

ZEN NOTES



Phantom Mirror

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, #14)

(Continued from the Fall '14 Zen Notes)

The Restorers: Gudo of Myoshinji and Monks of the Soto Revival

For many early Tokugawa monks, the principal means to revive the schools of Japanese Zen lay in a reassertion of tradition and orthodoxy centered on a return to the teachings of the medieval founders. This movement was especially conspicuous in the Soto school, where the sect's teaching was virtually recreated on the basis of Dogen's writings. In the Rinzai school, dominated by Myoshinji, no pivotal historical figure equivalent to Dogen existed, and here the retrospective impulse manifested itself in a reverence for the original Sung koan Zen associated with Kanzan and the early generations of Daio-line teachers. Unlike Dogen, however,

Kanzan bequeathed virtually no written legacy. The renewal movement at Myoshinji seems to have embodied a general desire to restore authentic koan study as it had existed before the degeneration of the late Middle Ages, and to oppose "heterodox" streams considered inimical to the founder's original practice. It should be noted, however, that while influential and at times dominant, this faction was by no means the arbiter of Kanzan-line Zen.

As can be seen from even the small sampling of Myoshinji priests in the preceding sections, the temple was itself a microcosm of the incredible diversity of styles and approaches that characterized the world of seventeenth-century Japanese Zen. Just as no one type of teaching can be identified as "early Tokugawa Zen," it is difficult and probably erroneous to establish a single "Myoshinji" style of Zen for this complex period. Instead, we have once again a multiplicity of streams and trends generating diverse combinations and permutations, some of which share particular features in common but few of which are identical. Even the teachings of Gudo, Mu'nan and Mu'nan's heir Etan appear to have been fairly distinct, and, ultimately, the importance accorded their line may be due to the fact that it produced the great eighteenth-century master Hakuin, whose own connection with his teacher Etan seems to have been relatively brief.

Gudo Toshoku (1579-1661) was probably the most celebrated of those seventeenth-century monks who figured as bulwarks of orthodoxy within the Kanzan line. He is the principal figure among the line's early Tokugawa restorers, and consciously regarded himself as the preserver of Kanzan's Zen and of the traditions of the temple's medieval founders. Officiating at Kanzan's three-hundredth anniversary service, Gudo delivered a poem in which he openly declared himself the successor to Kanzan's teaching:

*"How sad that of the twenty-four lines of Zen,
The greater part have been lost
But Kanzan can be thankful to have Gudo
After three hundred years, the flame continues to burn."*

At the same time, Gudo published Toyo Eicho's history of Myoshinji (referred to earlier in this series) and himself served an unprecedented four terms as the temple's abbot. Gudo traveled widely, founding and restoring many branch temples, including Toyo's temple, Daisenji, in Mino (Gifu Prefecture) and enhancing the fortunes of the Myoshinji line. He had ten Dharma heirs, among them Shido Mu'nan and Isshi Monju, and many lay disciples including doctors, daimyo, and Confucian scholars. He was widely revered as a Zen teacher and maintained an intimate relationship with the retired Emperor Go Mizunoo, who is said to have

realized enlightenment under Gudo's instruction. Legend has it that, in old age, Gudo once dozed off at the palace while preparing to lecture Go Mizunoo, who simply went on to another engagement, leaving orders to let the master finish his nap. In recognition of his accomplishments, Gudo was ultimately awarded the Imperial title of National Master, or *kokushi*, one of a select number of Myoshinji teachers to be so honored.

Gudo's view of himself as the representative of his line's orthodox transmission may be related to the fact that, unlike such freewheeling independents as Shosan and Bankei, he was able to obtain a worthy master to bring him to enlightenment, a master whom he revered and to whose line he finally succeeded.

Gudo was born in Mino in 1579, his parents fugitives of the samurai class. He entered the priesthood at age twelve, and at eighteen set off on a ten-year pilgrimage. During this time, Gudo's mind seems to have been particularly agitated by the problem of death. "If after one dies, mind and body cease to exist," he is said to have pondered, "for whose sake does one teach the Dharma? If mind and body do exist after one dies, then why can't they be seen?" 1605 found Gudo studying under the Shotaku-line Zen Master Nankei Sogaku (n.d.) at Nankei's temple, Sanyuji in Himeji (Hyobgo Prefecture). One evening, while practicing *zazen* at Sanyuji, Gudo suddenly experienced enlightenment. Giving a shout and rising from his seat, he found that all the koans he had puzzled over were perfectly clear. It is uncertain, however, what part Nankei played in Gudo's initial enlightenment, which may have been essentially independent of any teacher (*mushi dokugo*). On reflection, Gudo himself was not entirely satisfied with the experience, and soon set off again in search of an authentic enlightened master, visiting a large number of teachers, nearly all affiliated with the Myoshinji line.

