



SEIKO MORNINGSTAR
ZENBRUSH
2012

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FIFTY-SEVENTH LECTURE

Wednesday November 1st, 1939

"... and how we can make the sentient beings of the future world hear this holy teaching and grasp its true significance, that they may be able to enter the state of awakening step by step in conformity with your teaching."

Thus Bodhisattva Vimalamatih entreated the Buddha, repeating these words three times over and casting himself upon the ground in profound salutation.

Then Lokanatha spoke to Vimalamatih:

"Very well, very well, Obedient One! You have asked me, in the name of all the Bodhisattvas and of the sentient beings of the future world, to tell you how Tathagata draws gradual distinctions between the various grades of awakening. Now listen to me attentively and I will explain it to you."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The important lines translated here for the lecture tonight are the last lines: "How Tathagata draws gradual distinctions between the various grades of awakening." These lines contain the principle for the lecture. It is the Buddha's answer to Vimalamatih's question: "How can we understand the distinctions between your enlightenment, and the enlightenment of the Bodhisattvas and men in the world?" These distinctions were explained in the last lecture, but I shall repeat it again tonight.

People think that the awakening of the Buddha must differ from that of the usual man. But the Buddha, in replying to Vimalamatih's question, said that there is no enlightenment which is different from the enlightenment of the Buddha. Everyone attains the same enlightenment. There are no different states of enlightenment; the states of enlightenment are one in the world.

I give you a koan and you answer it. Later, you may become discouraged and say, "Oh, I solved a koan for Sokei-an but I was not enlightened!" or "Sokei-an talks about enlightenment but I have passed several koans." They blame the koans. They don't blame themselves. "I gave Sokei-an the right answer to the koan

but I am not enlightened! I didn't get anything from it. There is no Zen in it!"

Well, here is a glass of cold water. If I have a bad tooth, the water is painful but if I have a fever, it is soothing. Yet it is the same water. The soldier dying on the battlefield will cry out for water but the one who is at a party, "I don't want water, give me wine!" It is the same water but the taste is different. So, it is always the same koan, but according to the man, it is different.

"Is there real Zen in Japanese translations? Can you find Zen in China?" Zen is everywhere, and the Great Enlightenment is at any moment.

A man who has no enlightened nature cannot attain enlightenment by passing a koan. You must understand this and know that there are no different awakenings and no distinctions between the awakenings of the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, and man. According to the capacity of each—he sees it all; he is the corner of it. A pupil may pass all the koans which a teacher gives and the teacher will say, "You have passed all the koans which I have, but the matter of enlightenment is yours. I cannot give you enlightenment."

The people who come to my place open the eye very slightly—just as, during the night, a mosquito bites him and he awakes for a moment—then falls asleep once more. His eyes may be kept open in the bright sunlight, but his mind may be sleeping all the time. If you seek enlightenment, watch for your own fault before you blame Zen or the Zen master.

"... and how we can make the sentient beings of the future world hear this holy teaching and grasp its true significance, that they may be able to enter the state of awakening step by step in conformity with your teaching." —You have just gone around Buddhism! You may have read some sutra and have thought you understood it but you have never entered it! When you come here and stay for many years with me, you will recognize those who are standing outside of Buddhism and those who have opened the eye and entered.

When you understand the true significance of Buddhism, you will follow step by step. There is no inside, no outside. All is written in it; when you have the eye, you can read it. When you read the sutra you must have the eye to see the meaning.

When we come to the Zen school, according to the rules of practice, if the teacher says, "You must meditate for three years!" we meditate for three years. If the teacher says, "Observe this koan until you vanish from the quilt upon which you are sitting" then,

"Teacher, if I practice this for a long, long time, can I become truly nonexistent, can I truly lose myself?" "Yes, you will come to the point when your whole figure vanishes." "Well then, I shall practice!" And he goes home and practices until he disappears.

When I was young, I was trained in such a way—meditated a long, long time until I understood. They did not tell me a lie—but at first I misunderstood their words. In Zen you must follow the teacher's words.

There is a story about a young man who went to a teacher of archery: "Please give me lessons in archery." "First you must study no winking for three years—then I will teach you archery."

After three years, the student came back, saying, "Please examine me."

The teacher drew his sword and flashed it close before the student's eyes. The student did not flinch.

"Yes, you understand. And next—you must observe the slightest thing there is."

