

# ZEN notes

佛	法	煩	衆
道	門	惱	生
無	無	無	無
上	量	盡	邊
誓	誓	誓	誓
願	願	願	願
成	學	斷	度

The Four Vows

# THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

## SIXTY-SEVENTH LECTURE

Wednesday January 10, 1940

*Then Lokanatha spoke to Tejovatisvarah Bodhisattva:*

*"Very well, very well, Obedient One! You have asked me in the name of all the Bodhisattvas and of the sentient beings of the future world, to tell you about the Upayas contrived by Tathagata. Now listen to me attentively. I shall explain them to you."*

*Tejovatisvarah rejoiced in the Buddha's consent, and the multitude made ready to listen to the sermon in silence.*

*"O Obedient One! The highest and most marvelous awakening of the Tathagatas born in the tenfold Directions of the universe is precisely the same as all Dharma, in nature and in body. The Tathagatas' various practices do not have as their result two different attainments of awakening. The Upayas devised according to the nature of each sentient being are numberless, but from the fact that the fundamental natures of sentient beings vary, it may be conclusively inferred that there are three types of Upayas."*

### **SOKEI-AN SAYS:**

*Then Lokanatha spoke to Tejovatisvarah Bodhisattva: —In this sutra, ten Bodhisattvas stood one by one and asked the Buddha ten different questions about Awakening. In the West, you call it "enlightenment" —but your concept of this is something which relates to the brain. Our idea of enlightenment is entirely different. There is no happening in the brain, no nimbus or light—no one becomes a kind of demigod! Such ideas about enlightenment are superstitious and illogical; when anyone imagines such things, it is impossible to understand Buddhism in the true sense.*

Our idea of enlightenment is that you awake from dream to this state of mind; it is exactly as you awake from dream. From the time you were born, you have covered your soul with deluded concepts; receiving superstitions about religion and erroneous views of human life—you have suffused your mind with queer notions. It is as you paint a table with coat after coat, so that you no longer know the true nature of the mind. Man lives in a state of dualism, separating him from the true ground of his mind. It is as

if a skyscraper were built entirely upon air, forgetting the ground upon which it should be standing!

Once you will awake to the soul which is the ground for keeping all the seeds within it. Perhaps, when you are meditating, when you have forgotten all you have learned, heard, thought—all of a sudden you will discover the real existence. You will smile—"Well, I have been dreaming! I have been striving to find something sacred and holy outside or in my brain; but now my mind is solid and stable like the earth! It is as when the farmer cuts off the stubble from the field and the ground appears. In the ground of mind, the true mind appears. Now I am myself for the first time! "How do you do? I was looking for something—and I found myself!"

We do not need to strive, seek, wait for something to flash into the mind. We are surprised when we find that this very modest way of discovering ourselves is so-called Awakening. Now, you will find yourself in the great universe, in Mind eternal—but you are standing on the solid earth. The European scholars who translate the Buddhist sutras have an entirely wrong conception—we do not need to read books but to very simply come back to ourselves.

The Bodhisattva who is now asking his question is Tejovatisvarah, meaning "magnificent light, effulgent splendor." Bodhisattva here means "enlightened gentleman." In modern Buddhism, for some 500 years, Bodhisattva has taken on the meaning of some demi-god or angel; but the original meaning was just an enlightened sentient being. Don't have any such notions about Bodhisattvas!

*"Very well, very well, Obedient One! You have asked me in the name of all the Bodhisattvas and of the sentient beings of the future world,"* —We desire to transmit the simple teaching of the Buddha from generation to generation so we endeavor to keep this awakening on earth. Buddhism is the great discovery of the human mind. It is not yours, it is not mine—it has endured for 2500 years. We do not need to add anything more—just need to discover ourselves! So, a nameless priest like myself is doing this work for sentient beings.

*"... to tell you about the Upayas contrived by Tathagata."* —"Upaya" means a method to attain enlightenment. Ancient students followed the method contrived by the Buddha: left home, renounced the world and followed the commandments. They went into the desert or the mountains, practiced fasting, and forgetting about human life, became one with the great universe. There are many methods—thirty-seven types for attaining Dharma.

*"Now listen attentively. I shall explain them to you."*

*Tejovatisvarah rejoiced in the Buddha's consent and the multitude made ready to listen to the sermon in silence.* —When you go to Japan, you will observe the "silence" that reigns before the lecture. The students keep nothing in their minds; they are all ears!