Eventually, Gudo discovered an able master in the person of Yozan Keiyo (n.d.), another Shotaku-line teacher. In 1609, after several years of exhausting practice under Yozan, Gudo at last realized great enlightenment while meditating single-mindedly amid the onslaught of a horde of mosquitoes. One evening shortly thereafter, Gudo went to present his experience to Yozan. Yozan blew out the lantern Gudo was carrying and Gudo, laughing loudly, relit it. Yozan replied with loud laughter of his own, bestowing on his disciple the Shotaku-line transmission and the religious name Gudo.

The following year Gudo received office at Myoshinji and began his actual career as a Zen teacher. In addition to his extensive travels and his activity in founding and restoring Kanzan-line temples, Gudo seems to have been widely regarded as perhaps the

leading Myoshinji teacher of his day. Despite his close relationship with the retired Emperor, his many eminent lay followers and his high standing at Myoshinji, Gudo preferred the seclusion of provincial temples, particularly Zuiganji in Sendai and Daisenji. Daisenji became the Master's base in his native Mino, and in 1641 when famine swept the area, he assisted in distributing food to the local people.

Aside from his broad commitment to what he saw as the authentic tradition of Kanzan-line Zen, the actual nature of Gudo's orthodoxy is difficult to determine. We have the negative evidence of the criticism he directed to his contemporaries within and outside the Kanzan line, but only scant factual information on Gudo's own style of teaching. Gudo seems to have been especially critical of syncretic Zen despite the fact that he himself espoused it at times. He took exception to Isshi Monju's emphasis on combining Zen with strict observance of the Vinaya, or Precepts, and rejected Ungo's Pure Land-style Zen teaching and "Nembutsu" Zen generally.

Gudo was also opposed to the eclectic Ming Zen of the transplanted Chinese master Yin-yuan Lung-ch'i, a teaching which combined koan and zazen study with observance of the precepts and Pure Land and Esoteric elements. After Yinyuan's arrival in 1654, Myoshinji was bitterly divided over the question of whether to receive him at the temple. The Ming teacher's partisans at Myoshinji finally engineered a visit to Kanzan's pagoda, but Gudo remained firmly opposed to what he viewed as Yinyuan's heterodox teaching, and denounced those Myoshinji-line monks who became Yinyuan's disciples. Yet Gudo's actions at times were at curious variance with his stated opposition to syncretism and its proponents. Despite his criticism of Ungo and Isshi, for example, Gudo offered Ungo the abbacy of his leading temple, Zuiganji, and bestowed on Isshi his line's *inka*, or sanction.

On the question of what sort of Zen Gudo himself taught, we are on still shakier ground. At least with his priestly disciples, Gudo teaching appears to have focused on koan study and mondo using typical "Zen"-style phrases derived from Chinese sources. At the same time, Gudo is known to have lectured on the Blue Cliff Record and assisted in the publication of various Zen classics, including the koan collection Ch'an-lin lui-chu, referred to earlier. The Blue Cliff Record itself seems to have remained of key importance in the Daio line, a continuing legacy of the medieval period, and in the Myoshinji Shotaku line, Toyo's copy of the koan collection was transmitted with certain teachers' *inka*. Daigu, too, considered the Blue Cliff Record to be the Zen school's principle classic, and koan Zen generally, including its classics and associated "literary" forms, seems to have remained a conspicuous force in the Kanzan

line during the early Tokugawa period.

The biography of Gudo's heir Baiten Mumyo (1607-1676) states that Gudo frequently made use of koan in instructing Baiten and records several *mondo* (Zen dialogue) style exchanges between the master and his disciple. A *mondo* during one evening visit to Gudo ends with Gudo blowing out the lamp, at which Baiten, suddenly enlightened, declares he has realized his "face before father and mother," and receives Gudo's *inka*. The episode, patently similar to Gudo's enlightenment *mondo* with his own teacher Yozan, raises the question of whether the act of blowing out the candle represented a form of enlightenment ritual in Yozan's line, and suggests that, in certain instances, enlightenment *mondo* in the Kanzan-line temples may have been more formalized than spontaneous.