The student went home and hung a tiny insect somewhere—an insect so small that at first he couldn't see it. But in half a year he could see its form—and after three years he could see it as the size of an umbrella!

He went back and told the teacher—who said, "You have finished your study of archery." This is following the method.

The Buddha said, "Observe the Twelve Nidanas from beginning to end and from end to beginning." One student observed the Five Skandhas—meditated upon the state of Rupa for three months—then upon Vedana for three months; he meditated upon all the states, repeating it for five years—and he attained.

When I lost my teacher, he went back to Japan and I was left alone in this country, I had no one to follow and I began to meditate upon the five Skandhas. Samsara—I could not seem to understand it. One day I took my dog to the beach; he barked at the waves as they rolled in on the beautiful ocean strand. I realized that all this was reflected on the mind of my dog—he felt it in the dog's samsara—and expressed it.

I meditated upon samsara for many months. I watched the autumn foliage leave the trees; one leaf on a tree-top waved to me like a hand—"I am going away, I am going away. Goodbye, winter has come." Samsara! You cannot attain Buddhism all of a sud-

den, you must follow somebody's steps.

Thus Bodhisattva Vimalamatih entreated the Buddha, repeating these words three times over and casting himself upon the ground in profound salutation. He knows the value of the teaching.

Then Lokanatha spoke to Vimalamatih: "Very well, very well, Obedient One! You have asked me in the name of all the Bodhisattvas and of the sentient beings of the future world, to tell you how Tathagata draws gradual distinctions between various grades of awakening. Now listen to me attentively and I will explain it to you." My students of many years realize that there are many stages in awakening—gradual, ascending. The most important stage which you must know is this:

When you enter Buddhism, you enter inside of awakening but you cannot prove that you are there. Everyone passes through this stage: your eyes are open and everything is exactly as before-- the sky is blue, the water is green, the earth is brown. You are existing just as before but the thoughts have left you. You cannot think any more and you cannot express anything in words; you feel that you are standing like an idiot in the center of the universe.

This is the first stage. You cannot prove your mind, your state or your knowledge but you know there is nothing to say. Everything IS, your heart is palpitating and you must eat, drink, work. But there is no emptiness. You have read about the eighteen emptinesses in the sutra but no emptiness appears. You feel as before but you are quietly standing in it. Then you realize that you must find a teacher and prove your state of enlightenment. So the first stage is very important.

But the second stage is still more important. Perhaps you will pass your koan and say, "Sokei-an said 'All right' but I don't get anything yet." Well, some day, when you drop the dishes on the floor—"Oh! It was right!" You go to the teacher, and he explains one by one the stages you are experiencing—in terms of Buddhism. Now you really understand!

Yes, there are grades of awakening and the Buddha draws distinction. Therefore, a good friend, a good teacher, is very important when the student enters Buddhism.

A man who lives in New York can lose his way in the Bronx. You have to know where you are. Before you know this, you are in the stage called "The black cow sleeping in the pitch darkness."

There are five stages of Zen enlightenment.

SIX VERSES FROM ZENRIN KUSHU IN THEIR ORIGINAL SETTINGS

Translated into English by Ruth Fuller Sasaki

As I have stated previously (cf. Zen Notes, Vol.III, No.4 April 1956) the quotations comprising *Zenrin Kushu*, "A Zen Anthology" have been taken from numerous sources: the Chinese Classics, Chinese poetry, Chinese proverbs, as well as the writings and biographies of Chinese Zen masters.

In order to understand either the original meaning of these phrases and verses or the meaning given them in Zen, it is frequently necessary to be familiar with the context in which they occur. The Chinese Zen masters, in their writing, lecturing, or discussions with disciples, often drew upon their wide acquaintance with Chinese literature for apt illustrations of the points they wished to make; just as often a specific situation drew from them extemporaneous expressions in prose or verse which later generations have treasured for their lasting significance.

For the following six excerpts from *Zenrin Kushu* I have chosen examples of the latter case. I have not been able to trace the quotations to sources earlier than the contexts in which they appear here. Writing in parallel form is a characteristic of Chinese prose as well as poetry. It will be noted that the compiler of *Zenrin Kushu* has arranged in verse form expressions which originally were in prose; he has also occasionally changed the text slightly to conform to his scheme of compilation.

