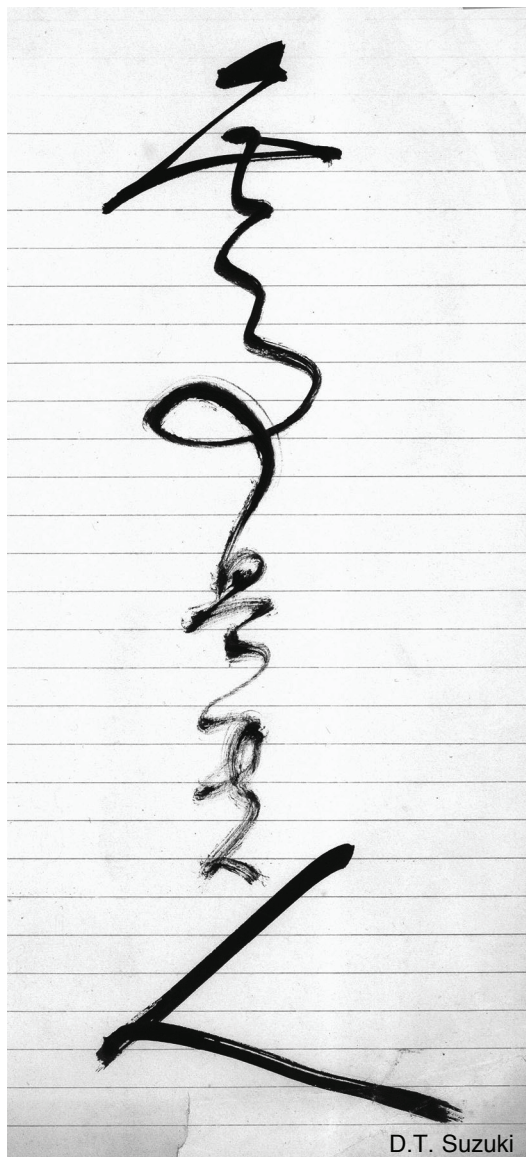


ZEN notes



True Man of No Rank

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

FIFTY-NINTH LECTURE

Wednesday November 15th, 1939

"If you attain Tathagata's state of annihilation you will realize that, according to the law of Tathagata's causal stage and also to that of its natural effect, there is neither the state of annihilation nor he who attains such a state.

O Obedient One! Since the beginningless past all sentient beings who have been deluded by their own erring minds and by egotistic attachments have failed to understand that their minds are ephemeral, appearing and disappearing every moment. For this reason they arouse their minds to hate or love, indulging in attachment to the five kinds of thirst. If they chance, however, to meet a good friend, they will understand through him the nature of Pure and Perfect Awakening. Then they will discover the falsity of their own minds in appearance and disappearance, and will realize that this appearance and disappearance are merely the false work of their own minds.

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

This sutra consists of ten different chapters and this is the Sixth Chapter. The Bodhisattva Vimalamatih asked a question of the Buddha, and the lines translated here are a continuation of the Buddha's answer.

When I came to this country ten years ago and heard you speaking of "enlightenment" I realize that you did not know the meaning of the word. You have the notion that enlightenment means to possess some supernatural power.

But the enlightenment taught by the Buddha is an entirely different thing. If you wish to attain this enlightenment you must realize your original nature; and to attain your original nature you must give up all notions and superstitions—your mind must become pure. (When I speak of "pure," I am not speaking about morality)

"If you attain Tathagata's state of annihilation, . " —This "state of annihilation" is the pure state of mind. Why is our state

of annihilation different from the Tathagata's? Certainly there are two states of annihilation!

When I was a child, I kept a memorandum of my dreams, keeping pencil and notebook beside my pillow. When the notebook and pencil were there I never dreamed that night; but when I forgot to place them beside me I had wonderful dreams! However, by the time I got paper and pencil—I had forgotten the dream. But by this careful observation of my dreams, I dug deep into my mind and became aware of its activity. When I sat alone my mind was completely filled with thoughts and they moved about one by one. I realized that I had no control of my mind. It bothered me.

Later, when I came to this country, I discovered that people here do not care what thoughts are running about in their brains! I am not talking about the mind that is wild but the mind that should be well ordered, cultivated. If you have a mind in such a state you should look into it and find what it is.