While the large number of his lay followers and female disciples would indicate that Gudo produced popular teachings in the vernacular, barely any evidence of such works remains. Gudo's principal written record, *Hokan roku*, is a posthumous work compiled by his disciples and published in 1662. Composed entirely in Sino-Japanese, it contains little that can be described as popular Zen. While certain of Gudo's heirs, such as Mu'nan and Baiten, composed works in the vernacular, there is no proof that they were influenced in doing so by similar works of Gudo, and if such works existed, his disciples failed to include them when compiling the records of his teachings. Possibly this type of material was considered too undistinguished for inclusion in the posthumous record of an eminent master of Gudo's standing at Myoshinji. Only one work in Japanese by Gudo survives, an extended Buddhist poem entitled *Iroha uta*, published in the mid nineteenth century. The poem is plainly directed to a popular audience and was probably composed for a female follower of Gudo's to be set to music and sung, presumably in a manner similar to Ungo's *Ojoyoka*, discussed earlier. Certain stanzas present what appears to be a simplified, popularized interpretation of Zen:

*"The various buddhas appearing on paintings or carved
from wood*

*All have their existence within our own breasts.
Our mind in which, right from the start, not a thing exists
When you become a kami, realizes buddhahood as well.
If you ask me where the Buddha is to be found
He's right in the heart of the one who is asking."*

But apart from such general expressions of the doctrine of original enlightenment, there is little indication here of Zen per se. Indeed, much of *Iroha uta* is devoted to a Pure Land-like outlook on practice and realization not far removed from that of *Ojoyoka*.

*"Men all think that Amida exists only in the west.
No one realizes he's to be found right within yourself.
You may turn to the west and think him to be a million
leagues away.
But when you take a closer look, Amida's there before
your eyes!"*

Hokan roku, too, shows Gudo instructing Pure Land followers with "Nenbutsu" Zen-type teachings. It is conceivable that, after all, Gudo felt syncretic Zen of this sort to be acceptable for women and laymen, but not for Zen priests, particularly those of the Myoshinji line. Yet, while Gudo's Zen is somewhat difficult to assess, and Gudo himself remains a rather remote and indistinct figure, there is little question of his importance in the development of Myoshinji in the Tokugawa period. Gudo sought to uphold the temple's dignity as a bastion of authentic Zen, honoring its traditions and defending its heritage against what he regarded as the incursion of heterodox influences. He viewed himself as a classical Zennist, and it was his lineage, transmitted through Mu'nan and Etan to Hakuin and his heirs, that ultimately became the leading line of Japanese Rinzai Zen, virtually dominating the entire Rinzai school to the present day.

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Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse XVII, Lecture 2

"There are blind baldheads who after finishing a stomachful of food sit down to contemplate tranquillity, restrain the flow of their minds, and abandon the mind's activity. They abominate noise and seek calmness, but this is heresy. A Patriarch said, 'If you restrain the mind to contemplate tranquillity, raise the mind to observe externals, hold the mind to behold serenity within, or concentrate the mind to enter trances, you must know these practices are all fictitious devices.' He who is listening now to my sermon, how can he be approached, realized, or adorned? He is not one who can be approached or adorned. But if he does adorn himself, he adorns himself with all existence. Do not commit an error!"

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

Lin-chi has settled all questions about meditation, concentration, and so forth. He tells us this is no true Buddhism. Your common sense might ask, "Then what is the merit of sitting all day in meditation?" He will give you the answer, but you must understand that his answer is from his own standpoint as a Zen master. He is not a student. His meditation when young was a very severe one, but now he no longer needs any device.

"There are blind baldheads who after finishing a stomach full of food sit down to contemplate tranquillity, restrain the flow of their minds, and abandon the mind's activity. They abominate noise and seek calmness, but this is heresy." Now he is touching all Zen monks and calls them baldheads, the unenlightened. In Zen temples, if you close your eyes in meditation, you are hit. You must have an open eye, sensitive to all that is around you. You must let your mind flow naturally.

"A Patriarch said, 'If you restrain the mind to contemplate tranquillity, raise the mind to observe externals, hold the mind to behold serenity within, or concentrate the mind to enter trances, you must know these practices are all fictitious devices.'" Wild fox Zen! This is a heresy, but it's a fault of all beginners. The study of Zen is dangerous without a teacher.

