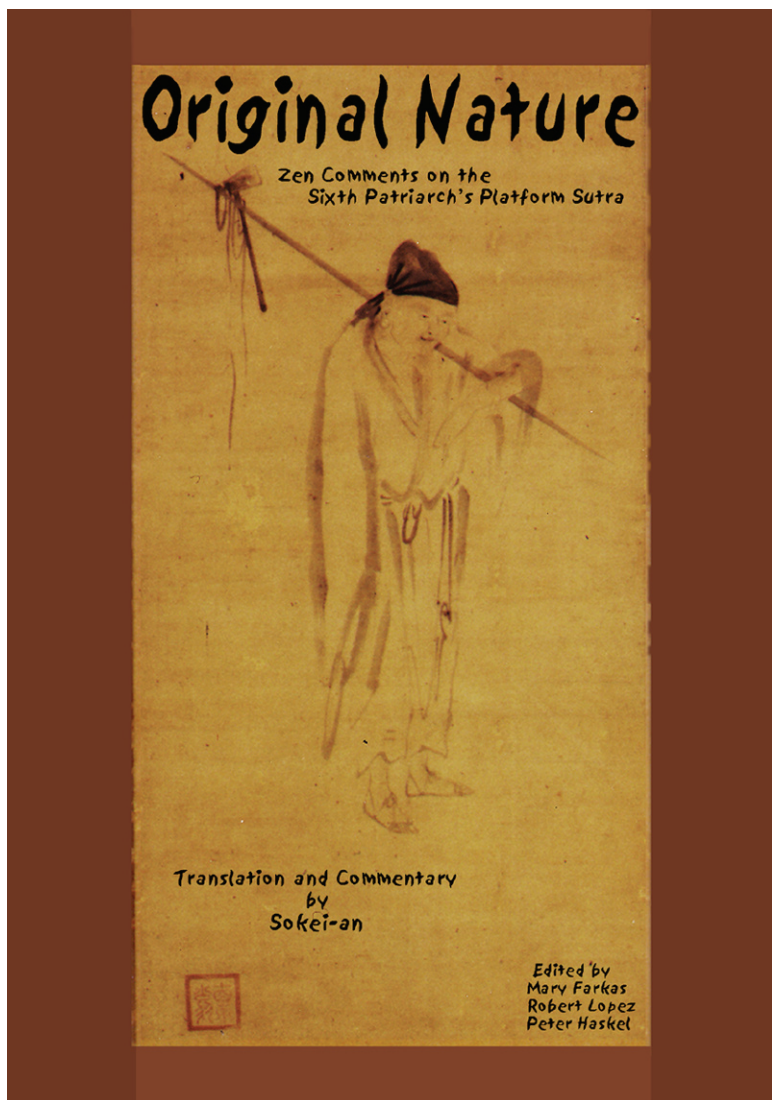


ZEN notes



THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FIFTY-EIGHTH LECTURE

Wednesday November 8th, 1939

"O Obedient One! Perfect Awakening has no definite nature of its own. This nature is the concomitant of other varieties of awakening nature. It is in the nature of Perfect Awakening that no one attains it and no one proves it. In the state of reality, there is in truth neither the nature of the bodhisattva nor that of sentient beings. Why? Because both bodhisattvas and sentient beings are merely appearances, merely phantoms. Since these appearances disappear, there is neither one who attains the nature of Perfect Awakening nor one who proves it. It is as the eye, which is unaware of its own nature. When you attain the state of equality, you will realize that no one has placed you in that state. The minds of sentient beings are inverted by their own delusions and have not yet eradicated the notions to which the phantasm gives rise. If sentient beings eradicate their notions but do not eradicate them completely—they will exhaust themselves to no avail in practicing my methods for attaining awakening, and will set up useless distinctions between awakening natures."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

In the Zen temple we are told that there is no way of explaining the state which is attained by the practice. But this sutra does explain it. This Vimalamatih Bodhisattva asked a detailed question of the Buddha: "What are the degrees of awakening according to the natures of bodhisattvas and sentient beings?" —and the Buddha answered.

"O Obedient One! Perfect Awakening has no definite nature of its own." —This "Perfect Awakening" is an important term here; it is not just "awakening" but is written "Perfect Awakening." There are many states of awakening, but Perfect Awakening is the highest state we know. The *shravakas* have their own awakening through following the Buddha's commandments; the *pratyeka* buddhas also have their own awakening—by observing the flowers blooming in the spring and the autumn leaves growing darker as the winter approaches. Observing the phases of nature, they understand the causal law of the Twelve *Nidanas* and they attain some degree of awakening. But the bodhisattvas practice six kinds of *paramitas* and attain awakening in the state of nirvana.

