Buddhist establishments through a series of Bakufu edicts. The initial edicts, appearing in 1601, were directed at the individual great temples of each sect, beginning with Enryakuji on Mount Hiei and including Daitokuji and Myoshinji. A second group of edicts from 1615 to 1616 addressed each sect as a whole rather than particular temples, and by the time of Ieyasu's death in 1616, edicts had been issued for nearly all the major schools, including the Tendai, Shingon, Soto, Rinzai and Nichiren sects. In 1665, this piecemeal approach was abandoned by the Bakufu, and two comprehensive edicts were issued whose provisions were made universal for all the schools of Buddhism.

Together, the edicts served to articulate the Bakufu policy on Buddhism, creating a nationwide system of administration for Japan's Buddhist establishment. The principal architect of this system was Ieyasu's advisor Isshin Suden (1569-1633) of the Konchiin, a Gozan monk who had masterminded Tokugawa policy in many areas and had even served Ieyasu as a military tactician. The various edicts devised by Suden aimed in large part at depriving the Buddhist establishments of whatever independent authority they had enjoyed in the Middle Ages by subjecting them to a variety of rigorous controls. The temples were forbidden to lodge direct petitions or to conspire politically and were even denied such symbolic vestiges of ecclesiastical privilege as the right to receive imperial honors directly from the emperor. Such honors had now to be submitted for review and approval by the Bakufu, a measure aimed at curtailing the independence not only of the great temples but of

the emperor and the court themselves, viewed as threats to the Bakufu's monopoly of power. Similarly, temple construction had to be authorized by either the *han*, or domainal, governments or the Bakufu, with new construction limited or proscribed by various edicts throughout the seventeenth century. Even procedures for such internal temple affairs as the appointment of abbots, succession, qualifications for priesthood and for temple office, transmission, lectures, and fund raising were specified in the edicts.

As Hideyoshi had done, the Tokugawa Bakufu also exhorted the priesthood to pursue scholarly activities, which the military government appears to have perceived as an antidote to other possibly subversive pursuits. As a result, Buddhist scholarship flourished during the Tokugawa period. Within each sect were established academies known as *danrin* or *gakuryo*, where monks were expected to spend a number of years in the course of their novitiate. The content of the curriculum, however, was circumscribed by the government. In theory, at least, the academies were restricted to studying the teachings of their own school, and attacks on other sects were strictly forbidden. The contents of the schools' teachings themselves were included within the purview of the government's authority. Certain heterodox Buddhist teachings were proscribed by the Bakufu, and monks were forbidden to teach any strange or new creeds or to contradict their preceptors. The edicts for each sect stress the importance of observing temple precedent, the methods of conduct and practice sanctified by tradition, a reflection of the Bakufu's general goal of ensuring stability by maintaining the "status quo."

Initially, at least, the government recognized the differences between the sects, and in framing the various edicts, Suden invited each of the headquarters temples to submit its own draft. These documents frequently served as the basis for the edicts themselves, which thus reflected the interests of the headquarters temples as well as those of the government. In fact, the Bakufu's hierarchical system of administering the Buddhist sects was by no means wholly inimical to the great Buddhist temples, whose status was enhanced in certain respects, if considerably diminished in others.

Generally speaking, the Buddhist organizations were subordinated to government control by establishing clear lines of authority within each sect and between the sects and the Bakufu. The machinery of Bakufu-temple relations involved both secular and ecclesiastical officials. Superintending the entire system of temples and shrines were seventeen samurai commissioners known as *jisha bugyo*. They were assisted by nineteen *furegashira*, eminent priests who acted as intermediaries between the Bakufu and the Buddhist sects and resided in powerful Edo temples known as *furegashirain*. The *furegashira* for the Rinzai sect bore the title of

soroku, evidently an allusion to the Gozan system of the Ashikaga period.

Within the Buddhist sects themselves, the principle form of organization was the so called *honmatsu* system, based on the relationship between a sect's headquarters and branch temples, known respectively as *honji* and *matsuji*. This approach reflected the Bakufu's basic strategy of imposing on important social groups hierarchical systems in which the structure of authority, and therefore of responsibility, was clearly indicated. A feudal order of sorts was reproduced within each major Buddhist organization, with the temples of each sect obliged by the Bakufu to define their standing as either main temples or branch temples, subject to a designated main temple. The *matsuji* were placed under the control of the *honji*, which in turn were subject to the Bakufu and responsible for any problems within their particular organization.