"*O Obedient One!*" —The Bodhisattva is "obedient" to the law of nature, of the universe, and of man. In the commentary which I am translating, this "Obedient One" is called "Good Man." European scholars usually translate this "Good Man" —but Dr. Goddard has it "O Good Fellow!"

"*The highest and most marvelous awakening.*" —He uses two adjectives here; these two awakenings make Perfect Awakening. First you annihilate your vexations, frictions, and worry; we do this by leaving home and dropping all the affairs of the world. Suffering fatigue and hunger, we annihilate all worldly desire, so that the mind becomes clear. It is the monk's first practice but this practice is not Buddhism, it is just practice. *Upaya* is like a ferry boat; when you reach the other shore you don't need the boat any more! It is a contrivance, an expedient.

Today, although the monks say, "Good-by father, good-by mother, good-by brother" —they, nonetheless, will return home twice a month sometimes every Sunday; a good monk may stay half a year!

Second, after wiping out the world, they will clean up the mind. They will realize that there is no color or form on the outside and then they will annihilate the mind-stuff. It is like taking the dust off the mirror until we find the true reflection—our own nature. This is the highest enlightenment. Then we come out and find ourselves right here at this moment! There are two edges to this awakening.

"... *of the Tathagatas born in the Tenfold Directions of the universe is precisely the same as in all Dharma, in nature and in body.*" —So this Dharma is existence—just simple existence! The human being is our existence—the insect is our existence!

The "body," *Kaya*, is different from this body. Of course, *Kaya* sometimes means this body, but here it means "substantial body." When the Buddhist speaks of the "substantial body of man" —he means "*Dharmakaya*" —omnipresent and omniscient. This is the ocean of body to which the Tathagata awakes. All existences are equal; all is one; therefore, every Tathagata (Thus he comes and thus he goes.) who awakes—is exactly the same. When you attain your original nature you are the universe! This is the third, and final, stage.

*"The Tathagatas' various practices do not have as their result two different attainments of awakening."* —There are thirty-seven methods and you think there must be thirty-seven different attainments of awakening. No!

I said that one awakening has two edges but it only looks like two edges by consecutive observation. It is as, in the highest enlightenment, it looks as if we go high. Why do we have to peel off one skin after the other? Here, in one place, is the spiritual, astral, and physical body. Why be deluded? These bodies cannot separate the Triune Body into three pieces.

*"The Upayas devised according to the nature of each sentient being are numberless, but from the fact that the fundamental natures of sentient beings vary, it may be completely inferred that there are three types of Upaya."* —Not only thirty-seven—but numberless devices according to the nature of sentient beings.

The "fundamental natures of sentient beings" will be explained in the next lecture. The three types of Upaya, as I explained above, are:

1. To deny all forms of existence and purify your soul.
2. To realize the true mind, throw away illusions and all ideas.
3. Absolute reliance upon your own soul—no more practice.

Buddhism is simple when you understand it!

## **Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger**

Sokei-an's commentary on

### **The Record of Lin Chi**

#### **Discourse XIV, Lecture 1**

*The Master said to the multitude: "Students of today must have faith in themselves. Do not seek it on the outside. Influenced by useless circumstances, you will be unable to discriminate right from wrong. The evidence for the existence of buddhas and patriarchs is nothing but the external traces of Buddhism. If, for instance, someone selects a phrase from a sutra, or appears from the hidden or from the manifested, you are bewildered, calling upon heaven and earth. Not knowing what to do, you ask your neighbor about it. A man must not spend his days in useless discourse and discussion about masters and rebels, right and wrong, lust and wealth."*

## SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The whole law is written in yourself. Even the first law is written in your heart. This mysterious power is also written in consciousness. We never get it from the outside, all springs from within. But we try to find protection in outside power. The Zen student is, however, different; he finds it inside.

*The Master said to the multitude: "Students of today must have faith in themselves. Do not seek it on the outside."* So what is this faith? We have it innately, as the universe has it. This innate power is symbolized by the sun; not the visible sun but the spiritual sun of the universe, the buddha-nature of the universe. This buddha nature is self-created and exists in the past, present and future, so every manifestation has this buddha nature. Knowing it or not, every action of daily life comes from this nature, that which the Christians call God.