Whether you keep your mind contemplating calmly or raise it to observe the external, or, look into the self to keep it as the moon's reflection in the pool, all these are but devices and not true Buddhism. There is the koan: "Your soul is turning day and night like a marvelous wheel with every circumstance. How do you turn it?" When you answer this, you will realize the real standpoint of Buddhism.

In a Chinese temple there was a poem engraved upon the two doors of a gate. One side said, "The soul is so marvelous and so mysterious." The other, "It turns into all circumstances." A monk entered the temple and, meeting the abbot, said: "I read the two lines of the poem. On the one side it speaks of the mysterious soul and on the other, turning into all circumstances. I wonder, which point is the more important for us?" The abbot said, "The soul is turning like a marvelous wheel." But a patriarch of Japan, hearing this, remarked: "I do not agree. If I were to emphasize either side, I would choose, "Turning with circumstance."

"He who is listening now to my sermon, how can he be approached, realized, or adorned?" So why do you try to approach, or realize, or adorn, or prove, or ascertain, or demonstrate by evidence, by argument? He who is listening in your presence is living in yourself--buddha-nature, the Buddha. There is no other being in your self. There is just one buddha-nature in the universe

in all sentient beings. I am speaking here and you are listening, but it is really one soul. There is no man, god, animal or insect, just one buddha-nature. When I say buddha-nature, you “image” a Buddha who is always meditating. It is not an image! Buddha-nature is the nature of the universe.

“He is not one who can be approached or adorned.” Who? This One? [Strikes chest.] How do you approach him? This existence is always *here*. There are no two existences in the world. Who could approach him? There is no high. There is no low. You think you are a human being. But you are God. You put a cheap value upon your own soul from your own ignorance. It is not necessary to prove that you are God. But you, of course, would say, “If I am God, I must make decisions. Yet I do not know what to do.” Well, God is still creating the universe and the creating will be endless. God has not decided anything yet. How could you decide? If you think you can decide, then you attach too much importance to yourself. If you study the Buddhist commandments, you will understand decision as a cardinal principle.

This phenomenal world is transient, mutable. It changes phase at every moment. If you make the decision to adhere to this world, that decision is violating the Buddha's commandment. You make yourself useless. Look at water and how it flows. See how the clouds change at every moment! No artist can depict the changes. If you do not understand the law of transitoriness, you do not understand Buddhism. So “He, who is listening now to my sermon” is buddha-nature. He is the one you can adorn.

“But if he does adorn himself, he adorns himself with all existence.” That one adorns himself with the blue sky, the green earth, flowing water, whispering breeze, singing birds, stars and flowers. Don't you realize that he adorns himself with a universal crown the sun and moon? Don't you know the experience of wholeness? Do you not know the moment when you enter into the universe and the universe enters into you? You are not just a human being. If you have no experience of adorning yourself, you are still outside Buddhism. So Lin-chi says, “Do not commit an error!”

Some say that Buddhism and Christianity are not very different. To me all this talking is a nuisance. There is no Christian God. There is no Buddhist or Mohammedan God. There is just one taste in the universe. But somehow we are trying to explain one thing from many different directions. We are trying to explain God or Buddha from a different angle, different experience. But, because the nature of each is the Dharma of the universe, we point to one thing. Essentially Buddhist and Christian are alike. We laugh. We smell the same way. Some say in the future there will be only one religion. It's foolish. Religion is just one nose in the world!

TALES OF "THE GREAT FOOL"

(Part 1)

Taigu Sôchiku (a.r. Daigu, 1584-1669) is generally ranked among the leading figures of seventeenth century Rinzai Zen. Like nearly all Rinzai masters of the early Edo period, with the notable exception of Takuan Sôhô, he was a prominent member of the Myôshinji line, the powerful Kyoto temple whose masters would come to dominate early modern Japanese Zen. Taigu was a close colleague of other celebrated Myôshinji masters, including Gudô Tôshoku (1579-1661) and Ungo Kiyo (1582-1659), both of whom he accompanied for a time on a renowned 1607 Zen pilgrimage, and, like them, was sought out by the retired emperor and Zen enthusiast Gomizuno'o (1596-1680).