The six *paramitas* are: giving, observing commandments, forbearance, expedients, practicing *prajna paramita* (meditation upon wisdom) and *samadhi*.

There are many kinds of *samadhi*. As Fire *Samadhi*, he becomes fire itself; as Light *Samadhi*, he becomes a shining light. There is the Dancing Lion *Samadhi*, and the *Samadhi* of Annihilation. There are many practices in *samadhi* for attaining Nirvana; the bodhisattvas practice the six *paramitas* to reach the other shore. So this awakening has degrees—but the Buddha says it "has no definite nature of its own."

"This nature is the concomitant of other varieties of awakening nature." —When you attain one kind of awakening, all other kinds of awakening will appear. And when you attain Perfect Awakening, you cannot prove yourself in that state. Therefore, all states of Perfect Awakening disappear. When a tea master tastes the water—"This water comes from such-and-such place. It has a little sulfur taste"—he must make a distinction between the nature of the waters. When he understands one taste of water he will understand all tastes of water. And if he enters the water and is drowned he will not taste water any more.

So, as one enters Perfect Awakening—there is no way of transmitting it or of even explaining it to another. The state of Perfect Awakening is a very mysterious thing! The Buddha and the bodhisattvas have come to the end of their attainment—have come into Perfect Awakening. This is the measure that the Zen master holds up before the student. When you have reached true understanding, all the natures of awakening prove the state of Perfect Awakening—and Perfect Awakening proves all the natures. Without knowing the reality of the state, you cannot know the action of the state. But when you attain Perfect Awakening, you forget its nature because it is empty. There is now nothing more to do. It is the end.

It is like a story—I have forgotten the book—in which someone traveled a long way, came to a monastery on the mountain and asked, "Is this the road to go to the end of the world?" "Proceed!" they told him. He came to another monastery where he asked the same question and received the same answer. He repeated this many times, and finally came to a very forlorn monastery where there was only one monk. "Is this the road to the end of the world?" "Proceed!" said the monk.

The traveler went to the very top of the mountain and looked into the Valley of Infinite Chaos. Looking down he realized that this is the end of the world. These Westerners sometimes write stories that express what we believe. It may be an imitation but it is

beautifully expressed.

In the true nature of Perfect Awakening—nothing breathes, nothing exists. But, in this physical body, we find five different natures of awakening:

1. Those who have no nature of awakening
2. *shravakas*
3. *pratyekas*
4. bodhisattvas
5. Buddha

Those are five different ways—but the real nature is not increased or decreased; however, you must know the real nature. And when Perfect Awakening comes, you will act in five different ways. If the bodhisattva has come—you will teach according to his way; if it is the *shravaka* you will act in accordance with his way, and so on.

"It is in the nature of Perfect Awakening that no one attains it and no one proves it." If you say, "I know this!"—your Perfect Awakening is not yet matured. If you say of the nature of perfect awakening, "I have never attained it and never proved it," there is some sound of Perfect Awakening. As in the Bible, "I have never met God." There are many such statements as, "I was standing face to face with God." "God revealed himself to me—but only the half-figure."

The nescient knowledge of the mind is different from acquired knowledge. That is the pivot which was transmitted from Shakyamuni to us. It is unintelligible but it is the basis of all existence.

"In the state of Reality there is in truth neither the nature of the Bodhisattvas nor that of sentient beings."—This line is very easy to understand. "Reality," in Chinese, means literally "real appearance." Disappearances are not real appearance, but no appearance is real appearance. You cannot prove it, cannot attain it, for your five senses cannot perceive it.

In a temple where I was, I stood at the entrance to receive guests. Almost always, I was barefooted or in *tabi*; my feet always felt the ground. But one rainy day, I wore wooden shoes, and I suddenly realized that my wooden shoes didn't feel the cold and wet. Then I thought, "I don't understand Zen—but my wooden shoes do!" But my teacher would say, "Shigetsu, don't talk so much!"

"Why? Because both bodhisattvas and sentient beings are

merely appearances, merely phantasms." —In that state there is no bodhisattva or sentient being. Sentient beings are wearing the filth of phantasms, of rajas (phenomena).

Scientists study objective existence, as they call it, and analyze it into protons and electrons. One should apply this analysis to one's self. Of course the scientist does not see it in the religious sense, though I have heard that some begin to take science as their religion. Those who scrape the mire away from the mind are called bodhisattvas. Their attitude is different, but their basic nature is the same.