*"Influenced by useless circumstances, you will be unable to discriminate right from wrong."* By "circumstances" Lin-chi means the written records of Buddhism, the laws, commandments, and so forth. You will be influenced by that record and believe that such laws really exist, and having faith in the written law, you will be commanded from the outside and forget your self. So you will not live your own life, but will live through someone else. So how do we apply the law of nature to daily life? You can ask no one. You must think everything out very carefully for yourself. That's why you have a brain. You have judgement. Why not use it?

*"The evidence for the existence of buddhas and patriarchs is nothing but the external traces of Buddhism."* Just like the traces of animals, or of men. Looking at them, you know that something or someone has passed, a snake here, a rabbit there; but you will not see the one who has passed. Why don't you catch the real man instead of running after his traces? That is what Lin-chi is saying.

If, for instance, someone selects a phrase from a *sutra*, or appears from the hidden or from the manifested, you are bewildered, calling upon heaven and earth. Not knowing what to do, you ask your neighbor about it. Zen is not manifested in the written law; it is transmitted from heart to heart.

*"A man must not spend his days in useless discourse and discussion about masters and rebels, right and wrong, lust and wealth."* Meditation is the best way. I meditated for six years to attain the six mysterious powers, not as a fairy story but in an entirely different way. You can do this too.

## Discourse XIV, Lecture 2

*"In this place, I do not discriminate between layman and monk. If you appear here, you will be discerned through and through. From whatever position you appear, it is nothing but a name. All is a dream. But if you are one who avails himself of all circumstances, you are observing the fundamental law of all buddhas. Buddhahood, however, does not profess to be buddhahood, saying, "I am Buddha!" It is he who does not depend upon anything who avails himself of all circumstances. If you come into my presence seeking Buddha, I will appear in accordance with the state of pureness. If you come into my presence asking about bodhisattvas, I will appear in accordance with the state of compassion. If you come into my presence asking about bodhi, I will appear in accordance with the state of mystery. If you come into my presence asking about nirvana, I will appear in accordance with the state of serenity. Although there are manifold circumstances, there is only this one and no other. Therefore, this one manifests in accordance with circumstances like the moon in water."*

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

If you really understand Lin-chi's attainment, you will grasp the very point of Buddhism through this lecture.

*"In this place, I do not discriminate between layman and monk. If you appear here, you will be discerned through and through."* Just as you appear in the sanctuary of a Zen master during *sanzen*. Lin-chi will see you from head to foot, from outer skin to inner heart whether you are a layman or a monk. He will observe your spirit, your emotions, your every gesture and word to find out what your understanding is. Perhaps you will say, "Well, I'm glad." But your attitude is different if your face is sad. So the master compares both your attitudes and knows whether you have understanding or not. Your answers are judged by his knowledge authorized from generation to generation, from Bodhidharma to our teachers of today. The student's answer is judged by this authorized knowledge. We have faith in this.

*"From whatever position you appear, it is nothing but a name. All is a dream."* Whether from *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, or *nirmanakaya*; *kamadhatu*, *rupadhatu*, or *arupadhatu*; from whatever position you appear, it is nothing but a name. All is a dream. If you come to real understanding in the Zen room, you will understand the iron rule: the koan must be answered from all angles,

but all the answers must touch reality.

*"But if you are one who avails himself of all circumstances, you are observing the fundamental law of all buddhas."* It is like the training of a horse. In the beginning the man is managed by the horse; you could say, there is nothing but the horse, and no man on his back. In the next stage, there is nothing but the man and no horse; the man's will controls the horse. In the third stage, there is no man and no horse. If he is a pianist, there is no piano and no player. The "one who avails himself of all circumstances" must be a master, utilizing mind-stuff, wisdom, emotion and power. Mind itself is Master, and the body of mind is its motion. Mind-stuff and all that is external is just the material expression of this Mind.

*"Buddhahood, however, does not profess to be buddhahood, saying, 'I am Buddha!'"* When one attains nirvana, one has a body before entering into entire annihilation. But the mind is already in nirvana. This is buddhahood: to be one with the universe. But in this state, one does not call oneself a buddha. Someone must master this state that is the Buddha.

*"It is he who does not depend upon anything who avails himself of all circumstances."* He does not depend upon any notion or any name. He does not depend upon anything. He avails himself of all circumstances; that is, he depends upon no circumstance, no conception, no idea. Such a one utilizes all circumstances.