Taigu was born in 1584 in the town of Sano in the old province of Mino (now Gifu Prefecture) to a family named Takefu. At age ten he entered the nearby Zen temple, where he became a monk under the Rinzai Zen master Jôgen Sôkô (d.1610), receiving the religious name Sôchiku. In 1615 he received transmission from Jôgen's heir Chimon Genso (d.1630) along with the second Buddhist name Taigu, "Great Fool." He served a term as abbot of Myôshinji, receiving the imperially-conferred purple robe, and also undertook Zen study with the master Itchû Tômoku (1522-1621), known as "Itchû the Stick" for his liberal use of the same on his monks. As apparent in the episodes that follow, Taigu, too, could be an abrasive and cantankerous teacher. But he remains honored as one of the pillars of Myôshinji Zen during this formative and at times troubled period in the temple's history, when the shogunate was clamping down on the major Zen temples' autonomy, and the temples themselves were divided internally over the arrival in Japan of a new generation of Chinese Zen masters such as Daozhe Chaoyuan (d.1662) and Yinyuan Longqi (1592-1673).⁴

The manuscript from which the following anecdotes are taken, was originally compiled in 1768 at Nansenji (Gifu Prefecture), the Myôshinji branch-temple in Edo of which Taigu became the fifth-generation abbot.⁵ The text, including Taigu's collected poems and other inscriptions for particular formal religious occasions, was published in 2012 by Hanazono University's Zen Culture Studies Center. Edited by Nônin Kôdô the volume is entitled Taigu oshô goroku, shûi, gyôjitsu (Formal Record, Gleanings, and Biographical Accounts of Master Taigu).

⁴ Ming masters of the so-called Ôbaku school, whose syncretic Zen split the Myôshinji's monks and teachers, some of whom left to become the Chinese masters' disciples.

⁵ Now situated in Tokyo's Arakawa district.

In the fifth year of Keichô (1600), the Master found himself caught up in the warfare engulfing Gifu.⁶ The Master fled, shouldering his book satchel⁷ and taking his elderly teacher Jôgen.

A renegade warrior brandishing a sword attempted to make off with the Master's book satchel, but the Master grabbed the thief's arm, pursuing him and shouting loudly, "These are the personal records of my Dharma transmission, and I'm not letting you get away with them even if it costs me my life!" And so saying, the Master snatched back the satchel from the bandit's hand. The bandit, fearing the Master's strength, let go the satchel and fled.

Having routed the renegade warrior, Taigu bid farewell to Jôgen and traveled on pilgrimage to the Atsuta shrine in Owari,⁸ where he offered fervent prayers that he might realize the great matter of enlightenment. After this, the Master traveled to study under various Zen teachers, dwelling alone in forests and fields, and never forgetful of his purpose for even a single day.

After the passing of Jôgen, the Master became Dharma heir to Chimon.⁹ Early in the Genna era, the Master resided in Edo and served as abbot and second founder of Nansenji.

*** (189-190, no.3) ***

⁶ That is, the battle of Sekigahara (in present-day Gifu Prefecture), the key battle in which Tokugawa Ieyasu defeated his rivals, leading to the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate. The chronology of Gudô Tôshoku describes how he and Taigu wandered together through the ravaged area of the battle, carrying their books on their backs as they picked their way through the corpse-strewn fields.

⁷ (*Kyû*) It was customary for Buddhist monks to carry their written religious materials on their backs in a kind of portable library on a wooden frame that could be hoisted backpack-style.

⁸ Located in the city of Nagoya in present-day Aichi Prefecture. Often classed as one of the leading Shinto shrines, Atsuta's principal object of worship is a sword. The celebrated warlord Nobunaga (1534-1582) is said to have prayed to the temple's deity for success in battle, and in addition to prayers for his own spiritual progress, Taigu may have wished to give thanks for his narrow escape amidst the ravages of war.

⁹ Chimon Gen (n.d.). A Dharma heir of Jôgen, Chimon similarly served a term as abbot of Myôshinji. In 1615 he reputedly gave the Dharma name Taigu to the Master, previously known as Sôchiku *shusô* [head monk], thus making Taigu a Zen master in his own right and a direct Dharma descendant in Jôgen's Myôshinji line.

There was a certain Korean Zen master named Myôkan,¹ who lived in Yoshino, in Yamato Province. Myôkan was a practitioner of exceptional endowments, who had meditated deeply on this matter [of Zen].

One day he asked a monk, "You have traveled widely on Zen pilgrimage, interviewing teachers. Who among them have you found to be a man of transcendent insight?"

The monk replied, "In all Japan there are no real Zen masters apart from one man called Taigu. His behavior is coarse, and he loves to drink, so that he goes about half drunk and half sober, cursing everyone, with no restraint over what comes out of his mouth. Yet for all that, one cannot fathom his spiritual depths."