Though the quotations all have their own value and beauty, I feel sure they will take on a deeper meaning when read within the framework of the incidents which occasioned them. I have added no explanatory notes, but leave the texts as they are for you to read with your Zen eye, if you have one.

I

*Kimpu gyokkan o fuku
Nako ka kore chiin*

The golden wind blows on a pipe of jade
But who is there to appreciate the tune?

Rinzai reached Three Peaks. "Where have you come from?" asked Hyo Osho. "I have come from Obaku," said Rinzai "What does Obaku have to say?" asked Hyo.

"The golden ox suffered the smelter last night and no one has seen a trace of him since, " said Rinzai.

"The golden wind blows on a pipe of jade, but who is there to appreciate the tune?" asked Hyo.

"He passed straight through the myriad barriers, and did not halt in the clear empyrean," returned Rinzai.

"This investigation of yours is exceedingly lofty," said Hyo.

"The dragon has given birth to a golden phoenix that smashes the azure dome of heaven," said Rinzai.

"Sit down and have a cup of tea," said Hyo.

II

*Koko taru hocho ni tachi
Shinshin taru kaitei ni yuke*

Stand upon the summit of the peak, high, high!
Walk upon the bottom of the sea, deep, deep!

Ri Ko, the Prefect of Ro Prefecture, having long yearned for the profound teaching of Master Yakusan, repeatedly invited the Master to visit him, but the Master did not come. Finally Ko went himself to the Mountain to pay his respects to the Master.

The Master was holding a volume of sutras in his hand and did not look up. His attendant addressed him, saying: "The Prefect is here."

Ko, who was a quick-tempered man, said: "To hear the name is better than to see the face."

"Prefect!" exclaimed the Master.

"Yes, your reverence," responded Ko.

"How dare you esteem the ear and scorn the eye!" demanded the Master.

Ko saluted with folded hands and offered his apologies. Then he asked. "What is that which is Tao?"

The Master pointed above and below with his hand. Then he said: "Do you understand?"

"No," said Ko, "I do not understand."

"The clouds are in the heaven, the water is in the jar," said the

Master.

Ko was delighted with these words. Bowing deeply, he offered this verse:

*"He has trained his body to resemble that of a stork,
Beneath a thousand old pine trees are two boxes of sutras.
I came to ask about Tao. There were only these words:
'The clouds are in the heaven, the water is in the jar.'"*

"What are commandments, meditation, and wisdom?" Ko then asked.

"My room is without such useless furnishings," replied the Master.

Ko could not fathom the profound meaning of these words.

"Prefect," said the Master, "If you wish to acquire this thing, you must at once sit down upon the summit of the mountain high, high, and walk upon the bottom of the sea, deep, deep. If you do not succeed in getting rid of the furnishings of the inner apartments, the passions will continue to seep out."

Keitoku dento roku

III

*Tasukete wa dankyo no mizu o sugi
Tomonatte wa mugetsu no mura ni kaeru*

Supported by it,
I pass over the water by the broken bridge;
With it as my companion
I return to the moonless village.

Basho Osho, addressing the assembly, said: "If you had a staff, I would give you a staff. If you had no staff, I would take a staff away from you."

Mumon says: "Supported by it, I pass over the water by the broken bridge. With it as my companion, I return to the moonless village. If you were to call it a staff, you would go straight to hell with the speed of an arrow."

"The depth and the shallowness of the world. Both are within the palm of my hand. It supports heaven, it sustains earth; Everywhere it spreads the tidings of our sect."

IV

*Tenjo no tsuki o musabori mite
Shochu no tama o shikkyaku su*

While you gaze at the moon in the heavens
You have lost the pearl, in the palm of your hand.

Kaifuku Donei Zenji of Tanshu said to the assembly:: "Before he left the Tushita Heaven, he had already descended to the royal palace. Before he issued forth from his mother's womb, the salvation of men had already been completed."

"O , all you virtuous Zen men! Every day the sun rises from the eastern horizon, every morning at dawn the cock announces the fifth watch. The Peachflower Grotto is not here, yet when spring comes, peach blossoms fill the valleys."

He further said: "He who was born from his mother's right side in the Lumbini Garden, having encircled it in seven steps and swept the Four Quarters with his glance, [proclaimed:] 'In heaven and on earth I alone am the Honored One.'"