*"If you come into my presence seeking Buddha. I will appear in accordance with the state of pureness."* Lin-chi does not want to use a term like *dharmakaya* or *tatha-gata*, so he just says pureness. Buddhists are always talking about pureness, but it is not snobbishness. It is but one aspect of Buddhism, but there are others.

The universe was not created by anyone. It is, was, and will be existing without beginning and without end. From this standpoint, the Buddhist does not understand creation by will power; there is no scheme, no plan; there is just existence. There is no man in the world, but just one power. Man is empty and the law of the universe has no self-existence. There is no God thinking, "I have to do this or that, punish or reward." There is no such God. If you know that you are just an element, that all is just one element, one stretch of ocean with a million waves, then what can be thinking? At the end of the universe when the *kalpa* fire annihilates everything, what will be existing, and what is evolution? This is one aspect, but there is another.

We cannot attain by the five senses nor conceive by knowledge;



it is undemonstrable. "Pureness" is not a good translation to express this. There is no word to express it. Lin-chi knows it, grasps it. To speak of it in words means nothing.

Once a Zen master and his disciple were taking a walk. They passed over a stone bridge with many arches. The master asked his disciple which stone was actually laid first. The disciple thought it over and said, "Which element was created first?" but he could not answer. The teacher said, "All I asked about was a mere stone bridge, and you do not understand."

The teacher had transformed himself from the pure state into a man's state. The human standpoint is not wrong, of course, but there is the other viewpoint. From the human standpoint, as man has will power the whole universe must have will power. But we say that no one creates and there is no annihilation. So what is Buddha? Wonderful question!

*"If you come into my presence asking about bodhisattvas, I will appear in accordance with the state of compassion."* Bodhisattva has many meanings, but here it means the incarnated power of purity. The bodhisattva is one who is ever-embodied, compared to one who is disembodied. Perhaps, in the Christian sense, it is the ever-embodied Christ, the one who is pure, possessing the whole nature of the Father, of God.

The *bodhisattva* is pure being appearing in separate bodies, but its selfhood is one, like the light of millions electric bulbs that are lit from one current. The human being, however, is not like the bodhisattva; he has ego, ideas, and desires. So the soul is divided as in this body. For the bodhisattva, the soul is all alike in whatever body, so whatever task each performs, he unites with the other and helps the other. This is the ideal personality of the Buddhist, and we all try to attain it. The element of this personality is love and compassion. It is a false human attitude to have an idea, a scheme, or a plan about the universe. From our standpoint as Buddhists, we observe the universe as love and compassion.

This "I," of course, that Lin-chi is talking about means the One who enshrines in the innermost self, the sacred self. It is a microcosm, the consciousness of the universe. If you think Lin-chi is talking about himself, then you do not understand his heart. This "I" is not ego, the separated self. It is really the one who does not depend upon anything, the One in your presence who does not depend upon anything, buddha-nature itself, transcendental selfhood. Lin-chi always speaks this way. You must grasp this "I" of which he is speaking. But it is not so easy.

*"If you come into my presence asking about bodhi, I will ap-*

*pear in accordance with the state of mystery.*" Bodhi is wisdom-knowing, performing knowledge; knowing the Knower. Unless one is a real Zen student, one cannot understand the Master's meaning from the surface of his words. Here he means "intrinsic power," which to us, to the human being, is a mystery. As you know, all existence in the universe has its own type of reaction. The melon in a valley has a thick skin if the winter is to be a cold one, so the farmer knows if the heavy snow is coming. The fox of Greenland prepares thick fur for a heavy winter and thin fur for a mild one. If you observe nature carefully, you will find these mysteries everywhere. See how the tendril of ivy searches for the sunlight with that blind body, searching each little slit of light, pushing forward with a little hand to touch the sunlight. It may reach ten to fifteen feet to find it.

We all have this intrinsic nature innately. No one can teach us. But when we see someone struggle mentally and physically, we try to help. It is our nature to do this; we are not forced. If we are troubled by notions, jealousy, anxiety, or anger, we rush about and try to forget it. No one teaches us this. But the Buddhist can forget through meditation. This is the mystery, the *bodhi*, the wisdom that we wish to attain. Somehow we know we have the mystery in us. This is our Fourth Vow. When we become Buddhists, we decide to follow the Four Vows.

