Zen Notes

Peach-devouring vegetarian Buddha Carp

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

SIXTY-THIRD LECTURE

Wednesday December 13th, 1939

"O Obedient One! When a Bodhisattva and also the sentient beings of the future world neither vainly arouse their minds nor check the vain agitation thereof; when they neither hold any further awareness of their vain thoughts, even though they abide therein, nor are they aware of their nescience of true being; when, after hearing of this Dharma, they observe it with conviction and resolution in which there is neither fear nor wonder, this is termed 'the awakening of sentient beings according to their original nature.'

"O Obedient One! You must know that these sentient beings who are able to attain such a state of awakening have already planted all the roots of virtue by offering alms to the myriad Buddhas and to the Bodhisattvas, numerous as the sands of the Ganges. The Buddha says that such men have attained the seed of all wisdom (Sarvathajnana)."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

This is a continuation of the Buddha's answer to the Bodhisattva Mahamatih. He had asked the Buddha to say, in detail, what is the highest awakening.

This awakening is a process; there is a beginning and an end. In your Western term, this is "enlightenment" —but, in Buddhism, we prefer the term "awakening."

When we awake to the enlightened mind—from sleeping mind—we really discover the new world in the old one.

There is something called "arising" —man awakes from this deluded state to the enlightened state. One who senses this, will begin to open his eyes to that new world. He will awaken from the dream, The students who seek awakening, awake from their dreaming thoughts to awakened thoughts, but there are degrees of awakening.

First, the students awake to their original aspect of mind. If this glass (holding it up) were painted, we would scratch the paint off to find the original quality of the glass. You will never find the

original quality by painting more stuff over it! So, if the student wishes to awake to this original state of mind he must scrape off his vain thoughts, this useless agitation of mind. If you wish to find the original state of water, you will keep it still—make it transparent. It is the same with the mind; we keep it quiet and make it transparent so that it will manifest its original quality.

This is an Oriental method—but why should not Western people practice it? Why should Western people agitate their minds in search of peace? Why must they stir up their minds to find stillness? As a matter of fact, they practice the diametrically opposite way! First, they will go to a library and read a little part of many books; then they will go to other libraries to check what they have read.

But this method, of course, is very near to you always. While you are peeling potatoes in your kitchen, concentrate your mind into the peeling and your mind will become quiet. To concentrate into each action is the first stage of Buddhist practice. The period described in this sutra is the last stages of work.

"*O Obedient One!*" —Thus the Buddha addresses the Bodhisattvas who act "according to the law of the universe, of nature, and of man; who take the acquiescent attitude because they know the law."

"*When a Bodhisattva and also the sentient beings of the future world.*"—This sutra is written for Bodhisattvas—not for monks. Then why do they speak of "sentient beings?" Because all beings have soul; in Buddhism, it is just one ocean of soul—we do not speak of "soul" in the plural sense. There is one soul which appears in all the different forms: soul in vegetable, in insect, in man—all the same soul! But the karmas which carry the soul are different; karma is not created in one incarnation, but through many incarnations. This idea suggests the theory of evolution.

In this part of the sutra, the Buddha teaches that all Bodhisattvas and sentient beings—whatever they do—are enlightened souls. Here the Buddha arranged three grades of the states appearing in the practice of meditation.

"*... neither vainly arouse their minds.* " —This means that when you meditate—your meditation must be natural. When your mind desires to meditate, it has some problem, while you are peeling potatoes—your hand will naturally stop. If your mother sees you, she will say, "Wake up, wake up!" But when you vainly arouse your mind to meditation—seat yourself, count, jerk—this is necessary practice so your nose begins to itch and you are ashamed to scratch it and hold your hand steady—No! True meditation comes

in the back way!

"... *nor check the vain agitation thereof;*" —As when a sneeze arises in this 1-2-3 meditation—or a small insect creeps into your lap!

"... *when they neither hold any further awareness of their vain thoughts, even though they abide therein, nor are they aware of their nescience of true being;*" —I am thinking useless thoughts, but I am aware of it. What am I doing? I don't need to be aware of it. I just go ahead and think the useless thoughts. For this awareness is of the mind, not of the consciousness.

When you look at Mount Fuji you must forget your mind; Mount Fuji and your mind are one. It is the mirror and the reflection. You say, "Isn't it beautiful!" This is the aesthetic view, but your mind is not beautiful at all. The mirror is not aware of the reflection and you are aware. (Knocked head)

The "nescience of true being" —this state always appears in the state of unawareness. "I must find the state of original mind—it is lost!" No, never mind! You are always in the state of original being, but you must realize it. Then drop it. When you are really sleeping, you don't know about it. This line on "nescience" is very important.