Some of you go to a psychoanalyst to be told about your subconscious. We believe that it is very easy to observe the subconscious mind by yourself. Just sit down and watch your thoughts, check them—what are they? "I lent 25 cents to Mr. Jones—I will call him up—no, that costs 5 cents!" or "I must get an overcoat before I go fishing with Mr. Jones."

Consider that your body belongs to nature—not to you: and that your eye belongs to nature, and that your soul belongs to the universe. Then think, "What is soul? What am I? What is this thing called Ego, or Atman?" You must annihilate these questions one by one. You must catch the thoughts as a policeman would catch a thief!

Then you will come into a state of annihilation; you must attain this state. It is our state of mind, but the Buddha's state of mind is deeper; he pushed away that annihilated mind also.

But first we must eliminate all thoughts one by one—house, hat, ants, poker, night club, whisky—and our brain is empty. Then we must annihilate this empty mind also—and at last we will reach the Buddha's state of annihilation.

And now what happens? When you have annihilated your own empty mind, the mind which is called "universal" will appear. And by this universal mind you will observe the whole world.

This is the deepest state—the so-called Tathagata's state of annihilation. This is a secret that we cannot talk about; you must reach there by yourself. Everyone will realize this state some time,

varying in depth, but similar.

When you go to Riverside Drive and sit beside the Hudson River your thoughts come and go like the sailing boats. Finally they go away—the blank mind comes—and you do not see the sailing boats. Then the blank mind goes away, and you are absolutely not there. But you see the river and the green trees; you are expanded into the universe, and your heart beats in the rhythm of nature. Then—"Oh!"—and you come back. If you are a religious man you shiver and know you are with God.

Our annihilation is to close the eyes and cover the ears; the Buddha's annihilation is to keep eyes and ears open. He sees and hears everything—he is one with the universe. I cannot explain to you exactly what this annihilation is—you will have to experience it by yourself.

"... you will realize that, according to the law of Tathagata's causal state, and also to that of its natural effect, there is neither the state of annihilation nor he who attains such a state." The "causal state" is Dharmakaya. The "natural state" is Nirmanakaya. The causal state is the transcendent aspect; it does not belong to eye, ear, or mind; it is the original state. If your five senses have no contact with it how does it look?

Let us say that a mine bursts in the ocean where there is no boat—no one to hear it. There will be no vibration and no sound. If there were no human being in the world, all existence here would have no color, sound, etc.; it is in the state of reality, the causal state. But if we observe the same thing with our physical senses—we can observe the same thing in two different states; I can observe each thing as transparent and, at the same time, observe its color, texture, etc. These two states do not contradict each other. When you enter this state you are annihilated, but you are not annihilating anything!

To express Mahayana Buddhism to a new audience is not an easy task. We handle religion quite differently; we do not join our hands and look at the sky, supplicating. To attain the religious experience is very important. Yet not many of you go to church except for some other purpose—to get a groom or a bride, for instance.

But at this moment, you can begin to train your mind; then perhaps you can sit on Riverside Drive and enter a state where all the values of the world are changed.

"O Obedient One! Since the beginningless past all sentient beings who have been deluded by their own erring minds and by

egotistic attachment, have failed to understand that their minds are ephemeral.,. " Like steam which rises from the spout of your kettle. Or like the dew-drop on a blade of grass in the early morning—suddenly it is no more. And so your mind: "Mr. Brown still owes me that 25 cents!" The telephone rings: "Oh, hello Mr. Brown—why don't you come earlier?" —and you forget to collect the 25 cents! "My maid did not turn up this morning—I cannot trust her." Well, you cannot trust your mind either!

"... appearing and disappearing every moment. For this reason they arouse their minds to hate or love, indulging in attachment to the five kinds of thirst." —The five thirsts: to eat, to generate, to sleep, to become rich, to become famous. By these you are carried away—you don't know where you are because you are carried away by your mind.

"If they chance, however, to meet a good friend, they will understand through him the nature of Pure and Perfect Awakening." To meet a good friend is very rare! It may happen that you meet a teacher who will say, "I will enlighten you." He will pinch your nose and say, "If you see a green light you are awakened." —and he will ask you for twenty-five dollars. This is not a joke! There is such a teacher in New York.

"Then they will discover the falsity of their own minds in appearance and disappearance, and will realize that this appearance and disappearance are merely the false world of their own minds." —All this agony of mind, going out, going in—all is the work of your own mind because you let the mind do this kind of thing.

The mind is like a wave: sometimes you must control the wave and sometimes you must let the wave control you. I take such an attitude. At the same time, you must remember that the waves are always fluctuating but that at the bottom of the ocean is the eternal calm.



Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse XIII, Lecture 2

“Brothers, he who at this moment shines brightly and is listening to my sermon is the one who abides nowhere, who penetrates in manifold directions and is at liberty in the three worlds. Though he enters into diverse circumstances, he is not diverted. In a moment he penetrates the cosmos. When he meets a buddha, he wins over the buddha. When he meets a patriarch, he wins over the patriarch. When he meets an arhat, he wins over the arhat. When he meets a preta, he wins over the preta. No matter what lands he traverses enlightening all beings, he never abandons a moment of mind. Wherever he is, is pure. His light radiates in every direction, and everything is one with him.”

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

When Lin-chi says “at this moment,” “this moment” covers the past, present, and future, that is, before the creation and annihilation of the universe. If you understand this, you will know the one who abides nowhere, who penetrates in manifold directions and is at liberty in the three worlds. This One, of course, is *this* consciousness, *this* present consciousness. This consciousness, however, though it shines so brightly, is not God. It is said in an early sutra, Mahabrahma appeared to the Buddha during his deep meditation, saying: “I am the father of all fathers, the king of all kings, the spirit of all spirits.” The Buddha told him: “You, mortal Mahabrahma, are not the father of all fathers, king of all kings, spirit of all spirits.” “Then,” asked Mahabrahma, “who is the father of all fathers?” “There is none,” said the Buddha, “HE is the father of all fathers.”

This is our understanding exactly. For the Buddhist, God is non-existence. Anything existing as consciousness (Mahabrahma represents the highest consciousness) is not the father. Mahabrahma is the king of light. He speaks the one heavenly word of light that contains all the meanings of all words spoken by human beings. When this light is once embodied in human beings, however, it can never return to its heavenly origin.

There is no word we can use to indicate non-existence, that is,

latent consciousness. Here, even Lin-chi must keep his mouth shut. This is *dharmakaya*. In Buddhism, this mortal consciousness is always the secondary part of consciousness. We understand *dharmakaya* through *sambhogakaya*. It is through *sambhogakaya* consciousness that we reach the father of consciousness. We can call this consciousness by name, but we cannot prove it with our consciousness, we cannot identify the stage of that latent consciousness. Anyone who says Buddhism is a religion of non-ego must point to that particular latent consciousness.

This consciousness is here, which is to say nowhere. Throughout the stages of the three worlds, he who is non-existent penetrates but never leaves a trace, as the moon shines upon the water but leaves no mark. There is a very important point here. Mortal consciousness also penetrates everywhere, in all directions, but is always constrained by the circumference, the objective sensation of the body. When the body returns to its original substance, *akasha*, consciousness has no abode, no place to stay.

In China, Buddhists always return to their temples for the three months of the rainy season. One time, Lin-chi did not return until late, disobeying the rules of the monastery. Days before the end of the three months, he came to the quarters of Huang-po, who was reading a *sutra*.

Lin-chi said, "I have come to pay my respects to you. I am now leaving."

Huang-po said, "You have broken the order of the monks of this temple, coming late and now you are breaking it to leave early."

Lin-chi said, pointing to Huang-po's *sutra*, "I tell you that you are a mere pigeon picking up the black beans (characters) of charity from the *sutra* and eating them."

Huang-po seized Lin-chi and slapped him. Lin-chi was puzzled. How should he respond to Huang-po's slap? This incident took place just before Lin-chi was ordained Huang-po's successor. Lin-chi spent two or three weeks in doubt after this encounter.

Lin-chi said, "Huang-po's consciousness and my consciousness are the same consciousness. Why do we have an order of monks, wear robes, and remain in the temple? This is nonsense!"

When he told this to Huang-po, Huang-po slapped him again, and again Lin-chi did not know what to answer. Lin-chi must have been thinking it was strange—there must be something beyond my understanding.

Lin-chi stayed at his teacher's temple for the rest of the summer. When the summer was over, the monks went on pilgrimage. Lin-chi went to Huang-po's quarters again. "Teacher, I am leaving now."

"Where are you going?" asked Huang-po.

"I am going across the river to the north or to the south. It's all the same. At the mercy of the wind."

Huang-po grabbed him and struck him again. Lin-chi returned Huang-po's blow. Then more blows were exchanged as if they were two men in an argument.