Myôkan, delighted, exclaimed, "That is my true friend and master! I won't take up drinking myself, and I won't adopt his coarse behavior, but I'll just follow his teaching." And that very day Myôkan packed for his journey.

After going some one hundred *ri*,² Myôkan came to a roofless houseboat. The Master received him just as if they had been old friends, and together they talked and laughed all day.

*** (190, no. 5) ***

On one occasion the Master participated in a vegetarian feast.

A certain Zen teacher who was present held up his prayer mat³ and asked, "See it?"

"I see it," the Master replied.

"What do you see?" the teacher demanded.

The Master told him "I see you squirming in agony while you truckle to the parishioners."

*** (193, no.7) ***

¹ Myôkan Sôtetsu (n.d.). Like Taigu, Myôkan was said to be an heir in the Myôshinji Tôkai line, and, like Taigu, served a term as Myôshinji abbot.

² A *ri* (CH. *li*) is an old unit of measurement, equivalent to approximately 2.44 miles. Myôkan has thus traveled nearly two hundred fifty miles, a considerable distance, presumably on foot, to meet Taigu.,

³ *Zagu*. The mat a monk always carries neatly folded and which he spreads on the ground to perform prostrations before Buddhist images or eminent masters.

Sengai Stories - Part 6

(continued from Vol 51, Winter 2015)

Not far from Hakata, in the town of Katakasu, there lived a haiku poet named Kawagoe Shien. A follower of Master Sengai, Shien was a frequent visitor at Kyohaku-in, where he would receive instruction in Zen from the Master and have him look over his haiku. Shien passed away in fall of the tenth year of Tenpô (1839) and was buried at Genjû-an in Hakata, receiving the posthumous Buddhist name Layman Setsu'nan.

Setsu'nan's family were hereditary equerries of the Kuroda daimyo, with a stipend of five hundred *koku*,² but for certain reasons, the stipend is said to have been reduced to some 250 or 300 *koku* during Shien's generation.

One day a dejected looking Shien came to visit the Master.

“Why so down at the mouth?” the Master asked.

Scratching his head, Shien replied, “To tell you the truth, I've done something pretty awful. I've knocked up one of our family maidservants. If this is made public, I could end up getting stripped of my stipend and having to commit *hara-kiri*.”

The Master said, “When lascivious thoughts run wild, that's always what happens. Well, you had better just leave the matter to me.” And so saying, the Master promptly left the temple.

The Master then went to talk with a Mr. Hirano, likewise a follower from Katakasu.

Sengai told him, “There's a woman I know whom I'd like you to take on as a maidservant for a little while.”

“Of course,” agreed Hirano, readily grasping the situation, “anything to oblige Your Reverence.”

“Ah, what a relief!” the Master exclaimed, and returned to the temple where he explained things to Shien. The maidservant was then dispatched to Hirano's, where she was safely delivered of a healthy male baby.

The maid had, however, contracted an infection of the nipples that rendered it impossible for her to suckle the newborn child. Shien had not enough money for a wet-nurse, leaving the couple

² A *koku* (a.r., *seki*) is an old unit of measure, equivalent to approximately 5.119 bushels of rice.

utterly at a loss as they took turns cradling the infant in their arms.

One day while the Master was making his usual begging rounds,¹ he stopped to visit Shien, whom he found once again sunk in despair.

“Now then,” the Master told Shien, “there’s no need to get yourself so upset over this. How about letting me have the baby for a while?”

Taking up the child, the Master nestled him in the capacious sleeves of his monk’s robe, balancing him tenderly in his arms.

Continuing on his begging rounds, the Master inquired if any nursing mothers had spare milk to suckle the baby, and repeated this plea every day. The citizens of the village of Katakasu, witnessing the Master’s deep devotion, could not restrain their tears, and one new mother after another pressed forward to suckle the child, exclaiming, “Me too!” “Me too!” In this way there naturally developed between the Master and Shien a feeling akin to that of father and son.

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¹ *Takuhatsu*. Literally, “holding the bowl,” the traditional begging practice in which a line of black-robed Zen monks wearing wide-brimmed straw hats wend their way chanting through towns, cities, and villages in search of alms from passersby and parishioners. It is unclear here whether Sengai’s *takuhatsu* is the usual group practice, or an individual begging expedition.