"Since these appearances disappear, there is neither one who attains the nature of Perfect Awakening nor one who proves it." —When you drown yourself in the state which was transmitted from Shakyamuni Buddha to us, you are through; you can do nothing; you have come to an end. Then, you should retire for a while. Come to my lectures—but rest for a while if you can!

"It is as the eye, which is unaware of its own nature." —This is a good illustration. The eye cannot ever see itself. When you really come to the pivot of Zen you can prove nothing.

There is a story in the Zen record of China—a master and a student looked at each other and burst into laughter.

Someone asked Joshu: "What was the purpose of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?" He replied, "The willow tree in the garden."

Another was asked, "What is Buddha?" "Three pounds of hemp."

If someone should ask a Zen master, "What is Zen?" —"Take some tea."

Such answers all laymen imitate, thinking there is some comic element in it. But it is as if he wears paper shoes on a rainy day! The imitation is obvious.

"When you attain the state of equality, you will realize that no one has placed you in that state." —Equality is the basic ground. He can associate with the sacred and the profane—with the good and the bad, but in his basic mind he is associating with everyone in the "state of equality." It is the original and real existence of the universe.

"The minds of sentient beings are inverted by their own delusions and have not yet eradicated the notions to which the phan-

tasm gives rise." —They discriminate between this and that, believing there are the states of sacred and profane, accepting one and denying the other. This is their own deluded notion.

Once the Buddha was asked, "What is your most sacred doctrine?" He answered, "The universe is endless; there is neither sacred nor profane." "Then who are you?" "I do not know." And the Buddha tucked up his skirt and went away.

"If sentient beings eradicate their notions but do not eradicate them completely, they will exhaust themselves to no avail in practicing my methods for attaining awakening and will set up useless distinctions between awakening natures." Their distinctions are nothing but notions.

In the *Avatamsaka Sutra* there is a beautiful story about some people who wished to reach the other shore. They had many difficulties, and lost many of their one hundred elephants which were carrying their wives and children. But finally they reached the other shore and awoke from the dream. No elephants; no river—nothing. So watch your koan and scrape the filth from your mind.

This part of the sutra gives a summary of the Buddhistic awakening. It is very important.



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Susan Morningstar

Three-Hundred-Mile Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin-Chi

Discourse XIII, Lecture 1

Someone asked the Master, "What is Buddha, and what is mara?"

The Master said: "If you harbor a moment of doubt in your mind, that is mara. If you realize that nothing in the cosmos has been created, that your mind is like a phantom, and that nothing exists, not even an atom of dust or a fragment of thought, there is no place that is not pure. That is Buddha. Buddha and mara are different circumstances. One is pure, and the other is profane.

"According to my understanding, there is no Buddha, no sentient being, no past, no present. Anyone capable of apprehending this may do so without wasting time. It does not require discipline or realization, attainment or abandonment. Throughout eternity, no other Dharma exists. Even though there may appear to be some truth better than this, I say it is like a dream or a phantom. Everything I preach comes to this."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

Many Japanese think that Zen is a grotesque religion, that the Zen teachers of China are grotesque. I do not feel this way. To me, Zen is very plain and the Chinese Zen teachers were plain, honest men. Why do Japanese students feel that the Chinese teachers were like demons or savages living in the mountains? Perhaps to the Japanese, Chinese sentences have some grotesque nature, some sharp strong force that is lacking in Japanese sentences, even though they are composed of Chinese characters. When I translate the Chinese into English and then read the English version, my feeling about what is said is entirely different from my feeling when I read the Chinese characters. A Zen teacher must understand this when he is transmitting such a special school of Buddhism to Westerners. He must transmit Zen itself. As religion, Zen is pure with no mystic or grotesque element in it.

When other teachers of Zen come after me to this country, they should note what I have just said about transmitting Zen to American people. They should not transmit that particular poetic

feeling that comes from Chinese sentences. I am trying to transmit Zen itself, not Chinese literature, to American people.