Remember, when Lin-chi uses the word "appear," he means to act or talk from this state. *"If you come into my presence asking about nirvana, I will appear in accordance with the state of serenity."* Nirvana, like Buddha or bodhisattva, has many meanings, but here Lin-chi means annihilation of all entanglements; *bodhi* has carried him to the other shore, nirvana. He has attained the original state of mind. One gets out of the jungle of mind-stuff.

*"Although there are manifold circumstances, there is only this one and no other."* Pureness, compassion, mystery, serenity--the elemental circumstances. Lin-chi puts on each and uses each. But there is only THIS ONE in the universe who does this. There is no other being in the universe but God; no man, animal, or insect, just THIS ONE.

*"Therefore, this one manifests in accordance with circumstances like the moon in water."* He transforms himself into the manifold performances of his transforming body that is called *nirmanakaya*. The true body of Buddha is like the sky. But when he appears according to circumstances, it is like the moon on the waves.

## **TWENTY-FIVE KOANS:**

### **(FOURTEENTH KOAN)**

Delivered by Sokei-an, April 9, 1938

*Zen Master Chikan of Kyogen said to the monks:*

*“Let us suppose that a man upon a treetop is supporting his body by biting a branch of the tree, not holding a bough or a stem with his hands or his feet. Suppose another man under the tree should ask him the question: ‘What was the purpose of the First Patriarch who came from the West?’ If the man upon the tree top would make no answer he would offend the other; but if he should make an answer he would fall down to his death. At such a moment, if you were the man upon the treetop, how would you make an answer?”*

*There was a young monk whose name was Tiger Head (Kotsu). He came out from the multitude and said:*

*“I should pay no attention to the man upon the tree. But, Osho, would you answer me a word to my question. What would have happened to the man if he had not climbed the tree?”*

*The master burst out laughing.*

*Setton said: “It is rather easy to make an answer upon the tree, but difficult to make it under the tree. Now I am upon the tree. Ask me a question!”*

*Master Tonan Gan questioned ToZan: “What is the mystery of the koan of Kyogen, ‘A man upon the treetop’?”*

*ToZan said: “It is pleasant to listen to the partridge crying in the spring breeze.”*

### **SOKEI-AN SAYS:**

I think this koan is quite familiar to my old students. Perhaps to my new members it is a new story.

This story appears in the Chinese records in about three different collections. I have two of them and I haven't the other one. This is not an old story. There are more. But these I have translated here are important lines.

This man upon the treetop is quite familiar to all Zen students. Everyone must study this case in the beginning of koan investigation. We think this is a rather easy koan, but in reality it is not very easy.

Chikan of Kyogen, a famous Zen master, went to Yu and Yu asked him a question: "What were you when you were in your mother's bosom?" He failed to make an answer and he found himself faced with a great question: "What was I in that unconscious state? Was I man or was I beast? Was I an insect or was I a god? Or a spirit? What was I when I was in my mother's bosom?"

Of course, biologically speaking, if we study this today, man passes through all stages of sentient being rapidly. He changes his phase every day and passes two hundred million years in ten months! But Yu did not ask such a question.

Yu asked: What were you fundamentally when you were in your mother's bosom? That was his question and Kyogen could not make an answer, so he packed up his things and left Wei-shan, crying. And then he came to a ruined temple where he stayed.

One day when he was sweeping the ground, a broken tile struck a bamboo tree and made a sound. On hearing the sound Kyogen was enlightened. He then made a poem which was translated by me already. And after he became a Zen master he made this koan to examine the monks.

By this koan, of course, Kyogen hinted at the highest state of Buddhism. You would say that this highest state is not necessarily Buddhism but includes all the religions of the world including Christianity.

No man can express this by a word. To express this, you use your word God; a mere name! When you say "God," do you think God appears here or reveals his existence to you? You can call his name one thousand times, yet you will never see him. Not only will you never see him, but you will withdraw in a different direction! God has no name. We made that tag and put it on him. God is just a name. The name is not God himself.

By this koan, Kyogen immediately brings you up to that state. This is not the bough of a treetop. It is the bough of the treetop of wisdom.