"... *when, after hearing of this Dharma, they observe it with conviction and resolution in which there is neither fear nor wonder,.* " —You must come to this conclusion. "I am always in the state of true beings; therefore I don't need to practice Buddhism." This is the conclusion! "I have practiced Buddhism: I have meditated and I have attained the state of nescience. My mind is transparent, but there is nothing to know. My mind is always in the original state."

Then one may say, "Well I am here, but now I must go back to daily life!" It is as if one says, "I have a tooth that aches; I must go to the dentist." But when you arrive at the dentist—there is nothing the matter with your tooth!

"... *this is termed 'the awakening of sentient beings according to their original nature.*" —This is the goal; come back, take tea, "Hello, how do you feel today?" "I feel fine!" But no one believes it, because this one hasn't gone to a mountain cave, eaten one grain of rice a day! The Buddha did this once—but he concluded, "No, this is not the way." But under the Bodhi tree he attained.

If you can have faith in God without knowing him you are

fortunate. Some can have faith without knowledge, but our kinky mind doesn't believe it. I believed it when I was twenty-one, at the monastery.

"*O Obedient One! You must know that these sentient beings who are able to attain such a state of awakening have already planted all the roots of virtue by offering alms to the myriad Buddhas and to the Bodhisattvas, numerous as the sands of the Ganges.*" —You are a Bodhisattva; your soul is transparent, and the first thing is "giving;" finally, you will come to real awakening.

At first, you awake to the empty world—but when you come to the last state of awakening—you find yourself in this state, this world, in this time, with this name, in this family. It is very difficult to attain this type of enlightenment.

"*The Buddha says that such men have attained the seed of all wisdom.* (Sarvathajnana.)—When I was young, I thought such wisdom unattainable, but it is here in this monk, the seed of all wisdom!

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Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse XIV, Lecture 2

"Students, however, do not understand this. Cleaving to the meaning of words, their view is restricted and confined to such terms as 'sacred' and 'secular.' This is the reason their view of the Dharma can never be clear. Such teachings as the twelve divisions of the teachings are merely a display of ideas. Unable to comprehend this, students invent imagined meanings for the written words. This means, of course, they are dependent [upon something that is not real]. Falling into the pit of cause and effect, they will never be delivered from birth and death in the three worlds.

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

Lin-chi is repeating the same subject again, the principle of true understanding, the principle of all sentient beings, the one point that is most important for us. This true understanding is very difficult to comprehend; so when I speak of it directly, you do not appreciate it. For example, when you hear the word "sacred," I am sure you approve of it; and when you hear the word

"profane," I am also sure you disapprove of it; but you do not really know why one is better than the other. In Buddhist understanding, "sacred" and "secular" really only have skin deep meanings. You could say the ones who are sacred are those who do not care for the life of the world and live on mountaintops and eat tree bark, weeds, and mushrooms. They do not use fire to cook their meals or put any special flavor into it. They are usually referred to as sages. Some of these hermits never take a bath for three or four years; yet, they are clean and pure. But the one who eats three times a day and does actual work from morning to evening, such a one is profane. So when a student does not know the real meaning and just surmises something from words, he cannot conceive of a deeper understanding. In this way it is impossible to grasp the law of the universe. It is like a man of law who is restricted and is never clear.

This is the reason Lin-chi says the "twelve divisions of the teachings," the Dharma of the Buddha which contains the whole teaching of Buddhism, is nothing but a display of words that restrict and narrow the real meaning of true understanding. If you surmise anything from it, it is not the true understanding. You are only making karma for yourself that will bind you in the invisible laws of cause and effect. If that is true, what shall you do? What's the use? And what is salvation? If you understand the Buddha's teaching, it is not new; it is the old, old thing; it is in our blood vessels and we carry it in our hearts. If you do not know it, you do not know Buddhism. So you must understand this before you decide to become a Buddhist.

The key to this understanding in Buddhism is in our term dharmakaya. It is a term that contains the real view of this actual, existing universe. And that view has three points: The first is everyday desire. I wish to learn this more than that, to make myself or another happier. In other words, I try to fulfill my desire or that of another. The world is a place of struggle and each being exists as an egotistic individual, but one also needs to give, to love, and to sympathize. However, sympathy towards others sometimes is like giving candy to a crying child. In this viewpoint, this ego idea, there is no rest or salvation, no peace and no emancipation.