*Someone asked the Master, "What is Buddha, and what is mara?" The Master said: "If you harbor a moment of doubt in your mind, that is mara. If you realize that nothing in the cosmos has been created, that your mind is like a phantom, and that nothing exists, not even an atom of dust or a fragment of thought, there is no place that is not pure. That is Buddha. Buddha and mara are different circumstances. One is pure, and the other is profane. The important point here is that you must have true understanding as the foundation of your life. Doubt brings fear. If you are not sure of your ground, you cannot succeed. You live in a blind struggle in the darkness from which we all come. From morning to evening you act at the instigation of instinct, not in accordance with your true understanding. It is through the eight stages of *rupadhatu* and *arupadhatu* that the bodhisattva comes to the realization that nothing has been created. From the standpoint of reality, he discovers all phenomena are included in it. It is not necessary to destroy phenomena, phenomena *are* reality; and reality *is* phenomena, which is a vision, a phantom created by our sense organs.*

Everything has its own inherent law. The branches of a tree always grow symmetrically. We have our law, too. We call it Dharma. But it is not good to be too exact. Confucius said if you try to follow the rule exactly, you will be under a strain and it will take all your attention. There is a rule to follow, but if you try to follow it too closely, you will bother yourself and others. In other words, act spontaneously. The Buddha made all the laws of the *sangha*, but he did not enforce them indiscriminately. This is the law that is not created.

"According to my understanding . . ." Lin-chi's understanding is very important. He means the understanding he attained under the rod of his teacher Huang-po [d.ca. 850]. When Lin-chi returned to Huang-po after visiting Ta-yu at his direction, Huang-po asked him about their meeting. When Lin-chi told him what had happened, Huang-po said: "Hmmm, he's a character isn't he? If he comes here, I'll give him a slap." "Why wait?" said Lin-chi, "I'll let you have it now." And Lin-chi slapped Huang-po. Lin-chi's understanding was that there were not three persons, only one, that it wasn't necessary to wait for Ta-yu or Lin-chi.

Slapping, of course, has no meaning. The Zen masters were deaf mutes who did not explain reality in philosophical terms but only manifested the original substance. In the Zen school we use the real thing. Today, however, our Zen is polished and developed, not crude as it was then.

At the time Lin-chi was young, just out of the shell, strong, shining, and crude, like a thunderbolt, standing on the viewpoint that he had realized after he came back from Ta-yu's. He saw that there was just one person in the universe, neither Buddha nor man; neither beast nor vegetable; just one thing in the universe. Of course, when there is just one thing, it is not necessary to call it "one."

Once a Zen master was sitting with three of his disciples under a full moon in autumn. This group had come together for a tea ceremony, but the master didn't make any tea. He just sat watching the moon. After a while he asked one of the disciples: "What are you thinking at this moment?" (All three were watching the moon rising through the pine trees.) The disciple answered, "A nice moment to realize the whole teaching." (The moon is the symbol of *tathata*, original consciousness of the universe. The whole universe manifests the symbols of its own nature.)

Then the master asked a second disciple the same question. He answered: "This is a wonderful moment to practice."

When the master asked the third, the disciple stood up, swept his sleeves back and disappeared—no answer. Nothing was left, not even a shadow.

The master said to the first disciple, "You understand Buddhism." To the second he said, "You understand Zen." To the third, he said: "You are the only one who understands nothing." And this one became his torch-holder.

"There is no Buddha, no sentient being, no past, no present. How do you understand this? Would you call it *dharmakaya*? If so, you do not understand Buddhism. This is the stage of Manjushri, the god of latent wisdom, concealed, incomprehensible wisdom. Samantabhadra is the god of manifested wisdom. Philosophy can explain the stage of Manjushri as original wisdom that lies dormant, but as an experience in meditation, how do you explain it?

As for the disciple that disappeared leaving not even a shadow, it took five hundred arhats five hundred years to explain it in the *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra*. When you hear that, you have some idea of the greatness of the Zen student who can realize it and express it in one moment. You cannot speak a word to express "nothing."

"Anyone capable of apprehending this may do so without wasting time." You do not need fifteen years. If you do not understand at this moment, you will not understand though you transmigrate for three kalpas.

“It does not require discipline or realization, attainment or abandonment.” Lin-chi destroyed all Buddhism, all religion, all realization, all meditation, all trying to attain, all practicing commandments—nothing left!

He means you must not dream. You must abandon wisdom, all that is accumulated in your mind, and come to the bare ground. What does this mean? Compare this with all the sayings, the *sutras*, the systems and the teachings of Zen—all these he pulled down. He smashed everything, leaving no Buddhism, no Zen, no teaching, just leaving the one who is *here*—eating, sleeping, waking. That is all.

“Throughout eternity, no other Dharma exists.” Just *this*. We did not look at *this*. We were looking for something else. But *this* was existing and has existed and will exist. *This* is the only one and there is no Dharma but *this*! We forgot for a long time, but now we realize it. *This* is all we have and it is real. Whatever a teaching may say, *this* cannot be destroyed.

“Even though there may appear to be some truth better than this, I say it is like a dream or a phantom.” The *Avatamsaka Sutra* is wonderful.¹ It contains many viewpoints of religion, all the viewpoints in the world. But Lin-chi said all this is but a dream and a phantom.