"It is like one who, while gazing at the moon in the heavens, has lost the pearl in the palm of his hand. Now, do you know where it is? If you know where it is, then you may be called filial sons and grandsons. If you don't yet know where it is, then I shall have to go on and on explaining."

He sat silent a little while, then continued: "Heavensent ability displays wondrous activity. Before you have made your appearance on the boards, you are already playing an inferior role."

Futo roku

V

*Kyoku owatte hito miezu
Kojo suho aoshi*

*The tune is ended, the man remains unseen,
Beyond the river a few peaks rise blue.*

Kempo, addressing the assembly, said: "When you raise up one, do not raise up two. If you let one go, it will fall into the second."

Ummon stepped forward and said: "Yesterday a man came from Tendai and went to Kinzan."

"When Kempo plucks the strings, Ummon recognizes the tune,"

said the Master. "But tell me, who is the one who appreciates it?
Do you understand?"

"The tune is ended, the man remains unseen.
Beyond the river a few peaks rise blue."

Zoku kosonshuku goroku

VI

*Kobe o ko sureba zansho ari
Moto kore jukyo no nishi*

Lifting up my head,
There is the evening glow;
From the beginning
It has been to the west of my dwelling.

The Perfect True Nature

Reaching the limit of the Principle words and feeling are
forgotten.
What is there to which to compare it?
Now at last the frosty night moon of itself falls into yonder
valley.
The ripening fruit grows heavy with the weight of the
monkeys,
The lengthening hills resemble a dimly seen road.
Lifting up my head, there is the evening glow;
From the beginning it has been to the west of my dwelling.

Hogen goroku

Ruth Fuller Sasaki
Ryosenan, Daitokuji
April 8, 1957

Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse XII, Lecture 5

“Now, if there were a Buddha-Mara inseparably embodied in one flesh—like the mixture of water and milk that the Goose King Hamsaraja drank from, of which he only drank the milk — he who has the clear Dharma eye can distinguish Buddha from Mara within that one flesh. But if you favor the sacred and abominate the secular, you sink or swim in the sea of life and death.”

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

If you examine Lin-chi's words carefully, you will see that he was trying to simplify the Buddhism of his time, which had become very complicated. He was really trying to popularize Buddhism so everyone in China might understand its true principle. But today, when we read this record, we feel as though we are climbing a mountain instead of coming down from its top to the town below. We realize that our time is an intellectual one compared with the Tang dynasty when such a simple Buddhism was being proclaimed. Such simplicity is difficult for our minds to understand. When I read this record, I always feel that if someone were to call “Ah!” and another were to answer “Ah!” that would be the whole story of Lin-chi's Buddhism. Perhaps we might find someone with such a simple mind in the American Far West. In the deep woods where no ax has touched a tree, if we were to call to him, “Hey!” he would just answer “Hey!” He would not be afraid to look at anything, he would not hesitate to answer; he would be very simple. In the city, however, if you call “Hey!” they'll think you're a pickpocket.

When I was out West I thought America was the natural ground for Zen Buddhism. Comparing American students with ours, ours are putting on rouge and white paint and hanging trinkets on themselves. The Easterner has lived so long in his complicated thoughts that his mind is enwrapped with artificial affectations, while the American is very simple. Of course, in the cities there are many complicated people, but I cannot believe that any artificial, sophisticated, metaphysical type of religion will fit the American heart.

In striving to understand many things in my own past (and I

haven't had much time to come to a conclusion) I feel now that I would rather make a solid foundation on the same ground than spread new branches from the trunk of this tree. My nature demands that I converge my effort to the center, to the root, to simplify life. Perhaps I have become lazy—lazier than in my youth, though I was lazy then also—but I like to see everything going on as it is without analysis by philosophy or logic.

I hold my glass in my hand and know that its colors—white, yellow, blue and red—come from various sources that I can observe logically, but this observation has nothing to do with the fact that *this* is *that*. Even when we know this simple Reality, however, our life never stands upon it, but upon the results of our artificial brain activity. Perhaps we should not blame ourselves for the fact that while animals live in nature, man must live in his brain. We enjoy a landscape, but we value a landscape that is painted more. We see the beauty of the human body on canvas, in marble, or ivory, better than the living body of a human being because the beauty of the form is abstracted from natural conditions. It seems to me that a human being that lives abstracted from nature is like someone who intoxicates himself with alcohol, which is abstracted from a natural source. There is a real drama on every street corner, but we do not use it as drama; we can appreciate it only on the stage where it is simplified. My friend asked me to go to the country, but I prefer to observe human life rather than nature. It is nature, abstracted from the wild state I love represented. I draw a line distinctly between a being that lives in nature and one who lives in his brain. Standing upon that viewpoint, I see what is called evil or virtue, but to me there is no mixture. It is a shortcoming of the human being that he always mixes up nature and art. The human being took the food from nature, ate it and created art; then he abominated returning to his natural home. When we think of nature, we think of art, but do not mistake nature for art. Art is abstracted nature.