*Let us suppose that a man upon a treetop is supporting his body by biting a branch of the tree, not holding a bough or a stem with his hands or feet. "Biting a tree branch with his teeth"*

—like this—and his hands and feet free and swinging in the air. When you think of reality logically, try to attain the state of reality, or through meditation or prayer, try to make access to God, you will come into this state. Your brain will be exhausted; there is no word to express any more. You will find the end of philosophy. It is tangible, but you cannot express it. It is intelligible, but you cannot express it. You feel it, but there is no way to say it. When you come to this state you will throw down everything.

This brain is bestowed upon us to open that door to get to the truth. I think that the one who does not hesitate to open that door to solve that question is an honest man, a true man. He doesn't lie to himself.

*Suppose another man under the tree should ask the question, "What was the purpose of the First Patriarch who came from the west?"* This is a translation of an idiom in Chinese, a Zen idiom. If I translate it into English, it will be, "What was the purpose of the First Patriarch who came from the west?" The First Patriarch was Bodhidharma, who came to China and brought Zen. He went to the top of a mountain where there was a temple and for nine years sat in a grotto opening onto a cliff without speaking a word. This was the first exhibition of Zen in China.

In India, Zen had been ruined by scholastic philosophy: "You should do this, should not do that," and so on. It is just as we try to get a passport from the government. You must speak exactly what has been said by somebody else. So in Buddhism you must read all those volumes of sutras and express exactly what it says there or you cannot pass Buddhism. That kind of Buddhism ruined India, China, and Japan too. In the Occident, all those scientists discovered many things; electricity, electron, proton, and so forth. And in the Orient, meanwhile, all were asleep, and when they woke up it was too late. Some are still sleeping!

Bodhidharma came to China in the fifth century and demonstrated his Zen sect, meditating nine years in a grotto before a cliff. He came to China and died in China *and what was his purpose?*

Is there a purpose? Of course, his purpose was to transmit Zen. What is reality? Today many Western scientists try to find it through the electron and proton. They are working materialistically as we work spiritually. There was no way to express it, so Bodhidharma *showed* it for nine years. No way to express it. If you speak about it, it would not be reality.

So translated one way, we have, "What is the purpose of the First Patriarch coming from India to China?" But, idiomatically, these five Chinese characters mean, "What is the fundamental

principle of Buddhism?" So in this koan we have, "*Suppose another man under the tree should ask him, "What is the cardinal principle of Buddhism?"*"

*If the one upon the treetop should make no answer he would offend the other but if he should make an answer he would fall down to his death. At such a moment, if you were the man on the treetop, how would you answer?* This is a question! In the record, he went to some famous Zen master and asked this question. And the old master took his stick and pushed it into his mouth and wiggled his hands and feet. This was his answer. Someone wrote, "I can't understand a monk like this gaining fame. The answer he made is of no importance." A quite good criticism. Of course, the master's view is very deep, too. His view is a little higher than that of ordinary people. Do you think this [Sokei-an imitates the master's answer] is the cardinal principle of Buddhism? Quite queer, isn't it?

*There was a young monk whose name was Tiger Head. He stepped forth from the multitude and said, "I should pay no attention to the man on the tree. But Osho, would you answer me a word to my question: What would have happened to the man if he had not climbed the tree?"* A man upon the treetop biting the branch and swinging. But please answer me and tell me a word. Before the man had climbed the tree, when he was standing on the ground, what is the cardinal principle of Buddhism? Please answer me!"

Good question! He was quite smart. "What would have happened to the man if he hadn't climbed the tree? We don't need to go to the end of philosophy to attain Buddhism. While you are standing upon this ground, living this daily life, there must be some cardinal principle of Buddhism. Then what is it?

*The master burst out laughing.* That is, "I understand! Such way! You, young monk, are too smart! Step down!" But I cannot see any laughing face among you. Perhaps you do not understand this story! Well, this laughter is very good. This master was very busy that morning; was not tied with philosophy then; was just in a plain everyday mood. So he laughed—like this. He gave a good answer.

*Setton said: "It is rather easy to make an answer from on the tree, but difficult to make from under the tree. Now I am on the tree. Ask me a question."* It is easy to make an answer to what is reality when on top of the tree. It is harder to make an answer when you are working at home than in the shop, isn't it?

Ask me a question." His nerve is tremendous —perhaps he

was only on a chair! You know if you don't understand these Zen masters, they will walk all over you!

This part is rather easy, but the next one is hard:

*Master Tonan questioned Master Tozan, "What is the mystery of the koan of Kyogen's 'Man up the tree?'"*

*Tozan said, "It is pleasant to listen to the partridge crying in the spring breeze."*

[Sokei-an rang the bell.]