Lin-chi did not stay in the small circle of his consciousness. He did not stay in any conception of consciousness, not as the master of the universe, nor in any particular place; he freely permeated all the dimensions of the three worlds. This is a difficult point to grasp. A Zen student may take fifteen years to grasp the real point of non-ego. When Huang-po clutched and slapped Lin-chi, Lin-chi clutched and slapped him back. Is this a sign of non-ego? Certainly not in the Western view!

"Though he enters into diverse circumstances, he is not diverted." Because he is not in any particular place, not in ego and not in non-ego. He knows he is not mortal consciousness. His consciousness is not square, triangular, nor round; he can stay in all the stars of heaven, yet not remain in one.

"In a moment he penetrates the cosmos." This is the cosmos of *dharmadhatu*, the phenomenal-noumenal existence—just one *dharmadhatu*.

"When he meets a buddha, he wins over the buddha." How do you "win over" a Buddha? Lin-chi is a little obscure here, but what he is saying is that you become Buddha.

"When he meets a patriarch, he wins over the patriarch." When Bodhidharma met the Emperor Wu, the Emperor asked him, "Sage, what is your doctrine?" Bodhidharma answered, "There is no sage." "Who then are you?" Bodhidharma said, "I do not know."

He is not consciousness. If he is not consciousness, he does not know. How could he know? Bodhidharma gave the right answer. I agree with him. When we meet Bodhidharma, how do we preach to him? Do you know?

"When he meets an arhat, he wins over the arhat. When he

meets a preta, he wins over the preta." A *preta* is a hungry-spirit. An *arhat* is one who attains the highest enlightenment, gives up his self. The whole cosmos offers him his life. An *arhat* is the conclusion reached immediately through our own mind.

This religion, therefore, has an entrance immediately here. The shrine is right here. Temporarily, I call it Buddha, not the Buddha who was born in India, but that Buddha who exists everywhere. I can call him "THIS Buddha." Yes, the answer is *here*, immediately!

Shakyamuni Buddha decided this was his religion. To us, the discovery of this religion by him has great significance. We say that a human being has reached true religion, and that the avenue through which he reached it is straight and without hindrance. Buddhism can be explained very easily and plainly, and you can have faith in it immediately without doubt. Others, however, try to reach something higher than themselves. They are always looking upward, joining their hands in prayer to someone in the sky. From our standpoint this is wrong, and it is not very convenient. Why must we search for it in the sky? Why try to get something we hope for by asking someone else for it? Prayer is the expression of man's immediate desire, and he offers a gift to ensure an answer. To us, prayer is our hope, our immediate desire, but we work to get an answer. Work, therefore, is our gift. Without the offering of gifts, prayer is not answered. If our desire is natural, it will be answered naturally; if it is unnatural, it will not be answered.

We do not need any image to worship. Our self is Buddha, and our mind is the entrance to the shrine of Buddha. The Buddha's birth brought this religion into the world and we follow it.

"No matter what lands he traverses enlightening all beings." The "lands" referred to are not actual places, of course. Lin-chi speaks of a subjective place. Everyone's mind is a land according to certain Buddhist sutras. The meaning of the statement that Buddha travels through myriad lands in the cosmos is that the Buddha's splendor simmers through everyone's mind, like magnetic waves. In the sutras, although these lands are always described objectively, you must understand that a subjective meaning is intended.

So "enlightening all beings" means that God enshrines in the human heart. Each one he meets becomes one with him and is enlightened by him. Lin-chi would say when I meet water I drink, thus enlightening it. This is all we can do from morning to evening; this is the manifestation of *nirmanakaya*, the transforming body. Meet a noodle, eat it, enlighten it; meet a fish eat him, enlighten him; there is no him, no you. Wherever you go, you are

one with that. This is enlightenment. No particular place. No place that you cannot go, penetrate at liberty through the three worlds. This is true consciousness. He travels through all places, pure and impure and enlightens everyone there. Certainly, this is not a usual sermon; it is not usual to give this wisdom to those of lesser understanding.

“He never abandons a moment of mind.” *Ksana* is a Sanskrit term meaning a minimum of time, a moment. Mind, particularly subconscious mind, floats in our consciousness so swiftly it is almost incomprehensible. Sometimes the word *ksana* is used to express it. What is this *ksana*-mind?