“Now, if there were a Buddha-Mara inseparably embodied in one flesh . . .” If Buddha is wisdom, what is buddha-mara? Mara is evil, darkness, *avidya*. A word like *Buddha-Mara* gives us a portrait of Lin-chi. Of course he is confessing what he is, someone who has creative and destructive power at the same time, who understands nirvana and evil. He is in darkness, *avidya*, and understands entire annihilation, in other words, Buddha. The evil of which Lin-chi speaks is entire darkness.

In Mahayana theory, the *alaya*-consciousness comes from the hidden consciousness, as heat that has not permeated the air or light, that has not come into the circle where light may be seen. The Buddha called this nirvana and also *avidya*; before we understand it, it is darkness, and when we understand it, it is nirvana.

Someone said, "What is it that makes the difference? If you know, then you are emancipated." Someone else said, "Though you do not know where you came from, you will be emancipated anyway." In *sanzen*, when I realized entire annihilation, I felt as though I had broken through the bottom of a bucket, and I understood the poetry of the ancient Buddhists describing the bottomless pail holding the full moon. I appreciate it; I have broken through the bottomless pail of my mind.

" . . . *Like the mixture of water and milk that the Goose King Hamsaraja drank from, of which he only drank the milk . . .*" Lin-chi borrowed the story of the Goose King from an old *sutra*. Water is enlightenment and milk is ignorance. We come from original darkness, *avidya*, and therefore do not know the Real in us; we use it unconsciously, not knowing how we do it. Using this instinct from the darkness of *avidya*, we make many mistakes without realizing it, for we are a mixture of both. Hamsaraja, the Goose King, sucks the milk of original darkness and leaves the clear water of buddha-nature. The Buddha teaches the same. By destroying the darkness in the mind, one leaves the buddha-nature, the real enlightened nature. Since it is in everything, when the cloud of illusion is blown off the mind, the sun shines naturally. So Buddha is the Goose King drinking the milk of ignorance and leaving the clear water of enlightenment.

" . . . *He who has the clear Dharma eye can distinguish Buddha from Mara within that one flesh.*" In what stage was your consciousness in the past? In what stage will it be in the future? Now? Is your mind emancipated? Where is the trouble in your mind? Is it in darkness or not? If Lin-chi has experienced all the different stages of his own consciousness, he knows the consciousness of others.

"*But if you favor the sacred and abominate the secular, you sink or swim in the sea of life and death.*" From Lin-chi's standpoint, you must not love the condition called sacred nor abominate the condition called secular. Why sacred? Why secular? No reason, for these exist in the human mind but not in the true mind. If you attach to such ideas, you sink or swim in the sea of life-and-death where you cannot attain absolute understanding. You always live in the relative, you have to live in your mind and cannot reach a stage higher than that. But when you have experienced all the stages, you will find that you are nothing but consciousness—the tip of your finger, the toe, the nose and tongue—you realize all is consciousness.

* * * * *

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, #3)

(Continued from the Fall '10 Zen Notes)

Buddhism Under the Tokugawas

Even while carefully regulating the Buddhist establishment, the Tokugawa Bakufu found it a convenient tool in carrying out its anti-Christian policies. Introduced to Japan in the sixteenth century by Portuguese and Spanish missionaries, Christianity had flourished for a time, but was outlawed by the Tokugawas, who regarded it as a subversive foreign belief. The Bakufu's persecution of Christianity began in 1612 and continued throughout the Tokugawa period. Converts who refused to renounce their faith were ruthlessly pursued and executed, but those who formally recanted and apostatized were pardoned and allowed to rejoin the community. The Bakufu was especially concerned over the existence of "hidden" Christians, and something of a witchhunt men-

tality informed many features of the government's anti-Christian campaign.