The *honmatsu* system had its origins in the Middle Ages, when it was adopted by the Ashikaga Bakufu for the Zen temples of the Gozan and by certain Ikko and Nichiren groups for their own internal needs. Sect headquarters temples were also established by the Sengoku daimyo within their domains, and a process of restructuring temple organization on the *honmatsu* model had been initiated by Hideyoshi. Not until the Tokugawa period, however, did a comprehensive main and branch system evolve, encompassing all the temples of a given sect throughout Japan. Between 1632 and 1633, the temples of the leading Buddhist sects were required to submit registers which were statements of affiliation that precisely defined their standing within the sect's hierarchy, with the major temples being confirmed by the Bakufu as main temples and the subordinate temples ranked as branch temples. In fact, the system was highly complex, with three grades of main temples and three of branch temples. Various methods were followed in determining a temple's identity as a branch of a particular main temple. In the Soto school, for example, a temple could only qualify as a branch temple if it had been founded by the founder of the main temple or by one of his descendants. The founder was thus the key to the temple's status, a fact which tended to emphasize the importance of the temple line over the particular teaching line of the temple's abbot. It was frequently a problem to determine which temples were main and which were branch and wrangling continued between many temples over their respective positions. Despite the Bakufu's initial efforts, the connections between temples often remained unclear, and the system was not truly completed until the institution of a second, revised, comprehensive register in 1692. The 1692 register remained the standard evidence of temple affiliation throughout the Tokugawa period. It served also to provide a moratorium of sorts, recognizing the legitimacy of temples built in defiance of a government ban on temple construction that had

accompanied the original register of 1632-1633, and was thus designed to force temples which remained unaffiliated into the headquarters and branch structure of authority. Even so, official memoranda on the subject make it plain that disputes over the *honmatsu* status of certain temples continued well into the eighteenth century.

In many of the major Buddhist sects, the Bakufu established multiple main headquarters temples..Though such measures were aimed in part at fragmenting the power of the great medieval Buddhist organizations, they also reflected longstanding internal rivalries among leading temples of the sects themselves. The division of the Pure Land sect, for example, between the Eastern and Western bore witness not only to Tokugawa strategic concerns but to factional disputes that had been brewing within the Pure Land establishment. Similarly, Eiheiji and Sojiji were recognized as joint headquarters temples for the Soto school, continuing nevertheless to quarrel over questions of precedence. In the Rinzai school, too, such traditional rivals as Daitokuji, Myoshinji, and the Gozan temples were all recognized as separate organizations, with the Gozan placed under the leadership of Nanzenji. Perhaps the most notable example of this policy was the Tendai school, where Enryakuji--the school's de facto headquarters during the medieval period--was forced to share its position with two relatively recent temples situated in the Kanto, near the Bakufu's seat of power. These were the Tendai administered mausoleum at Nikko (Tochigi Prefecture), where Ieyasu was enshrined, and the Toeizan in Edo, which seems to have been regarded by the Bakufu as the sect's actual headquarters.

The headquarters temple played a powerful role in the life of the sect. It was generally the site of the founder's grave (as was the case with Myoshinji) or a temple that derived its authority from important connections with the sect's founders or revivifiers. Because of its unique standing and its relationship to the sect's founders, the headquarters temple had the right to perform important ceremonies that the branch temples were bound to attend. In addition, all ecclesiastical honors and appointments had to be approved and confirmed by the headquarters temple including imperial honors, requests for which had to pass through the headquarters temple's bureaucracy before being forwarded to the Bakufu and the court. As the highest teaching authority in the sect, the headquarters temple also supervised the education of the sect's monks, who were expected to train at the temple at least once during their novitiate, frequently for an extended period. Indeed, in order to become teachers in their own right, monks had to be authorized by the headquarters temple's officers. As a rule, the headquarters temples also held ultimate power over the appointment of abbots in the branch temples, as well as the power to dis-

cipline, dismiss, and even expel abbots and monks. Together with the the special priest who served as liaison with the government the headquarters temple wielded virtually absolute legal power over its subordinate temples, and its decisions on disputes and other questions regarding the sect had the power of law. Failure to obey the orders of the headquarters temple could lead to confiscation of a temple's estates, and severe punishments could be incurred by any members of the sect who ignored or contravened the main temple's authority.