Whenever the Buddha said “now” or “at this moment,” it was very important. “Today” from the lips of the Buddha means not only this moment but also the past, present, and future. *Ksana* means the cosmos that has no time or space. So when the Buddha seated himself and held SILENCE before his disciples, that was the *ksana* moment, the deepest and highest manifestation of Buddhism.¹

The Second Patriarch of China met Bodhidharma and said, “My mind is not liberated.” Bodhidharma told him: “Where is your mind? Show it to me!” You will observe this *koan* in *sanzen*; then you will realize and understand the *ksana*-moment.

Wherever he is, is pure. His light radiates in every direction, and everything is one with him. “He” is without form or body but penetrates in multifold directions. This is the Master who transforms himself into numerous bodies and preaches his *Dharma* to whomever he meets. This *Dharma* of Lin-chi is not the preaching that goes on in churches or temples but is our actual life from morning to evening.

Lin-chi, of course, is poking fun at those who seek truth in

1 See comment by Edward Conze in his translation of the Diamond Sutra in regard to the Buddha’s preliminary disposition before speaking to his disciples: “Preparatory to entering into trance, the Buddha fixes his attention on the breath which is in front of him. He then enters into a trance which is described in the larger *Prajnaparamita Sutras* as the ‘king of all samadhis,’ and which miraculously persists throughout the preaching of the Sutra.” *Buddhist Wisdom Books* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), p. 22. Elsewhere Sokei-an said, “Dhyana-yoga is what I always do before my lectures. But we do not need to call it by any name. The transparent and clear mind immediately leads you to your original nature, while thinking something deviates you.”

externals, forgetting their own consciousness that is the *sambhogakaya* of the invisible *dharmakaya*. This is the fundamental principle among all the doctrines of Buddhism.

The radiant splendor of the Buddha became one with the light and the myriad-fold existence became one with him. This is the important *ksana*-moment, all is reduced to one.

In the Gospel of St. Luke, it is said, "That they all may be as one in Thee." One in us is the same. Lin-chi, in the ninth century, had the same conception of the truth. All sages speak the same truth, the same word, not two different ones.

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D.T. Suzuki Memorabilia

by Peter Haskel

The Institute archives has received a trove of photos, calligraphy, and other memorabilia relating to the noted Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966). The items, from the collection of William Segal, were generously donated by Segal's wife, Marielle Bancou Segal, an artist, writer, and designer resident in New York and a longtime subscriber to *Zen Notes*. A personal friend of Suzuki's, William Segal (1904-2000) was a successful New York publisher, who is perhaps best known as a prominent student and follower of O.I. Gurdjieff and the subject of two films by Ken Burns that recently aired on PBS. During the postwar years, Segal traveled to Japan and practiced Zen under teachers in various Rinzai temples, joining the monks in their daily practice. He also studied with Suzuki at the latter's home in Kamakura, and during Suzuki's visits to America, hosted Suzuki and Suzuki's personal secretary, Mihoko Okamura, in New York and at Segal's country home in Chester, N.J.

The items appearing in this issue include pictures of Suzuki and Ms. Okamura on a summer 1958 visit to New York, along with an impromptu sample of Suzuki's calligraphy done on legal pad given to Segal: "True man of no rank," a famous phrase from the *Record of Lin-chi*.



William Segal and Dr. Suzuki, summer 1958.



Suzuki wearing Segal's hat with Ms Okamura



Suzuki and Ms. Okamura.

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, #5)

(Continued from the Spring'12 Zen Notes)

Buddhism Under the Tokugawas

The Buddhist response to Confucian accusations that the priesthood was morally and spiritually bankrupt often took the form of intense self-criticism. Many of the leading figures in early Tokugawa Buddhism were reformers who shared the Confucians' low opinion of the contemporary Buddhist priesthood, though not the Confucians' tendency to link this state of affairs to the perceived failings of Buddhism itself. In this atmosphere, the question of "morality," of observance of the Buddhist precepts for both monks and Buddhist laymen, assumed particular relevance, and the early Tokugawa period witnessed movements in every sect of Buddhism aimed at restoring the precepts to a place of central impor-

tance.

In the Shingon sect, Myonin (1576-1610) attempted to revive the Kamakura period precepts school of Eizon (1201-1290), while in the Tendai sect, Jizan Myoru (1636-1690) became the founder of the so called Anraku Ritusu school, a new branch of Tendai promoting Saicho's teaching of the precepts. Even in the Zen school, where such issues did not ordinarily receive special emphasis, figures like Isshi Monju (1607-1645) promulgated a "precepts" Zen emphasizing Buddhist morality for both priests and laymen.