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

SEVENTIETH LECTURE

Wednesday January 30th, 1940

"O Obedient One! If a Bodhisattva realizes pure and perfect awakening with the mind of immaculate awakening which does not accept as true existence all phenomena and all forms of purityas, he will completely understand that adherence to the self-conscious state of the mind, and the body will become a hindrance to awakening. Without the self-conscious state of his own existence in the mind and body, the Bodhisattva will attain the clear state that forever transcends the state of hindrance and that of no-hindrance also. Then he will realize that the world we live in and the form of our mind and body are as the sound of a gong coming forth to the world of dust. Klesa and nirvana are not the forms which become hindrances. He will discover within himself marvelous awakening, tranquillity, and lightness of mind; he will acquiesce in the state of absolute annihilation.

Our body and mind and those of the others are unable to attain this state. The natures of sentient beings and the attributes of long-lived beings are as floating imaginations in comparison with this state of absolute annihilation. This upaya is called dhyana."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

Tejovatisvarah Bodhisattva asked the Buddha a question. The Buddha told him that, fundamentally, there are three *Upayas*. In Sanskrit, this word is also translated as contrivance, method, or way of looking at something. We contrive many vehicles, as when you go to Washington D.C. you may go by train, by plane--or will you swim through the sea, or dig through the ground like a mole?

The three types of *upaya* to attain perfect awakening are; *sa-matha*, *sa-mapatti*, and *dhyana*. Meditation has seven different types—but these are the three basic types.

Samatha is the wiping out of all your thoughts, as well as all your conceptions of the outside, of the sensations impressed on your sense organs and your mind. Thus you will discover your

pure consciousness. There are many ways of wiping the filth from your mind: by confession, ablution, cremation and then meditation.

Samapatti is finding your original mind, observing it through meditation. That is, to find that the things observed are different from the observer, and to understand that you are observing nothing but phenomena or thoughts. Thus, you understand the nature of the existing world through *samapatti* as the observation of eyes, ears, mind, conscious and subconscious, one by one. You observe the outside with your empirical intuition; you learn to use this intuition accurately. You do not prove reality by this intuition. Read the science of optics to prove that nothing exists objectively, but in the senses: vibration appears as form and color to your senses. So objectively, there is nothing. The outside is nothingness.

But how about your dreams, your thoughts, your consciousness? It is your consciousness that creates this great dream of the universe. Then you meditate upon this; your thoughts, your *samsara*, *vedana*, and your observation, called *vipashana*. You observe that all is temporal a mirage with no eternal form; that the whole universe is empty. Then, you come to your original nature.

From the standpoint of Buddhism these two views are not really true, so we come to the third, *Dhyana*, which I am speaking about tonight. We have:

1. Emptiness
2. Temporal
3. Central

I shall speak about this third view (the Tendai sect is based upon it). It is not understood in the Western world. It is a science, it is Buddhism! You have your psychology, your physical science, your Eddington, Einstein, your theology. But this way of Buddhism is unknown to you.

"O Obedient One! If a Bodhisattva realizes pure and perfect awakening with the mind of immaculate awakening which does not accept as true existence all phenomena and all forms of purityas," —"Purity" is in the eye, the ear, the center of mind; purity is in your soul. You must accept your imagination, so to you, your soul looks impure. But there is no impure soul from the beginning; purity is universal. This is the reaching point of *samatha*, followed by the reaching point of *samapatti*.

But the Bodhisattva with his immaculate awakening denies both, because they are abstract views! You cannot separate phenomena from noumena.

Reality, according to Emanuel Kant, is undemonstrable, unintelligible. This is so but he himself falls into the dualistic view when he tries to find the monistic view.

When we meditate, we see Reality with the same eye that we use to perceive phenomena—we cannot divide this in two. You must observe the universe from one consciousness, though you give many names to the perceptions, both inside and outside. If you understand this, you will know that the "immaculate awakening" is the awakening which does not fall into two things: phenomena and noumena—*rajah* and *sunyata*. The Western philosophers see the world in these two ways—but the Bodhisattva refuses this dualistic view because of his immaculate awakening. It is hard to get this immaculate awakening, for the mind is naturally dualistic; therefore, the mind itself must be annihilated! We practice to attain this.

"... he will completely understand that adherence to the self-conscious state of the mind and the body will become a hindrance to awakening." —"The self-conscious state of mind and body." You accept this body and this mind but it is like two things, and your existence is nothing but the self-conscious state of body and mind.