The second point is that although my consciousness takes on all manner of different existences, it is one because it comes from one consciousness and returns to one consciousness; therefore, we must not have this kind of ego idea, as well. A commandment says that you shall not talk of another's faults and be pleased that you are better; you are part of the universe. But this idea will not save you from agony and disturbance either. You cannot save yourself.

The third point is the highest, the knowledge of non-existence.

This view says this world has no value to cling to, this desire has no end to pursue; this is just a dream. The dream you experience at night comes from your subconscious, but *this* dream comes from our *alaya*-consciousness, the deepest part of our minds, the link between nature and man--all this existence is the production of our senses. This is the Buddhist idea of emptiness, of reality: I am hungry; I will eat. That is all. This is pain. That is all. You live in two worlds, the visible and invisible. That is true observation. And if you understand this, you will find that you are different from others, and you will see it. The others are running about seeking this and that, for beauty in art, and so on, but you can see emptiness and can transcend this world. I am beaten, why should I be sorry? I am dying, why grieve? If you carefully observe this viewpoint, you will see that all great men stand upon it. The one who sacrifices, always has this viewpoint. Sometimes a poet will write something sweet, yet have something dark in it, some kind of unworldly enchantment that draws all hearts into the belief that the poet has understanding. A monk will never be able to cast away his daily desire until he takes the viewpoint that all is a dream.

The emptiness of true existence is the theory of the Buddha. The beauty and the depth and the charm of Buddhism arise from it. If we understand, we do not need words. There is not much value in just talking about true understanding and true Buddhism. If we observe the great religious giants, we will see that their indifference toward their own life and death, their wonderful power and their great beauty, all come from this point of view--in Buddhist terms, *dharmakaya*. For them, this emptiness is not empty in the relative sense. This phenomenal existence, this desire, is just a temporal mutable existence, and they do take it seriously. But they give it no value and make no attachment; they enjoy its beauty, but this enjoyment of beauty is not eternal existence. They stand upon emptiness and realize true existence. This is true salvation.

"If you wish to be at liberty, to live or to die, to go or to stay, to put on or to take off, you must at this moment comprehend the one listening to my sermon. He is without form or appearance, root or ground, or any abode, but he is full of vitality. Performing manifold functions, he responds to all circumstances and leaves no trace. Therefore, if you seek him, he recedes; if you pursue him, he turns away. Thus, this is called the "Mystery."

Of course, in this passage Lin-chi is speaking of the Master, this universal man we might call consciousness. He has no root because he is beginningless; no ground because the original form, original existence, is pure space and time there is nothing in which to root this originality. (I think you will understand this when you pass the koan "Before father and mother.") He has no abode because he penetrates the whole universe but does not stay any place;

there is no place to stay.

You must understand that your consciousness is performing manifold functions from morning to evening. It is tangible; you can feel it. You may sing and dance in your dreams, but when you awake, you find no trace of these performances. If you try to catch the dance of this consciousness, you cannot! In the koan, "The wooden man dances and the stone woman sings," it is impossible to find a trace of this song and dance. One answer was, "The dragon peacock circles in the scarlet sky." This was an answer given by a disciple to his master when their candle flame was blown out, leaving them in darkness. Who can trace the dragon peacock circling the sky? Although we can see everything in this stage, if we shift into the *dharmakaya* stage, then we cannot trace anything anymore.

Of course, Lin-chi is speaking from his own standpoint. He is standing upon the transcendental existence of *dharmakaya*. One who has an egotistic viewpoint cannot understand his words. But one who transcends this physical and individual world and lives entirely from the universal standpoint, such a one will understand. Such faith is very difficult to explain from the Zen standpoint. Christianity explains it simply by saying that we have nothing to do with staying or going, living or dying. All is in the power of the Almighty, a part of his omnipotence. Man must give up his desires, his clinging to life. He should be modest and humble, and welcome the will of God. To grasp the real understanding of that almighty power and to live in it, one cannot have any pride and selfishness. This is the Christian view.

It is a shortcoming, however, of some Zen students to put too much importance on themselves. These kinds of Zen students think they can act in any way they want, to stay or to go as they wish, but they do not really understand that stage. They must give up something, make their slate clean, must be annihilated once and so gain that great relaxation of true understanding. When Lin-chi speaks of being at liberty, this liberty is not a selfish one; it is the liberty of the universal one, the one with the universal mind. Such a one can attain this liberty, can stay in this stage or go, put on any state of mind and take it off, not acting or dramatizing. Nature performs this wonderful function for him. To live, to die, you do not know how to do it. But if that one with the universal power of nature carries you away and brings you back, it is just the same as though you did it yourself.