The material obligations of the branch temples varied among the sects. As a rule, however, they could be called on to make financial contributions to the main temple when it lacked the resources necessary to a particular project, such as a special ceremony or a program of rebuilding or repair. With the system clearly weighted in favor of the headquarters temples, such demands on the branch temples could occasionally become extortionate, and the 1665 shogunal edit, while insisting on strict observance of the headquarters temples' authority, cautions them against behaving exploitatively toward their branch temples, a tacit recognition by the Bakufu of the headquarters and branch system's potential for abuse.

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Puddle Buddha

Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse XII, Lecture 4

“He who claims to have renounced the world must exert himself to acquire the knowledge of true Dharma, distinguishing between Buddha and mara, true and false, sacred and secular. When he can do this, he deserves to be called a world-renoucer. But if he is unable to discriminate between Buddha and mara, he is one who has merely renounced one worldly home for another. Call him a karma-maker, not a world-renoucer.”

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

As Buddhists we must know about what is called “The Buddha’s Great Cause.” That Shakyamuni Buddha renounced home life and became a recluse is not the important point for us. For the Buddhist, renouncing the world means to know our original nature. This is the foundation of our lives.

When you take *sanzen*, your Zen master will give you the question: “Before father and mother, what were you?” If you think and philosophize to answer this question, your answer is a concept you have manifested to identify Reality and your original nature, but your answer is not original nature. Therefore, to find your original nature you must use a method entirely different from philosophizing. Original nature is not a concept. It is, to use another word, buddha-nature.

This question was the great cause for which the Buddha renounced the world. Were you there or not? If not, you could not be here. If you are here, you must have been there. If you think you were there, what were you? In Buddhism our study from the beginning to the end, from the time of entering the temple as a novice to the time of coming out as a teacher—whatever we study—is reduced to this one point: to know our buddha-nature.

A monk in China asked Chao-chou Ts’ung-shen [778-896], a famous Zen master: “Does a dog possess buddha-nature?” Chao-chou said: “MU!”—NO!

If you try to understand this by reasoning, you will never understand. It is just one word, but it includes a million meanings all

reduced to this one word, "NO!"

In a legend, Brahma created the first *bija* sound, the diamond sound of AH. In Sanskrit, "AH" means "none," "negative," "no." The priests of the mantra sect say that AH is in every word, that it was there when God was there, and that it will always be there. A Zen master may ask you, "What was before AH?" All these questions point to original nature. Buddhism is not hard to study; it is as simple as your hand, clear as the sound of a silver bell.

In Buddha's time one of the great questions was the cause of the universe. Today, we know that the earth is round and how the solar system was created. But in the Buddha's time, it was thought the earth was flat, that the stars were the spirits of dead men having some connection with the souls living on earth, that the sun was no larger than the earth, and that the moon was not a dead planet. They thought that water supported the earth and that the water was supported by a whirling wind. Mount Sumeru was in the water with sun and moon circling it, and the water was dammed up by an iron mountain. This was the concept of the world at the time of the Buddha. But the Buddha thought our world was only one of a million worlds.

Today, when we observe anything, we analyze it into atoms and electrons and prove the original substance materially. We know that all the varied forms of the sentient and the insentient worlds reduce to one essential substance. We have no doubt of this. Even primary school children know it. If we compare this with the belief of the Buddhists, we can find no difference between them.

In the future a religion based purely on scientific thinking will be created. Even now, if the scientists would grasp original nature as a living substance rather than dead, they would be in agreement with us. But I fear that when the future faith comes to the human being, he will have forgotten to love and to worship. Perhaps that will be the sign for the Buddha of the future to appear—Maitreya, the Buddha of love.