You are always seeking the mind; you read books; it is as if you were seeking fire with a light in your hand! Where is the fire? Then suddenly—"Oh, I have mind!" You will begin to analyze the mind, and if you reach the end, you will discover that the mind is rooted in universal consciousness.

This "self-conscious state of mind and body" is indeed a "hindrance." When you meditate upon mind and body, looking for something eternal, you will never find it.

"Without the self-conscious state of his own existence in the mind and body, the Bodhisattva will attain the clearest state, which forever transcends the state of hindrance and that of no-hindrance also." —Think about this! Will you wait for death to attain this state? European scholars do not understand this; they think we are talking about the impossible. It is because our idea of nescience is different from theirs. When you think about nescience, it is not nescience. When you forget it, it is nescience.

We have a koan: "How can you drop off the body?" Well, how can you? The mind is in the body—how can you drop the body? By the realization that this mind is not yours, that the mind is universal. This is eternal consciousness. Eternal consciousness has this sense perception: I am not doing anything! This state of mind we call nescient. As a human being, you can reach the state

of nescience! As universal consciousness you have this sense perception.

When you think this consciousness is yours, the world is very small. So this eternal mind must be enlightened, This enlightens the human mind.

When you materialize everything and give it a name, it certainly becomes a "state of hindrance." When you deny it, this is also a hindrance. The Bodhisattva transcends both the states.

"Then he will realize that the world we live in and the form of our mind and body are as the sound of a gong coming forth to the world of dust. Klesa and nirvana are not the forms which become hindrances." —Klesa means "affliction"; nirvana could be called the opposite state. When you attain pure awakening, you can experience both; when you like nirvana and hate *klesa*, you are not yet enlightened.

"He will discover within himself marvelous awakening, tranquillity and lightness of mind; he will acquiesce in the state of absolute annihilation. Our body and mind and those of the others are unable to attain this state. The natures of sentient beings and the attributes of long-lived beings are as floating imaginations in comparison with this state of absolute annihilation. This upaya is called dhyana." ... I have no more time.

* * * * *

The Phantom of the Mirror

The cover pic was taken by Michael Hotz who, in taking a photo of this intriguing object found himself caught inside as the phantom of the mirror, endlessly staring at himself staring in, no longer able to enjoy Buddhist "life as suffering" outside.

Yours truly, driven by great compassion, chanting the dharini for preventing disasters, engulfed and protected by clouds of burning incense and sage and... armed with photoshop, managed to extricate, after grueling hours of struggle, the phantom from the mirror to return as Michael once again. However, the mirror having once tasted phantom companionship, hungers for more and now, aware of its power to entice, waits for some unsuspecting soul to stare into it long enough to find themselves staring out at themselves staring in as its phantom companion. To assuage this hunger, a token remembrance of its phantoms past is included on the back page for the protection of our viewers.

The Phantom of the Mirror



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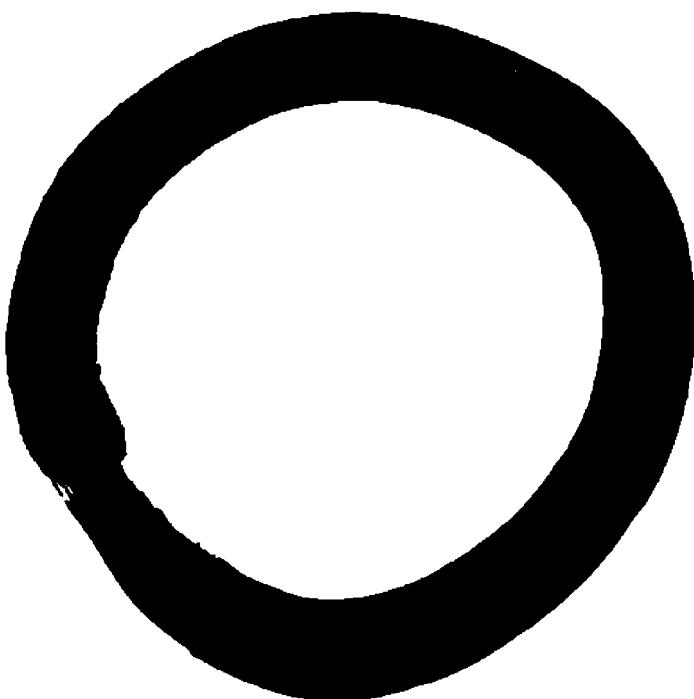
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