Sometimes a man will attain this liberty at the moment of death, because his hardship will annihilate his egoistic mind and he will know Nature's arrangement to be much better than his own egoistic desire. We already have this faith in our nature anytime

country has been divorced from the true Dharma, so that no more that we meet with difficulty and we can say, "I am ready; I have some understanding." In the last moment, you have infinite tranquility. A soldier in the last battle will say, "I was afraid, but now I am ready, settled in my mind. At this moment death may come. I have no regrets." There is this dream, and there is the eternal world.

"Therefore," Lin-chi says, *" if you seek him, he recedes; if you pursue him, he turns away. Thus, this is called the "Mystery."* If you say no, it turns to yes. You say yes, it turns to no. Nothing exists in the universe; all is existing; even nothing is one existence.

In Zen if a koan is presented from the *dharmakaya* view, you must answer from *nirmanakaya* and vice versa. That is a trick to pass through a koan. A teacher always tries to present it from an entirely different angle. When the Zen master is indicating something very small, he will speak of something very large because in the *dharmakaya* state both are the same: the poppy seed contains the universe and a hair swallows the ocean. If you try to "take four thousand volumes of sutras out of a violin case," this koan is impossible to handle from the phenomenal viewpoint because this is not the real ground from which to settle the question. You must go back to the cause of creation of this phenomenal existence. If you enter into this, then you will see from that standpoint. You will see that all is mutable, like the waves on the ocean, always moving. To grasp real understanding, you must see from all stand-points, from knowledge, emotion, and desire. You must reach it from all angles. In koan study, you will realize it when the teacher says, "Your word is alright, but not yet." There is something more to understand.

There was once a disciple of Nan-ch'uan [748-835], who went far from his temple and then returned after about ten years. He walked into the temple and met the abbot. "But where is Nan-ch'uan?" The abbot said, "Oh, your teacher Nan-ch'uan is dead." He laughed at the news. The abbot looked at him and said, "You must not laugh!" He then cried bitterly. We see, from his understanding, that his action was spontaneous, not dramatic. The attitude of the Buddhist is sometimes very different from others.

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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, #9)

(Continued from the Spring '13 Zen Notes)

The Independents

One of the most striking features of early Tokugawa Zen is the number of famous monks who achieved enlightenment independently, who were what was at times referred to as *mushi dokugo* or "enlightened by oneself without a teacher."

Most of these men were determined idealists, animated by a desire to experience authentic realization, while expressing a strong pessimism about the current state of Japanese Zen. Because of the degeneration of the teaching, they believed, few if any qualified teachers remained. Being unenlightened themselves, the teachers of the present day were unable either to enlighten others

or to confirm others' experiences of enlightenment. This left sincere practitioners with no alternative but to win realization on their own, and having done so, to sanction their enlightenment for themselves, thus becoming literally, 'self-enlightened and self-certified (*jigo jisho*)..

Bankei himself, as will be seen, was a prime example of this trend, realizing enlightenment in solitary retreat and subsequently unable to find any teacher fully qualified to sanction his experience. But Bankei's case was hardly an isolated one, and the roster of self-enlightened teachers includes such notables of the period as the Myoshinji masters Daigu Sochiku (1584-1669), Ungo Kiyo (1582-1659) and Isshi Monju (1607-1645) and the Soto teachers Suzuki Shosan (1579-1653) and Soko Gesshu (1618-1696). Indeed, belief in the necessity of relying wholly on oneself in the quest for enlightenment may be one reason for the emergence of so many individual teaching styles in early Tokugawa Zen.

The careers of Daigu and Ungo, in particular, offer dramatic examples of the *jigo jisho* phenomenon. As teachers of Zen, the two were very different individuals. Daigu was an explosive personality, given to wildly eccentric, and even violent, behavior; by contrast, Ungo was a modest and retiring monk who espoused a synthesis of Pure Land and Zen. Both, however, were colleagues who as young monks had studied under the same master and traveled together on pilgrimages and their search for enlightenment shared certain common features. Although both had received their line's inka and were awarded honors within the Myoshinji, they ultimately found themselves questioning the depth of their experience of Zen, and set out once more in middle age on the quest for authentic realization.