For reasons as yet unclear, the Bakufu sought to extend its anti-Christian policies to the local level through the agency of "parish" temples (*dannadera*) within each community. At its inception, the system was devised specifically for apostatized Christians. Beginning in 1614, such persons were required to obtain each year from the chief priest of a recognized Buddhist temple a certificate known as the *terauke*, vouching that they were parishioners in good standing. The *terauke* (literally, "vouched for by the temple") served as the formal warrant of their recantation, apparently on the assumption that a confirmed Christian believer could not allow himself to be affiliated with a non-Christian religion such as Buddhism. Initially limited to apostates, by 1635, the entire population, from samurai to peasants and merchants, were required to participate in the parish system and to receive the *terauke* as proof that they were not covert Christians.

The process of issuing the *tera-uke* was known as *shumon arateme* 'rectification of religious (i.e., Buddhist) affiliation,' and served as the basis for the periodic compilation of household registers, termed *shumon ninbetsu cho*. It is difficult to date the first registers, but by about 1660 they were being carried out nationwide, compiled initially by the parish priest and after 1660 by the village headman. The process called for the head of each household to present a *tera-uke* from the parish temple, which the headman would then record in a register, a copy of which was forwarded to the daimyo of the province. A sample preamble from one such register contains an affidavit which states in part:

"We have checked thoroughly, and no Christians are to be found in our village, or any persons under suspicion [of being Christians] All the men and women of the village have presented certificates from their parish temples Any denunciations suggesting that someone may be a Christian have been investigated in person by the temple's chief priest and the local leaders None of our parents, wives or other relations are Christians, and those persons who were formerly Christians but have apostatized are honestly stated as such, with no attempt at concealment Anyone who seems in the least suspicious will in future be duly reported without delay, as will anyone who disposes of a deceased person himself and fails to request the temple to do so...."

Following this appear the names of each household head, accompanied by detailed information on family members, place of birth, sect and location of parish temple, permanent residence and so on.

While a degree of freedom could be exercised in choosing one's *dannadera* the fact remains that under the Tokugawa parish system, for the first time in Buddhism's history in Japan, parishioners, temples and priests were linked by external legal bonds. Failure to receive the parish priest's *tera-uke* meant being stricken from the *ninbetsucho* and becoming 'outside the register,' condemned to the status of an outcast and deprived of one's livelihood.

Through his power to withhold the *tera-uke*, the parish priest could compel the support of the temple's parishioners, and the system clearly created a potential for extortion by unscrupulous clerics. The *tera-uke* could be legally denied to any household found failing in its obligations to the parish. The support demanded of the parishioners was both economic and "moral." Each household was assessed a sizable tithe in rice, and was expected to offer additional donations to the temple at Bon and New Year's and in spring and autumn. Parishioners were also required to bear the expense of temple construction and repairs, and even expenses incurred by the main temples could be passed on to the parishioners of the branch temples. Temple burials, which had become increasingly popular during the Middle Ages, were now compulsory under the Bakufu's anti-Christian program (see, for example, the last clause of the affidavit cited above), and funeral services formed an important staple of the parish temple's economy. The priest was required not only to conduct the service for the deceased, but to assign a posthumous Buddhist name, examine the corpse and administer the tonsure. At the same times parishioners were expected to open their household shrines to inspection by the priest and to participate in all temple festivals, even in such events as the memorial of the temple's founder.

Ostensibly, the parish system was instituted and maintained by the Bakufu to guard against the menace of hidden Christians, but other motives, for the most part economic rather than religious, have been suggested. The Bakufu's economic base was agricultural, derived chiefly from taxes levied on the rural peasantry. It was a primary object of Bakufu policy to ensure a regular tax income and to prevent the peasants from absconding. The *tera-uke* system was perfectly suited to such a strategy. The religious census, for example, provided a convenient subterfuge for fixing the peasants in their villages for tax purposes and providing a register of who could be taxed. In effect, the parish temples were required to serve as watchdogs over the local community, keeping track of the people's movements and even scrutinizing their personal activities. Thus, in many instances, all unusual events in a village's households had to be reported to the parish temple and receive the approval of the abbot. These included marriages, changes of residence, trips, and even the employment of servants.