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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 8)**

Master Kankei Sotei of Ishihara in Tôtomî studied under Hakuin and thoroughly realized the great matter. Later, he became abbot of Shôkôji. Here, he lectured on the *Blue Cliff Record* to an audience of over one hundred monks. Addressing the assembly, he said: When it comes to the koan 'Huangbo's "Drinkers of wine dregs,'" in Zen temples today they toss it aside like it was a clod of dirt. My teacher Hakuin would say, 'Huangbo's "Drinkers of wine dregs"' must be as if it comes from your own lips; only then can you get a look at Huangbo's innards--his liver, bladder, heart, and stomach.'" Kankei added, "And not only will you see Huangbo's liver, bladder, heart, and stomach, but you'll meet face to face with Master Hakuin. So, all of you, train hard!"

One day when Kankei was at Hakuin's temple,<sup>1</sup> he was serving as the master's attendant and lightheartedly asked, "Master, when you were traveling on pilgrimage, do you recall any strange happenings?"

Hakuin replied, "Long ago I was living in retreat [at Mount Iwata] in Mino.<sup>2</sup> One day I climbed the mountain and strolled about. Coming upon a large, flat rock, which could easily have accommodated over ten men, I climbed up and sat a while in meditation. A few of the village farmers who were engaged in tilling some newly cleared fields shouted to me, "Don't go up on that rock! The local god has placed a curse on it!" Hearing this, I got down and wandered about, slowly making my way through the nearly impenetrable thicket.

Returning to my hut that evening, I sat in meditation. It was around the time of the second watch [approximately 10:00 PM] that I heard the sound of deliberate footsteps. Suddenly [the steps] had leaped down from the mountain and were right in front of my hut, which they seemed to be trying with all their might to cave in.

"Master Hakuin!" the creatures shouted loudly, their voices shaking the trees of the forest. [They were so huge that] when I peered out at them, all I could see was up to their waists. Their feet were as huge as stone mortars, and they stood there towering over the house, the area above their waists wholly obscured by the edge of the eaves.

Kankei asked, "And what happened next?"

Hakuin said, "I was really tired that day, and before I knew it I'd fallen fast asleep. When I awoke and opened my eyes, the smoke from the incense stick I'd lit for my meditation had vanished, and along with it all traces of those ghostly apparitions."

(No.11, 145-147)

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The Zen master Daijû Jôkô (1720-1778) was a native of Hôki.<sup>3</sup> He was endowed with great keenness of intellect and had made a deep study of both Buddhist and Confucian texts. The only area of study that had failed to penetrate was the *Yi jing*, the *Book of Changes*. He therefore traveled to Edo, hoping to satisfy his

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<sup>1</sup> I.e., Shôinji

<sup>2</sup> Present-day Shiga Prefecture. The event Hakuin relates here, also described in Hakuin's chronology (*nenpu*), is said to have occurred in 1715.

<sup>3</sup> An old province in what is now Tottori Prefecture.



curiosity under some Confucian scholar.

On his way, he passed by Hakuin's temple. Thinking, "Here is to be found the greatest teacher of the realm," Daijû asked for lodging and went to interview Hakuin.

Hakuin asked him, "Where are you off to?"

Daijû replied, "I am going to Edo."

"Hakuin asked, "And what do you intend to do there?"

Daijû explained, "I have not yet fathomed the meaning of their *Yi jing*, and am hoping to hear some Confucian lectures."

Hakuin told him, "As for the *Yi jing*, without any experience of seeing your true nature, you can't hope to understand it. You had better stay here awhile and strive to realize enlightenment. If you see your true nature, then *I'll* teach you about the *Yi jing*!"

"I shall do as you command," Daijû replied. He thereupon joined the assembly of monks at the temple,<sup>2</sup> and devoting himself to exhaustive practice finally realized the great matter of seeing into one's nature. He then served the master over ten years, compiling *Poison flowers from a Thicket of Thorns* (*Keisô dokuzui*).

Daijû subsequently became chief abbot of Jishôji in Buzen. Here, students underwent rigorous training under Daijû, who earned a reputation for extreme severity. In instructing the assembly of monks, Daijû would only employ the koan "Tosotsu's 'Three Barriers.'"