Daigu is frequently cited as one of the luminaries of Myoshinji Zen in the seventeenth century. A native of Mino, he entered the priesthood as a child, and while still in his twenties, was awarded office at Myoshinji, succeeding to the line of his teacher, Itchu Tomoku (1552-1621), known as "Itchu the Stick" for his liberal use of the same on his students. One day, a woman visited Daigu's temple and asked him to perform the funeral service for her dead child. Daigu agreed, but when the woman begged him to tell her where her child had now gone, he found himself unable to answer, and the woman went off sobbing in despair.

Shaken by this incident, Daigu is said to have recognized the shallowness of his understanding, and feeling no longer competent to serve as abbot and conduct funerals, he abandoned the temple and set out once more on pilgrimage. After six years of travel, he finally realized enlightenment at age forty-six when, according to one account, the rotted well crib on which he customarily passed

the night meditating gave way, plunging him into the water. Convinced, however, that no master existed in Japan qualified to attest to his experience, Daigu turned instead to the "buddhas and patriarchs," invoking them in a verse in which he prayed for their affirmation or rejection of his enlightenment. "If my enlightenment is genuine," Daigu declared, "let the buddhas and patriarchs confirm it; but if it is not genuine, then let me instantly endure their punishment!" Apparently the answer Daigu received was affirmative.

Ungo's enlightenment experience is remarkably similar to Daigu's in many respects. Abandoned at a temple as a child, Ungo was raised as a monk. Like Daigu, he eventually became a disciple of the Myoshinji master Itchu, and after studying under Itchu for six years, set out on a famous pilgrimage in which he visited many of the leading Zen teachers of the day. In 1621, Ungo was appointed abbot of Myoshinji and became a successor to Itchu, but chose as a rule to remain in the obscurity of small country temples.

Despite his purple robe and years of study under famous masters, however, Ungo found himself at age fifty beset by fears that his understanding of Zen was merely intellectual and superficial. Ungo was debating how to resolve his doubts when, early that autumn, the Bodhisattva Kannon appeared to him in a dream, declaring that Ungo would realize enlightenment if he climbed Mount Ochi in Echizen (Fukui Prefecture) and undertook a period of solitary practice. Accordingly, Ungo set out the next day for Echizen. Mount Ochi had been a sacred peak since the Nara period and remained a center of popular worship, focused on the shrine of its Shinto avatar. When Ungo reached Mount Ochi in late fall of 1631, snow had already blanketed the slopes and mountain passes, and the priest-custodian of the shrine attempted to discourage him from proceeding with his retreat. Ungo, however, would not be dissuaded, and climbing to the shrine, began seven days of intensive practice, sustained only by a small supply of dried beans carried to him by the anxious priest. By evening of the sixth day, the beans had been exhausted, and the following morning at dawn Ungo at last experienced enlightenment, suddenly perceiving the truth that "all things are unborn." However, like Daigu and, later, Bankei, once having realized enlightenment, Ungo was now confronted with the problem of how to confirm his experience.

"In the Zen school," the Teacher reflected, if one experiences enlightenment, and he fails to meet a clear-eyed teacher and receive his sanction, it is called "being enlightened alone without a teacher (*mushi dokugo*)". Such a one, moreover, is considered a heretic. However, for two hundred years now the Zen of our

clear-eyed teachers remain. While there are many people in the world of Zen, there is none able to sanction my own present experience of enlightenment.

Like Daigu, Ungo was forced to conceive of an alternative to sanction by one of his own contemporaries. His enlightenment, he reasoned, had been due to the spiritual assistance of the "gods and buddhas." It was to them, therefore, that he would turn for some sign that his realization was genuine. Holding aloft his *hossu,* the short stick that is a Zen master's mark of rank, Ungo prayed to the gods and buddhas, saying: "If my enlightenment is genuine, as proof, return this *hossu* to my hands. If it is false, then do not let me ever again behold it." He then hurled the *hossu* a "thousand fathoms" into the valley below, and descended the mountain.

Some thirteen years later, Ungo was on his way to Kyoto to Myoshinji when he stopped for the night at a temple near Mount Ochi. The abbot came to pay his respects and brought with him a *hossu* discovered by a woodcutter. He reported that it had been found years ago, abandoned on the floor of the valley, and offered it to Ungo, as a gift. Tearfully receiving the *hossu*, from the abbot, Ungo was overcome by gratitude to the gods and buddhas for having finally acknowledged his realization.