It seems likely that the movement to restore the precepts was at least in part a response to Confucian attacks against Buddhism and specifically against the Buddhist priesthood. In addition, with the temples enjoying a quasipublic status under the parish system, supported by members of the community through compulsory tithes, there must have been considerable moral pressure on the priesthood to maintain acceptable standards of decorum and to honor their priestly vows. Not all Confucians, however, were unqualifiedly opposed to Buddhism, and some even realized a certain accommodation with Buddhist teachings. Perhaps the leading example in the early Tokugawa period was Banzan's teacher Nakae Toju (1608-1648). Toju considered Buddhism inferior to Confucianism, but his later works contain frequent references to Buddhist teachings, even to such notions as the Buddhist heavens and hells, and he is known to have lectured on Buddhist texts to his mother, who was herself a devotee. While the Buddhist terms and concepts employed by Toju serve by and large to expound Confucianism, he plainly considered there to be important links between the two religions. Toju speaks, for example, of the "Bright Virtue Buddha Nature" and of the "original mind of filiality." The true meaning of "leaving home," he says, is not to don a black robe and shave one's head, but to "illumine the Bright Virtue of Buddha Nature...." Toju's notion of an intrinsic, intuitive moral wisdom is close in many respects to the Buddhist idea of original enlightenment, and it is apparently in this sense that he combines Confucian ethical terms with expressions like "Buddha Nature" and "original mind".

Figures like Toju, notwithstanding, Japanese Buddhism in the seventeenth century was plainly on the defensive in many areas. The great temple establishments were hemmed in by governmental restrictions and deprived of much of the independence they had enjoyed in the Middle Ages, even of such traditional prerogatives as the right of sanctuary. At the same time, both the priesthood and Buddhism itself were subject to repeated attacks by Confucian theorists and administrators, who had now usurped advisory functions once the province of many eminent Buddhist

clerics in certain domains. As described earlier, Confucian rhetoric resulted in active persecution of Buddhism by the feudal authorities. Moreover, the fact that Confucian teachings were enshrined as the guiding principles of the Tokugawa regime seems to have lent the anti-Buddhist sentiments of the Confucian scholars an aura of official approval, while discouraging Buddhists from pursuing a more aggressive defense of their position.

Yet, despite such difficulties, the early Tokugawa period was a time of growth and activity for Buddhism, an era of considerable patronage by the ruling elite and enormous popularity among the population at large. The Confucians' vituperative attacks against Buddhism may well reflect frustration over the teaching's continued success at all levels of Japanese society, a success sanctioned and encouraged by the Bakufu itself through the parish system. Indeed, an image of the seventeenth century as a period of decline in the fortunes of Buddhism would be incorrect in many respects.

If the Tokugawa shoguns in the seventeenth century made themselves the uncontested overlords of the Buddhist establishment, they also served as its principal patrons. The Tokugawa family dispersed huge sums to the temples for sundry purposes, including scholarship and the performance of rites, and founded and patronized a vast number of temples, particularly in the Kanto, near their seat of power. In addition, Buddhism maintained a significant presence at the Shogunal court.

Buddhist ceremonials were performed for the reigning Shogun, and deceased Shoguns were interred in Buddhist mausolea and assigned posthumous Buddhist names. Beyond such largely formal connections, moreover, several of the Tokugawa rulers of the seventeenth century evinced a personal interest in Buddhism, and series of eminent Buddhist priests served as trusted advisors to the early Shoguns.

Ieyasu himself was an adherent of the Jodo, or Pure Land sect, and is said to have repeated the *nenbutsu* five hundred times daily, but his interests seem to have been fairly eclectic, and he was associated with a number of teachers from various schools of Buddhism. Conspicuous among these were the Gozan monk Suden, mentioned above as a key formulator of Tokugawa secular and religious policies, and the Tendai monk Tenkai (d. 1643), who founded the Toeizan Kaneiji and helped to establish an official cult centering on worship of Ieyasu as an avatar of the Healing Buddha Yakushi at the shogun's elaborate mausoleum at Nikko. As noted previously, the Daitokuji master Takuan Soho was a presence at the court of the third shogun, Iemitsu, who became his devoted patron and tried, unsuccessfully, to enlist his counsel on state affairs, as Ieyasu had done with Suden. Tsunayoshi (1646-1709),