“Everything I preach comes to this.” Lin-chi preached in many different ways, used many different terms, but all comes to this: there is neither Buddha nor man, neither past nor present.

When you see this clear as crystal, do not touch it, for you will spoil it. When you realize pure Dharma, even a word will spoil it. Take care!

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¹ *The Flower Garland Sutra*; the basic text of the Hua-yen school of Buddhism that teaches the equality and mutual interpenetration of all phenomena and thus that the human mind *is* the universe.

Am I Really Hungry? 6th Sense Diet: Intuitive Eating By Jane Bernard.

Book Review by Ian Chandler

Then Mara summoned all his host, enraged with greatest fury, "Yakshas and Rakshas!" And addressed them thus, "Now then ye braves! Go quickly, bring hither mountains, rocks and trees – bring bows and arrows, swords and clubs; clutch your diamond maces, spears and halberds—every kind of implement, and hurl them down on yonder Sakya youth of the Kshatriya caste. Crush him to powder—rain your arrows down as hail from heaven!...

What about the demon of chocolate cake? The devil of extra cheese pizza? The menacing hordes of Halloween candy and Christmas cookies? Are these enemies real, or do they exist primarily inside our own minds? Just as Siddhartha defeated the hosts of Mara through intuitive wisdom, is it possible for us to apply the ancient Buddhist practices directly to address the immediate and practical problems of daily life, such as what to eat or how to lose weight?

Jane Bernard's "Intuitive Tools" in *Am I Really Hungry*, read like the attributes of the ten great disciples of the Buddha: (1) Curiosity; (2) Prudence; (3) Tenacity; (4) Dignity; (5) Determination; (6) Patience; (7) Foresight; (8) Self-Discipline; (9) Courage; (10) The 10th Tool (grace). Similar, but not quite identical to: Ananda (Intellectual learning), Rahula (Perseverance), Anirudda (Deva Vision), Mahakashyapa (Discipline), Sariputra (Wisdom), Upali (upholding the Vinaya), Subhuti (Meditative contemplation), Katyayana (Fundamental Principles), Purna (Expounding the Law), Maudgalyayana (Supernatural or Miraculous powers – grace), and of course, the 11th disciple, Avalokiteshvara (Compassion).

Jane Bernard is a long-time practicing Buddhist, and I asked her whether she had deliberately structured her chapter titles to match the attributes of the great disciples of the Buddha. Her immediate reply was no, that had never occurred to her. The attributes of the Buddha's disciples point to a right-brain approach to problem solving. Mary Farkas, who ran the First Zen Institute for many years, used to say that women have better talent at Zen than men because women are more naturally intuitive.

Am I Really Hungry dispenses with left-brain lists and calorie counts and instead relies on right-brain "intuitive tools" -- curiosity, prudence, tenacity, dignity, determination, patience, foresight, self-discipline, courage and grace. Much of what Jane Bernard recom-

mends to lose weight is very commonsensical -- like spending more time smelling food and savoring it slowly, or eating just a half-portion of desert, or consuming sugar-free beverages. A major point of failure for many diet plans is periods of austere dietary discipline and strict calorie counts followed by stress-induced binges. Stress is a major contributor to overeating, and Jane Bernard advocates a "12-Step" program" for coping with it, the first step of which is to "Admit stress impacts your eating."

Media and societal pressure, she says, play an important role in the modern obesity epidemic. *"Media, driven by economics, has made us eat more by saying that bigger is better. 20 years ago, bagels were 3" in diameter. Now, they're 6" and the size of a slice of pizza has doubled. Big packaging encourages us to eat more."* Good advice for controlling food consumption in social situations: *"For less calories when you're out with the crowd, order half the amount of pasta with one fourth the total sauce. Enjoy the flavor as you eat slowly."* What about falling off the wagon? *"IT'S OKAY to fall off the wagon, but it's not okay to fall into a black hole."*

I love Jane Bernard's descriptions of some of her "Intuitive Tools," such as Courage:

"Courage is incomparable energy you're born with. It's the intuitive lifeline you can always opt for. The energy of courage is a boldness that feels like enthusiasm with backbone. It is the diamond point of the arrow of your intuition. Courage is an intimate part of your inner strength, fortified by clarity of what is right."

Am I Really Hungry? presents an intuitive approach to problem solving which those of us who are well-practiced in Zen are familiar with. It is a refreshing change from the left-brain multi-tasking stressed-out crazy-busy society which we all live in. *Am I Really Hungry?* is filled with wit and wisdom, and practical advice on dieting which can be followed by anyone with strong intuition.