The career of the Zen Master Isshi Monju, a famous contemporary of both Daigu and Ungo, offers another interesting example of the early Tokugawa Zen "independents." Born into a noble family, Isshi began his training at Shokokuji and later traveled to Sakai with the aim of studying koan under Takuan. When he presented his understanding, however, Takuan only laughed and told him: "I don't tie up students by burdening them with a lot of useless talk; with one pill I cure all their illnesses!" Discouraged, Isshi left Sakai and received ordination from a priest of the Ritsu school, but subsequently returned to Takuan for intensive training and followed him into exile as an attendant.

Yet, despite his early links with Takuan, Isshi pursued his Zen studies largely on his own, preferring a simple, reclusive existence and practicing in solitude in the mountains. In 1635, at age twenty-nine, he suddenly realized enlightenment while seated under a citron tree. Despairing, however, of finding anyone in Japan suited to testify to his experience, Isshi determined to sail to China, hoping to meet there an enlightened teacher who could sanction him, but was prevented from realizing his wish by the Bakufu's prohibition on foreign travel. Finally, at the retired Emperor Go Mizunoo's urging, Isshi went in 1644 to meet the Myoshinji Master Gudo Toshoku. After submitting Isshi to a rigorous examination, Gudo declared that he found himself and Isshi to be in perfect accord, and conferred on Isshi his *inka*. The interview, it should be noted,

was engineered under pressure from the retired emperor, a prominent patron of both priests. We do not know what part, if any, this played in the favorable outcome of Gudo's meeting with Isshi; nor do we know if Isshi, for his part, wholly accepted Gudo's ability to confirm his experience, though Gudo was among the most highly regarded Zen masters of his day. What is clear is that it was not until the year of his death, nine years after his original enlightenment experience, that Isshi at last received some confirmation of his realization. The statement composed by Gudo on this occasion affirms the independent character of Isshi's enlightenment:

"As has been said by the Patriarch, one who does not depend on a teacher for his enlightenment is rare indeed; if you are fortunate enough to realize enlightened wisdom on your own, you do not have to study with teachers. The Zen student Monju is such a man, one who immediately awakened of himself without having to depend on others in his search."

Gudo's remarks above imply plainly that Isshi's enlightenment was self-realized. Despite Isshi's studies with Takuan, the relationship between the two remains clouded. Before arranging the meeting with Gudo, Go Mizunoo had attempted to have Takuan appoint Isshi his heir. But Takuan steadfastly refused to approve Isshi or any other Zen priest as his successor, despite pressure from both the retired Emperor and the Shogun to appoint an heir, Takuan wrote: "That which is the Dharma cannot be passed on; that which can be passed on is not the Dharma.... When the Dharma obtains [suitable] men, it is revealed; when it does not, it is concealed. When concealed, it is like the sun; when revealed, it is also like the sun."

Though approaching its subject obliquely, the statement reveals Takuan's deep pessimism about the Zen world of his day. He sees no students in Japan qualified to carry forward the teaching of Zen. Rather than cheapen the Dharma, he seems to imply, it is better to let it remain in obscurity and cut off his line if no worthy heirs are to be found. Like Ikkyu in his work *Jikaishu,* Takuan apparently scorns the notion of formal transmission for its own sake. At the same time, however, he sounds a positive note. The Dharma, like the light of the sun, can never be extinguished, he insists, but can only become temporarily obscured. It need not depend on an unbroken transmission from teacher to disciple, but is always waiting to be "rediscovered" by the right man at the right time. In this way, even while declining to appoint an heir and lamenting the sorry condition of Japanese Zen, Takuan affirms the truth of original enlightenment and with it, the possibility of reviving the teaching, if needs be, even on one's own. This curious combination of pessimism about the state of Japanese Zen as a whole with optimism about the individual's potential to experience

enlightenment and revitalize the teaching from outside "the system" seems to have characterized the independents and contributed to the distinctive atmosphere of early Tokugawa Zen.

As in the case of late Muromachi Zen, it is tempting to question some of the more extreme criticisms that Zen monks of the seventeenth century directed against their contemporaries. Was the situation of Zen in the early Tokugawa period truly as bad as many of its detractors such as Takuan, Bankei, and Ungo claimed? Was there really a dearth of enlightened teachers and able students? Had the teaching of Zen hopelessly degenerated over the previous two centuries, leaving sincere practitioners with no choice but to attempt to revive the ways of the early founders, or simply to start from scratch and set out on their own? Such questions are probably unanswerable. At best, we can simply register the early Tokugawa Zen world's perceptions of itself; but it may well be impossible for us to gauge the accuracy of those perceptions, beyond noting the currency they carried among leading figures of the period.