the fifth Shogun, actively patronized the Buddhist temples, as did his favorite Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658-1714), at whose mansion the Shogun would frequently assemble groups of monks to lecture on Buddhism. Yanagisawa was known for his close acquaintance with Zen monks and studied koans and *mondo* under a series of teachers, but the nature of Tsunayoshi's own interest in Buddhism seems to have been superficial, if not actually superstitious. The diary of the Shingon priest Ryuko (1649-1724), the leading monk at Tsunayoshi's court, reveals that, as in the Heian period, a primary role of Buddhism for the country's leaders remained the invocation of magical powers to insure the welfare of the state and that of the ruling family. Specifically, this involved the performance of rites aimed at averting natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts and eclipses of the sun, but supernatural threats, too, were the object of priestly attention. An entry for 1696 records an urgent Bakufu request for Ryuko to appear at the Shogun's castle in response to a warning from the *monzeki*, or Imperial Abbot, at Nikko. According to the abbot, the previous winter several inches of metal had been torn from the shrine's sacred sword, and the color of the blade now showed signs of "anger," which Ryuko was asked to propitiate by performing the appropriate rites.

The patronage of Buddhist priests and temples by the early Tokugawa Shoguns established a model for their retainers, many of whom followed the rulers' example. The result was that, in terms of official recognition, the prestige of Buddhism and of the priesthood remained high in seventeenth-century Japan, though on occasion jeopardized by the violently anti-Buddhist sentiments of Confucian partisans. Though not included among the four classes that theoretically made up Tokugawa society, Buddhist priests, in fact, occupied a privileged position, beneath the rank of samurai but above that of commoner. As in medieval Europe, the priesthood in Tokugawa Japan provided one of the few avenues of social mobility. While noble birth clearly enhanced one's career in the Buddhist clergy, even a priest of humble extraction could distinguish himself by virtue of his learning, piety, or administrative or artistic accomplishments and be considered worthy to visit the local castle or even the Imperial palace.

Despite the massive confiscations of temple lands in the late sixteenth century, estates remained the economic backbone of the great temples patronized by the Bakufu, who confirmed these domains as they had the fiefs of the leading feudal lords. The abbots of such temples, moreover, were on occasion able to muster political influence comparable and even superior to that of many daimyo. In response to the temple confiscations that accompanied the anti-Buddhist campaign in the Okayama domain, for example, the leaders of the Ueno Kaneiji appealed to the Bakufu, asking

that Ikeda Mitsumasa turn over to them fifty-four of the now vacant temples he had seized. Mitsumasa had probably intended to transform the properties into taxable farm acreage, but was ultimately compelled by Bakufu pressure to relinquish the temples to the Kaneiji, a telling demonstration of the respect and support accorded by the Tokugawa regime to the Buddhist establishments that they favored.

In a sense, Mitsumasa's program of temple consolidation was attempting to reverse a trend that constituted one of the most obvious manifestations of the popularity of Buddhism in seventeenth-century Japan. This is the enormous growth in the number of temples, a phenomenon that was a hallmark of Buddhism in the early Tokugawa period. Temple construction reached a sudden, dramatic height in the 1620s before subsiding, and remained relatively stable thereafter, with only occasional spurts to the end of the seventeenth century. In Edo itself, the seventy-two temples that had existed in 1590 had swelled to more than a thousand temples one hundred years later. The Bakufu's repeated attempts to limit the construction of new temples, both in the capital and the provinces, seem to have been motivated primarily by a simple desire to keep the number of temples from getting out of hand, rather than by any official campaign to suppress, discredit or discourage Buddhism. The Tokugawa clan itself was responsible for many of the new temples in the capital, as were the various daimyo who were required to maintain alternate residences in Edo, where they established large numbers of clan funerary temples. These were augmented by yet other new temples supported by the city's burgeoning middle class.

The spate of temple construction was not confined to Edo, but occurred throughout Japan, in apparent disregard of the Bakufu's ban on new construction, which seems to have been honored largely in the breach. New temples continued to establish themselves throughout the seventeenth century through a combination of accepted legal dodges and the backing of influential samurai. A common ruse, to which the Bakufu and domainal governments often seem to have lent their grudging acceptance, was to select the site of a ruined or abandoned temple and claim that the temple under construction on the site was not a new establishment but merely a restoration of an earlier structure. Thus, following the creation of the Obaku school with the arrival of various Ming monks in the mid-seventeenth century, some five hundred Obaku temples sprang up across Japan, with the sect justifying their construction on the pretext that they were "restorations" of older temples that had originally stood upon the sites. Although the growth in construction of temples was stimulated in part by the parish system, many of the new temples were not parish temples, supported by tithes but independent establishments, maintaining themselves

through popular and wholly voluntary support.