Lin-chi is saying that if a Buddhist has no understanding of original nature, he is a mere toiler, a man of the world, not a real recluse. But the one who understands, though in the world, is a true recluse, a true renouncer of the world. So it is our task to find the first great cause of the universe and of man. How to live, how to teach and cure are just branches of the creative Law or *Dharma*. When one understands buddha-nature, he renounces two secular "homes." Our one body is living in two homes. One is that relating to our relatives—father, mother, wife, and so forth; and the other is our mind-stuff.

Mind and mind-stuff must be discriminated from each other. Mind is fire and mind-stuff is a lump of coal. Of course, if there is no coal there is no fire, so without mind-stuff we cannot prove the mind. If you discriminate mind from mind-stuff, you will know buddha-nature. It is very simple to know. Mind-stuff is home and mind is master, so mind without mind-stuff is Buddha. There is no fire if there is no wood, but wood and fire are not the same thing. When wood is reduced to ashes, the fire expires; when mind-stuff is annihilated, you return to nirvana, to total annihilation. Then you will understand buddha-nature—"Ah! I see." You need not take a long time; understanding can come in a moment, but you must do it yourself. It is not necessary to sit in long meditation. Just pay attention, and at any moment—"Ah!" Like the monk who swept a pebble against a bamboo trunk and in the sound of its striking—"Ah! Yes, I understand!"

Real substance, that is it. So if you exterminate mind-stuff, the first mind returns to you. You have renounced the physical home and the mental home; they are two dead houses.

The Buddha said these two homes are a corpse with no living soul, no understanding of buddha-nature. Such are the living dead of which Christ spoke: "Let the dead bury the dead." If you renounce these two homes, it doesn't matter whether you wear robes or ordinary clothes, no difference whether you recite the sutras or read a newspaper. If you find original nature, you are a real recluse. The Buddha taught that this was preferable to withdrawal into the mountains. But one who leaves the physical home to enter a temple but does not leave his mental home is a recluse of the body but not of the soul. He may shave his head and wear robes but keep his wife and children in the temple and keep his mind-stuff. Such a one will never know buddha-nature; he is just an undertaker, that is all. There will be an army of donkeys in his temple!

If you understand buddha-nature, you will discriminate easily between Buddha and *mara*. We all come from the root of *maya*; we are all children of *Maya* the "creatress." As her children, we did not pass through man and woman whose nature is animal. This is the meaning of the "virgin birth."

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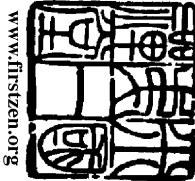
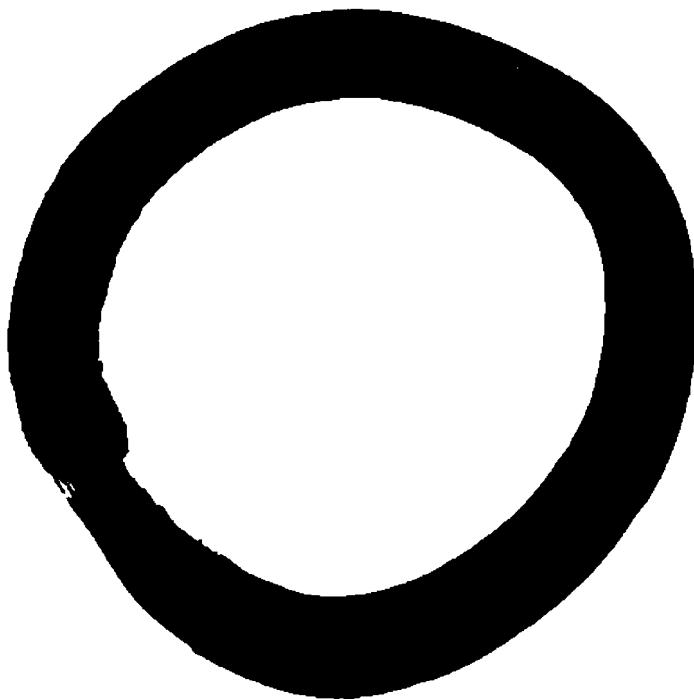
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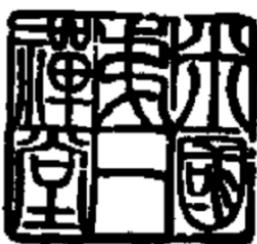


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