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TALES OF HAKUIN'S FOLLOWERS

Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769) is generally acknowledged as the key figure in formulating the Japanese Rinzai school of Zen as we know it today. The following anecdotes are taken from *Hakuin monka itsuwasen* (*Tales of Hakuin's Followers*), a translation into modern Japanese of *Keikyokusôdan* (*Tales From the Forest of Thorns*), composed in 1829 by Hakuin's fourth-generation disciple Myôki Seiteki (1774-1848) and published in 1843. *Tales of Hakuin's Followers*, which along with the modern Japanese-language version includes notes, the original Sino-Japanese (*kanbun)* text and its reading into classical Japanese (*yomikudashi*), was prepared by Nônin Kôdô and issued in 2008 in Kyoto by Hanazono University's Zen bunka kenkyûjo (Institute for the Study of Zen Culture).

(Part 4)

Master Chôdô of Chikugo (present-day Fukuoka Prefecture, in Kyushu) studied under Kogetsu[2] and attained realization of the *Mu* koan. At that time, the Dharma teaching of Hakuin was enjoy-

[2] Kogetsu Zenzai (1667-1751). A noted contemporary of Hakuin's in the Myôshinji line, Kogetsu and Hakuin were probably the two leading Rinzai teachers of the period.

ing great popularity, and monks were flocking to his temple. Chôdô too determined to set off for there, hoping to engage the master in a Zen dialogue, and went to take his formal leave of Kogetsu.

Kogetsu advised him, "Postpone your departure for a while."

Chôdô, however, refused, and Kogetsu then told him, "Very well, if that's how it is, I'll write an introduction for you," and writing out a note, he handed it to Chôdô.

Chôdô went off to interview Hakuin. He found the teacher in the bath, but Chôdô went right into the water, introduced himself and presented his understanding of Zen.

Hakuin told him, "One may say that your coming here was not in vain. Now withdraw."

Chôdô then thought to himself, "He's approved me!"

When Hakuin emerged from the bath, Chôdô dressed himself in his most formal monk's robes and entered the master's room to interview him again and present Kogetsu's letter.

Hakuin opened the seal and read the letter. It said: "It is not that this youngster lacks any merit. But he is simply a person of limited capacity. I beg your Reverence to find some suitable expedient to teach him."

When Hakuin had finished reading, he turned on Chôdô. "Even if someone with your meager endowment and inferior spiritual potential were to realize the great matter," Hakuin angrily berated him, "what would be the use?"

At that moment, feeling that his whole realization had been snatched away, Chôdô bedcame deranged, and from then on he was never normal again. Hakuin was often heard to lament, "I have always taught huge numbers of students. But among these I only went wrong with two--Chôdô of Chikugo and one other, whose name excapes me."

Subsequently, Chôdô returned to Chikugo and became abbot of a temple. He erected a small monk's hall, where all alone he carried out the Zen temple observances. Every Rohatsu he would bring the child priests and temple cats into the zendo with him to do zazen. When the cats would run out he would grab them and hit them with the *keisaku*,[1] berating them, "Why won't you follow

[1] The "warning stick" used by the head monk to correct students in the Zen meditaiton hall.

the rules in my temple!" In this way, countless cats died at his hands. Yet strictly maintaining his monastic practice, it is said Chôdô ended his days at the temple.

(No.29, 68-70, 206-209.)

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...A novice monk of seventeen or eighteen belonging to a sub temple of Tôjiji[3] became secretly involved with a prostitute from [Kyoto's] Kitano district. Their attachment for one another grew more intense with each passing day. One evening, believing the steward monk to be absent, the novice stole one hundred gold coins, placed them in a pouch, and accompanied by the prostitute, fled into the night.

They traveled by boat to Fushimi,[4] then proceeded to Osaka. But when the novice searched his belongings, he could not find the gold coins.

He thought, "Last night I left the pouch hanging from a hook on one of the temple pillars and must have forgotten it when I fled!" The two were overwhelmed with consternation, not knowing where to go, and in their extreme despair, the monk hung himself with the prostitute from a tree,

That night, sounds of wailing and anguished moaning were heard from a room adjoining the branch temple.

"I hung the pouch here," a voice cried out, "but where is it? Oh, how terrible!"