Along with the surge in temple construction, the Tokugawa period witnessed a marked increase in the ranks of the Buddhist priesthood. Standards had been relaxed, making it relatively easy to qualify for admission to the priesthood, which with the new economic security of the temples, had become an increasingly attractive calling. In certain instances, temples had become so crowded that monks pushed out into lay houses, where they set up in competition with their former establishments, performing esoteric rites and other services for the local population, a situation inveighed against in the 1665 decree. The priesthood was expected, however, to observe rigid standards of decorum. Like the samurai, the monk was, at least theoretically, bound to present a model of ethical conduct to the common people, charged as he was with responsibility for their spiritual lives. Monks were consequently forbidden to engage in secular activity and punished for any infraction of the law with greater severity than a comparable lay offender.

Above all, the priesthood was enjoined to devote itself to learning, and Buddhist scholarship enjoyed something of a renaissance during the Tokugawa period. Academies, as noted above, were established in all headquarters temples, and in every sect, numbers of notable scholar monks emerged. While the Bakufu restricted scholarly activity in the temples to study of one's own school, this resulted in a minute examination of the various sects' teachings that led to their being organized, simplified, and systematized, with the correct form of their particular classics carefully established. A signal aspect of this process was the investigation and clarification of the teachings of the sects' founders, which sparked a revival of interest in the founders themselves and in the history of the sects. Many studies of the schools of Buddhism and of their founders and luminaries appeared, prompting a new spirit of self awareness and self examination and contributing to a kind of revival in each school. In the Rinzai sect, for example, the noted scholar monk Mangan Shipan (1626-1710) compiled the *Empo dento roku*, a collection of biographies of eminent Zen priests, for the stated purpose of reviving true Zen, in decline since the Onin War, "so that monks of the present may read the words of the men of old and take them as their models for today." In the Soto sect, scholarship played an even more crucial role, reviving interest in the works of Dogen, who had been relatively neglected since the late Middle Ages, and reforming the Soto teaching on the basis of Dogen's written legacy. The Soto school of today is largely a creation of the early Tokugawa movement to restore the original teachings of Dogen that was founded in part on the work of various Soto scholar monks of the period.

True man of no Rank
caught in a frogbox...



Susan Morningstar

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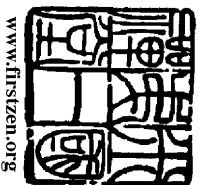
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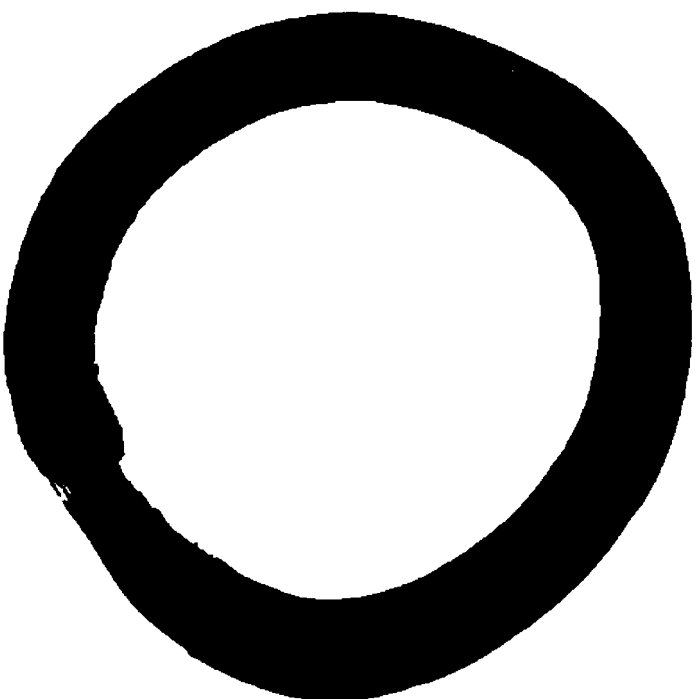
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VOLUME LVIII, NUMBER 3 SUMMER 2012
Editor, usually anonymous artist, poet... Peeter Lamp

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First Zen Institute of America
113 East 30th Street
New York, New York 10016
(ZN Vol 58, No.3)



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