Not long after assuming abbacy of Jishôji, Daijû passed away. Subsequently, those who were his disciples also relied only on the "Three Barriers," to the complete exclusion of all other koans. Over and over, each one would repeat to his students, "When the elements of the physical body disperse...When the elements of the physical body disperse... Penetrate this and your Zen studies are finished for life. I don't care if all the Zen teachers of the land criticize me!" Thus they stubbornly defended their exclusive focus on the koan.

Personally, I have some serious questions about this whole matter. On consideration, does not such a dubious approach seem quite unworthy of Daijû? Here, after all, was someone who had served under Hakuin for years and even compiled the *Poison Flowers* collection of the master's teachings, someone who had as

<sup>2</sup> I.e., Shôinji, Hakuin's temple in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture, referred to previously.

surely received the master's exhaustive koan instruction in private interviews...

In all likelihood, Daijū's adherence to the Three Barriers koan for teaching students was no more than an expedient for those in the early stages of their Zen studies. It's what the old masters referred to as "sick bay" Zen.<sup>1</sup> Also, Daijū having passed away at so young an age, his students were unable to fully penetrate the innermost secrets of his teaching. Was not Daijū's untimely departure from the world the likely explanation for these things?

(No.17, 165-171)

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### **Dancing Bodhi Dogs**

This year's Rohatsu invitation,... Yeah, I know, this is the summer issue but the right year... was the calligraphy on this issue cover of the four vows by Isshu Miura Roshi who lived and taught for a while at the Institute in the early 60's.

Manus Pinkwater, a member of the Institute since the 60's, upon receiving our invitation, read it out loud to his two dogs with this to report:

*... When I received it, I read aloud the Four Vows to my dogs, for no particular reason. The dogs rose up on their hind legs and capered and twirled. They are large dogs, and I have not known them to behave in this manner, which I associate with small dogs. I am guessing they were prompted to express themselves by the reference to sentient beings--but I don't know. I refer this account to you for your possible interest.*

### **Cover Translation**

Sentient Beings are numberless  
I vow to enlighten them all.  
Worldly desires are endless  
I vow to uproot them all.  
The gates of Dharma are manifold  
I vow to enter them all.  
The goal of wisdom is ever beyond  
I vow to attain it.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nehandōri no zen*. The Nehandō (literally, Nirvana hall) was the monastery infirmary as well as a kind of hospice for monks in declining health who, faced with the imminence of death, would presumably be driven even more urgently to resolve the question of "birth and death" and realize enlightenment.

Bodhi dogs, sitting quiet as you please...  
But close the cover  
and they twirl the great wheel  
with the greatest of ease...



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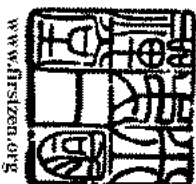
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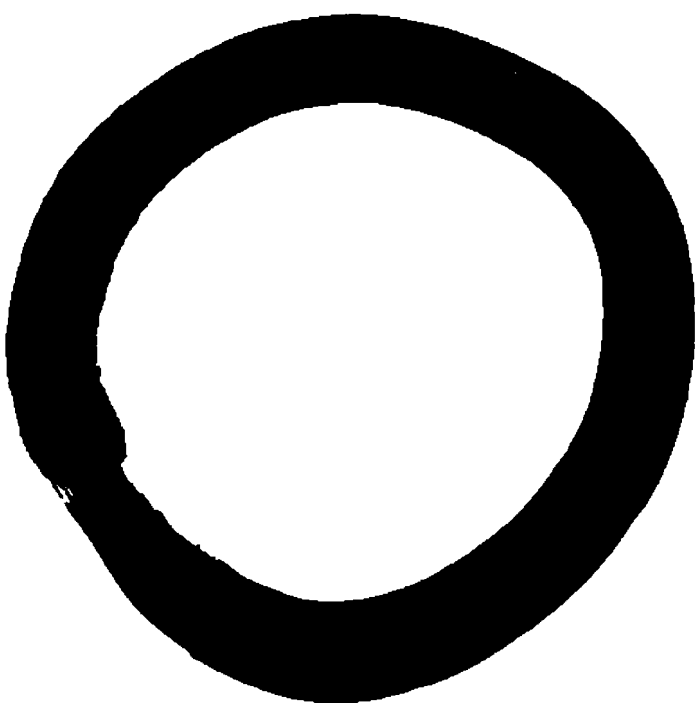
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