The wailing was accompanied by the sounds of fingers running over the hooks of the temple pillars, groping along the room's walls and beams. There was also heard from time to time the voice of a woman. Thereafter, this was repeated every evening. Hearing sounds of such misery and bitter affliction, the temple's monks were scared out of their wits, and before long deserted the temple, which was left without a single monk.

At this time, Master Tôrei[5] was about to visit Tôjiji and was told in confidence of the foregoing situation. The master said,

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[3] A branch temple of the Rinzai headquarters temple Tenryûji, in Kyoto.

[4] In premodern Japan, a town south of Kyoto, now part of the city of Kyoto.

[5] Tôrei Enji (1721-1792). One of Hakuin's principal Dharma heirs and formal founder of Ryûtakuji, among Hakuin's favorite temples, and the temple where Tôrei served as abbot for thirty years. Tôrei is known to have visited Tôjiji in fall 1768.

"there is no reason for distress. I will stay in the room." The very evening of the master's arrival at the temple, all traces of the mysterious spirits disappeared.

One night, when the master had been invited away to another temple, the priest Shô of Mikawa,[1] the master's attendant as well as an accomplished Zen student, assumed the duties of caretaker. A young maiden appeared, exceedingly lovely in appearance. Standing before the priest, her head bowed, she said, "I have come to ask a favor."

"Just tell me," Shô replied.

"I am one of the dead," she began. "I hung myself in Osaka because of forgetting some money and now am unable to free myself from the bitter round of transmigration. It is my fervent wish to beseech the great teacher of this temple to save me."

"Why don't you ask him yourself?" Shô asked.

The apparition replied, "It would be unseemly for a master of such lofty virtue to be approached by a lowly woman. How much less could I, someone from the world of shadows, dare to put to him a request?"

Shô agreed, whereupon the woman thanked him and departed. When Shô subsequently conveyed this to Tôrei, the master said, "Such things do happen, then!" And during the sutra chanting he had a bowl of clear water placed before him and performed the ceremony for the repose of hungry hosts.[2]

From that time on, the ghosts never appeared again. Later, the priest Shô died an untimely death, and Tôrei is said to have greatly mourned his passing.

(P.36-38, No. 15. 159-160.)

Cover Pic

The cover photo by Michael Hotz from his farm pond is of an 'old master' carp induced by offerings of peaches to reveal himself, sort of like the Third Patriarch in hiding suddenly revealed through his love of muskmelons...

[1] Shô is unidentified. Mikawa is an old province, now Aichi prefecture.

[2] *Segaki*. The ceremony is a standard part of the liturgy in Japanese Zen temples.

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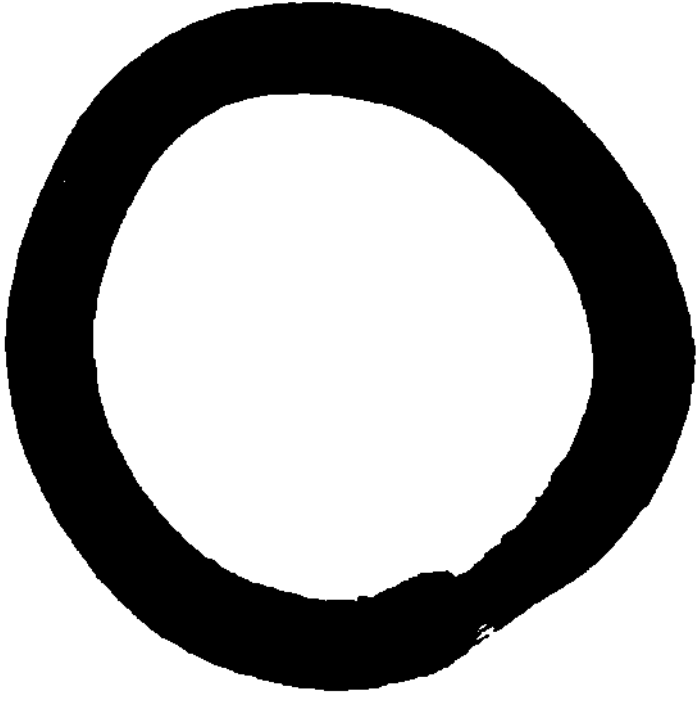

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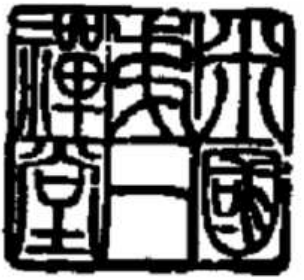

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