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, #4)

(Continued from the Winter '12 Zen Notes)

Buddhism Under the Tokugawas

While, for legal and administrative reasons, every Japanese had to be affiliated with a particular parish temple, one's religious life was not restricted to the parish temple, and the Bakufu codes make it plain that individuals were at liberty to support various sects and follow their teachings simultaneously without interference from the clergy. Certainly the records of Bankei's teachings provide frequent instances of monks and laypeople of different sects attending Bankei's sermons and participating in his training periods.

Even with regard to the choice of parish temple, the 1665

edict affirms the right of the patron to select a parish temple strictly according to his own beliefs and enjoins the priesthood against interference. Initially, individual members of a household could choose their own separate parish temple, and at the beginning of the Tokugawa period it was not unusual for family members to have different parish temples and different sect affiliations. Because this arrangement tended to provoke disputes over parishioners' assessments, however, it gradually fell out of favor and was formally abandoned by the Bakufu in 1788 for the so-called "one temple-one household" system, in which the choice of parish temple for the entire family was determined by the household head. Even so, households were free to leave one temple for another, and the temples were periodically enjoined by the Bakufu against inhibiting in any way the parishioner's right to change his affiliation to another parish temple or even to another sect.

Within the parish temples themselves, moreover, the parishioners frequently enjoyed a certain measure of autonomy. Management of the parish temples, including the disposition of temple properties, was generally shared between the temple's abbot, the main temple and the temple's leading parishioners, the latter drawn, as a rule, from the upper echelons of the community. In most parish temples, selection of the abbot himself was similarly carried out through consultation between the parishioners and the main temple and, if appropriate, the disciples of the previous abbot. In certain instances, the choice of abbot rested solely with the parishioners, again, through an elite who acted as their representatives in the temple's leadership. The new abbot's selection was routinely endorsed by the main temple's officials, who were urged by the 1665 edict to accept the candidate proposed by the parishioners in such cases. Other parish temples, by contrast, were governed entirely by the dictates of the main temple, and parishioners rejecting the abbot approved by the sect risked punishment as heretics. But in many cases the patrons held important power not only over the abbot's appointment but over his dismissal. There were even instances in which entire temples could switch their affiliation to a different sect at the parishioners' request.

Again, the principal aim of the headquarters-branch system, the parish system, and the other chief elements of the Bakufu's Buddhist policy was not the suppression of the Buddhist establishment but its control and domination and even its appropriation as a tool for official surveillance over the population at large. Nevertheless, during the seventeenth century, there were many both in and out of office who were openly opposed to Buddhism itself and counseled the government to adopt an aggressively anti-Buddhist stance.

Foremost among these critics of Buddhism were various

Confucian scholars who attacked the religion on both theoretical and political grounds. A basic objection, voiced by Confucian advocates such as Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) and Muro Kyuso (1658-1734) was that Buddhism denied the crucial relationships between parent and child, lord and subject, relationships which, according to Confucian theory, determined norms of ethical conduct. While Confucianism was rational, human-centered and concerned with establishing moral standards and appropriate norms of behavior, Buddhism, they argued, sought a Way outside the real world. Lacking any coherent theory of government, economics, human relations, or the structuring of society, the Confucians claimed, Buddhism offered a vision that was not only nonhumanistic but frequently irrational. Scholar officials like Razan and Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691), for example, denounced belief in transmigration and faith in the existence of heavens and hells as rank superstition; others derided the notion that one could enter paradise by repeating the *nenbutsu* or the *daimoku*, the invocation to the *Lotus Sutra*. Buddhism, it was argued, offered no practical benefit to the common people, and was worse than useless, since the temple establishment constituted a serious drain on both the village and domainal economies. At the same time, Buddhism was attacked as a "foreign" religion, while Confucianism was linked in various ways to Shinto. Such correspondences were frequently tortuous, amounting to little more than explanations of Shinto in Confucian terms. But the concept of the underlying unity of the two religions was common to much anti-Buddhist rhetoric.

Typical of the Confucian critics of Bankei's period was Kumazawa Banzan, mentioned above. Banzan was a follower of the Yomeigaku, or Wang Yangming (1472-1529) school of Neo Confucianism, and advisor to Ikeda Mitsumasa (1609-1682), daimyo of the Okayama domain and an ardent Confucian. The Buddhist establishment, Banzan maintained, deprived the domains of important revenues and resources. Temple monies were passed on to the headquarters temples, leading to an outflow of the domain's reserves, while the temple estates and the priesthood themselves were exempt from taxation.