In one sense, the parish system represented a windfall for the Buddhist establishment, offering the parish temples and priesthood virtually guaranteed support. At the same time, however, the temples were expected to act as instruments of government policy, carrying out certain police functions connected with the Bakufu's anti-Christian campaign, functions that lent the priest an official standing similar in some respects to that of the village headman. Indeed, taken in its rough details, the parish system presents a generally gloomy picture, an image of a repressive and potentially exploitative religious structure, of which the parishioners were virtually helpless prisoners. Other information, however, suggests that such a negative assessment of the parish system, while not wholly inaccurate, may be somewhat overdrawn.

Religious dissent, it is true, was not tolerated, and infractions of the Bakufu's laws against Christians and certain proscribed Buddhist sects were punished severely. Within the recognized schools of Buddhism too, espousal of heterodox creeds was strictly forbidden, and an edict of 1687 calls on the temples to denounce all heretics within their ranks on pain of punishment. Yet, as previously observed, those willing to recant were readily forgiven, and apostasy was encouraged, a situation somewhat akin to the persecution of Christians in ancient Rome. Indeed, provided that one was a Buddhist and a member of one of the established sects, it was possible to exercise a surprising degree of freedom in the religious sphere, given the authoritarian character of Tokugawa life as a whole.

(Translation and copyright by Peter Haskel)

Zen Notes Leap Year

Due to a mysterious slippage in time around 2003/4 ZN has been a year behind present time. Some temporal black hole ate up a whole year of ZN without leaving a trace of its pernicious deed. So if you have been reading ZN since 2003/4 you have been experiencing a crack in time where the past and present seamlessly intermingle while the future is, as always, a fuzzy question mark.

Well the Dragon has returned from year 2000 when time was still whole and with a resounding roar sent 2011 rabbits scattering, thereby declaring a ZN leap year. No longer do you have to read ZN with your seat in the past, eyes in the present and mind endlessly pondering the confusion of the three times or the now missing 2011 rabbits.

Unless you have been with us before 2003, your subscription has not been affected. If you have been with us longer, then perhaps, in consideration of ZN steadfast inflation proofing in the new millennium, you would consider the missing year as a condensed four issue manifestation of "*form is emptiness and emptiness is form*" (Heart Sutra). If not, please contact the editor for other alternatives such as... a lucky missing rabbit's foot? (editor)

Riding on the Dragon's Tail and in Zen Notes, Sokeian's commentaries on The 6th Patriarch's Platform Sutra have, after 75 years, been published in book form by the Institute through iUniverse. The book is 411 pages, 7.5x9.25" paperback and should be available sometime this summer. The price is \$37.95.





*Leap a year
and 2011 rabbits scatter...*



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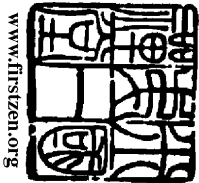
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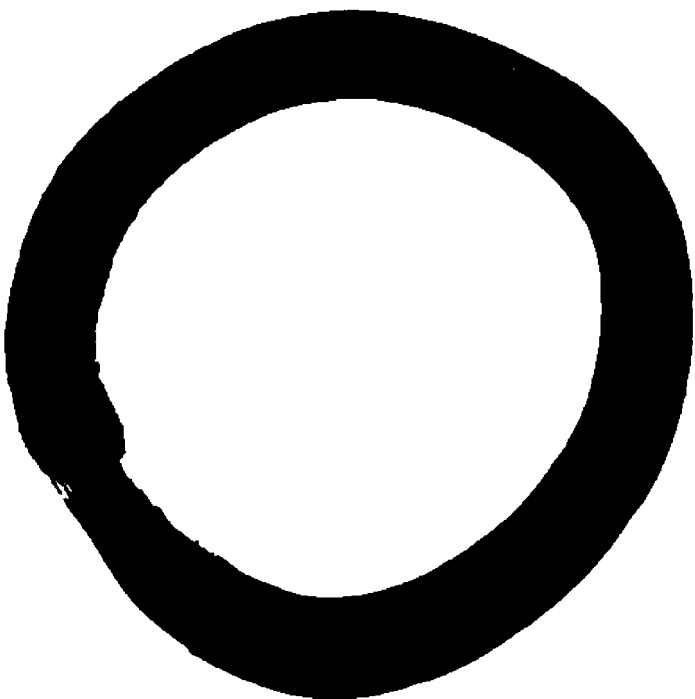
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**Founded in 1930 by
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