The solution Banzan proposed was repeal of the temple voucher and parish systems, which he believed had corrupted the priesthood and impoverished the common people. He recommended instead that the temples be destroyed and the land turned over to the peasants to farm, yielding both additional crops and tax income. As for the Buddhist priesthood, Banzan argued that Japanese monks had long since ceased to observe the precepts and were little better than unscrupulous thieves, whose rapacity had only been exacerbated by the establishment of the temple voucher system. He proposed that the present generation of monks and nuns be allowed to die off or forcibly returned to lay life. Like the tem-

ple estates, the Buddhist priesthood represented an unproductive sector that was a potential source of corvée, farm labor and tax revenues. At the same time, abolition of the priesthood would relieve the people of the burden of its support, compelled by the parish system. Banzan also advocated an immediate halt to temple construction, which he decried as a dangerous waste of the domain's wealth and of its natural resources, causing the woodlands to be deforested for building materials.

Banzan's term as advisor to the Ikeda domain made him the principal theorist behind the domain's anti-Buddhist "reforms," probably the most extensive of the Tokugawa period. A large number of temples were destroyed and the remainder consolidated, with many monks returned to lay life and temple estates appropriated by the domain. The temple voucher was abolished and replaced by a "*Shinto-uke*," or Shinto voucher, dispensed in association with the domain's Shinto shrines. Extreme as these measures were, it is important to note that Mitsumasa never attempted a total destruction of the Buddhist establishment in his domain. The bulk of the condemned temples in the Ikeda domain were either Fujū Fuse temples or Shingon and Tendai temples associated with the performance of esoteric Buddhist rites and invocations; most of the monks and temple estates within the domain belonged to the surviving temples.

In Mito a similar program was instituted under the daimyō Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628-1700), resulting in the demolition of roughly half the temples in the domain--all new temples established in violation of the Bakufu's ban on temple construction. The monks were forcibly returned to the land, the temple estates converted to fields, and the temples' belongings sold at public auction. Unlike Mitsumasa, however, Mitsukuni does not seem to have been motivated by a hatred of Buddhism. His policy of confiscation was directed equally at Shinto shrines, and he protected and even restored many "old" temples as well as inviting various eminent monks to his domain.

While of considerable interest, the difficulties experienced by Buddhism in Okayama and Mito were by no means typical. The various domainal governments seem to have been permitted a certain latitude in determining their internal religious policies. Satsuma, for example outlawed the Ikko, or True Pure Land, school and infraction of the ban was considered a capital offense. But in the extreme character of their religious "reforms," Mito and Okayama both constitute exceptional rather than representative cases. Whatever its actual impact on public policy, however, the anti-Buddhist rhetoric of Confucian scholars remained a familiar feature of the early Tokugawa period.

Surprisingly, the Buddhist response to these assaults from the Confucian camp was generally mild, at times almost apologetic. Perhaps because of Confucianism's semiofficial role as the guiding moral standard of the regime, there were no attempts to mount a Buddhist counterattack that questioned Confucianism's basic teachings, identified as they were with ethical principles such as loyalty and filiality that were central to Tokugawa life. Instead, the Buddhist reaction was defensive at best, confining itself to denying the validity of Confucian critiques. To this end, certain monks composed point-by-point refutations of the Confucian attacks.

The Obaku Zen teacher Choon Dokai, referred to previously, was responsible for detailed refutations of both Razan's and Banzan's accusations against Buddhism, and for the forgery of a document, the *Kuji honki daizokyo*, that purported to be a defense of Japanese Buddhism composed by the imperial prince and early Buddhist leader Shotoku Taishi. Choon's *Daizokyo* attacks the sort of anti-Buddhist position being articulated by the Confucians of his day, forbidding, for example, the persecution of Buddhism and asserting that the kingdom will be endangered if the ruler fails to honor any of the three teachings (i.e., Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism), though it insists on the superiority of Buddhism.

Such advocacy of the harmony of the three teachings (or four teachings if Taoism is included) was itself an important element of the Buddhist response to Confucianism. Generally, Tokugawa Buddhists seem to have denied that there was any contradiction between Buddhism, Shinto, Taoism, or Confucianism, and the notion of a synthesis between Buddhism and Confucianism was popular in the early Tokugawa period. This was especially true in the Zen school, whose monks had been among the early champions of Neo-Confucian thought in Japan. Takuan Soho's writings, for example, abound in references to Confucianism," and the Zen Master Shido Mu'nan (1603-1676), in his works, quotes freely from the Confucian classics. The teachings of Bankei, Hakuin, and other prominent Tokugawa Zen monks reflect a complete acceptance of Confucian ethical values that was probably standard in the period at all levels of society. In his debates with the Okayama Confucians, Bankei seems to have insisted on the essential compatibility of Buddhist and Confucian teachings, maintaining that his opponents' stubbornly anti-Buddhist position revealed a superficial understanding of the true principles of Confucianism.

A standard Confucian objection to Buddhism was its emphasis on *sunyata*, the emptiness and illusoriness of all phenomenal existence, including ethical values and systems of thought. Buddhism's Confucian detractors frequently pointed to what they considered its negative approach to such concerns as evidence that Buddhism was an amoral, and therefore immoral, religion. The allegedly de-

generate condition of the Buddhist priesthood was cited as evidence for this view, and monks were denounced as mere parasites, fleecing the parishioners to maintain themselves in idleness and no longer bothering even to observe the Buddhist precepts.

While violations of the precepts and other abuses clearly occurred in the temples--the temple edicts address cases of married priests and simony, to mention only two examples--it is difficult to judge if such practices were the exception or the rule. All in all, extreme caution should probably be exercised in extrapolating "factual" information from the Confucian critiques, which were conceived primarily as partisan attacks on Buddhism rather than balanced assessments of its shortcomings.

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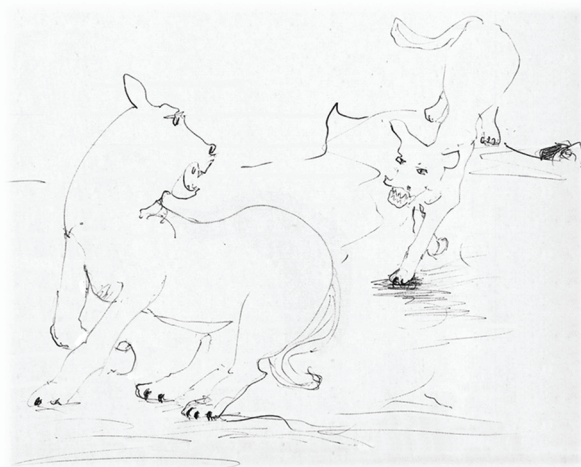
Original Nature is now available on Amazon for \$37.95 with a Kindle version for \$3.03. With that monumental work behind us the First Zen Institute is now preparing for publication of Sokei-an's translation and commentary on the *Record of Linchi*. Its title will be *Three-Hundred-Mile Tiger* taken from the following quote from Sokei-an:

"Kuei-shan and Yang-shan were disciples of Huai-hai, whose teacher was Ma-tsu, another famous master. Kuei-shan was asking who Lin-chi's real teacher was. However, Huang-po and Ta-yu were not two men. From this angle, Ta-yu was the head of the tiger and Huang-po its tail. What a huge tiger! Three hundred miles long!"



Sokei-an

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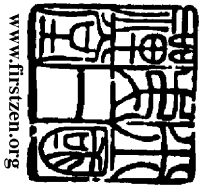
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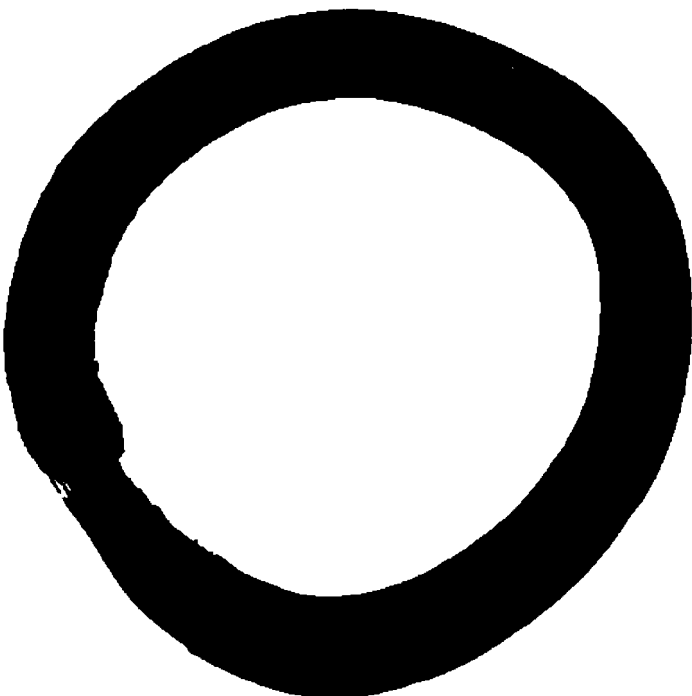
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