

ZEN NOTES



FIVE VERSES FROM ZENRIN KUSHU *in Their Original Settings*

Translated into English
by

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AS I have stated previously (cf. ZEN NOTES, Vol. III, No. 4--April, 1956) the quotations comprising ZENRIN KUSHU-- "A Zen Anthology"--have been taken from numerous sources: the Chinese Classics, Chinese poetry, Chinese proverbs, as well as the writings and biographies of Chinese Zen masters.

In order to understand either the original meaning of these phrases and verses or the meaning given them in Zen, it is frequently necessary to be familiar with the context in which they occur. The Chinese Zen masters, in their writing, lecturing, or discussions with disciples, often drew upon their wide acquaintance with Chinese literature for apt illustrations of the points they wished to make; just as often a specific situation drew from them extemporaneous expressions in prose or verse, which later generations have treasured for their lasting significance.

For the following five excerpts from ZENRIN KUSHU I have chosen examples of the latter case. I have not been able to trace the quotations to sources earlier than the contexts in which they appear here. Writing in parallel form is a characteristic of Chinese prose as well as poetry. It will be noted that the compiler of ZENRIN KUSHU has arranged in verse form expressions which originally were in prose; he has also occasionally changed the text slightly to conform to his scheme of compilation.

Though the quotations all have their own value and beauty, I feel sure they will take on a deeper meaning when read within the framework of the incidents which occasioned them. I have added no explanatory notes, but leave the texts as they are for you to read with your Zen eye, if you have one.

那 金
箇 風
是 吹
知 玉
音 管

*Kimpū gyokkan o fuku
Nako ka kore chiin*

The golden wind blows on a pipe of jade,
But who is there to appreciate the tune?

RINZAI reached Three Peaks.

"Where have you come from?" asked Hyō Oshō.

"I have come from Ōbaku," said Rinzai.

"What does Ōbaku have to say?" asked Hyō.

"The golden ox suffered the smelter last
night

And no one has seen a trace of him since,"
said Rinzai.

"The golden wind blows on a pipe of jade,
But who is there to appreciate the tune?"
asked Hyō.

"He passed straight through the myriad bar-
riers,

And did not halt in the clear empyrean,"
returned Rinzai.

"This investigation of yours is exceedingly
lofty," said Hyō.

"The dragon has given birth to a golden
phoenix

That smashes the azure dome of heaven," said
Rinzai.

"Sit down and have a cup of tea," said Hyō.

深 高
深 高
海 峰
底 頂
行 立

*Kōkō taru hōchō ni tachi
Shinshin taru kaitei ni yuke*

Stand upon the summit of the peak--
High, high!
Walk upon the bottom of the sea--
Deep, deep!

RI KŌ, the Prefect of Rō Prefecture, having long yearned for the profound teaching of Master Yaku-san, repeatedly invited the Master to visit him, but the Master did not come. Finally Kō went himself to the mountain to pay his respects to the Master.

The Master was holding a volume of sutras in his hand and did not look up. His attendant addressed him, saying: "The Prefect is here."

Kō, who was a quick-tempered man, said: "To hear the name is better than to see the face."

"Prefect!" exclaimed the Master.

"Yes, your reverence," responded Kō.

"How dare you esteem the ear and scorn the eye!" demanded the Master.

"Kō saluted with folded hands and offered his apologies. Then he asked. "What is that which is Tao?"

The Master pointed above and below with his hand. Then he said: "Do you understand?"

"No," said Kō, "I do not understand."

"The clouds are in the heaven, the water is in the jar," said the Master.

Kō was delighted with these words. Bowing deeply, he offered this verse:

"He has trained his body to resemble that
of a stork,

Beneath a thousand old pine trees are two
boxes of sutras.

I came to ask about Tao. There were only
these words:

'The clouds are in the heaven, the water
is in the jar.'

"What are commandments, meditation, and wisdom?" Kō then asked.

"My room is without such useless furnishings," replied the Master.

Kō could not fathom the profound meaning of these words.

"Prefect," said the Master, "If you wish to acquire this thing, you must at once sit down upon the summit of the mountain--high, high, and walk upon the bottom of the sea--deep, deep. If you do not succeed in getting rid of the furnishings of the inner apartments, the passions will continue to seep out.

Keitoku dentō roku

失 貧
却 看
掌 天
中 上
珠 月

*Tenjō no tsuki o musabori mite
Shōchū no tama o shikkyaku su*

While you gaze at the moon in the heavens
You have lost the pearl in the palm
of your hand.

KAIFUKU Donei Zenji of Tanshū said at jōdō:

"Before he left the Tushita Heaven, he had already descended to the royal palace. Before he issued from his mother's womb, the salvation of men had already been completed.

"O, all you virtuous Zen men! Every day the sun rises from the eastern horizon, every morning at dawn the cock announces the fifth watch. The Peach-flower Grotto is not here, yet when spring comes, peach blossoms fill the valleys."

He further said: "He who was born from his mother's right side in the Lumbini Garden, having encircled it in seven steps and swept the Four Quarters with his glance (proclaimed:) 'In heaven and on earth I alone am the Honored One.'

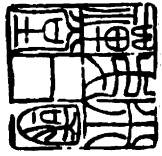
"It is like one who, while gazing at the moon in the heavens, has lost the pearl in the palm of his hand. Now, do you know where it is? If you know where it is, then you may be called filial sons and grandsons. If you don't yet know where it is, then I shall have to go on and on explaining."

He sat silent a little while, then continued: "Heaven-sent ability displays wondrous activity. Before you have made your appearance on the boards, you are already playing an inferior role."

Futō roku

CORRECTION: In the April Issue of ZEN NOTES, we stated that the population of Hong Kong was one million plus. Though not untrue, this statement does not present an accurate picture of affairs there. At present, though having accommodations for perhaps 1,200,000 persons, according to the New York Times, Hong Kong is crowded to overflowing with some two and a half million persons, 700,000 of whom are refugees. Sorry, we just weren't keeping up with the Times (New York, that is).

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*Kyoku owatte hito miezu
 Kojō sūhō aoshi*

The tune is ended, the man remains unseen.
 Beyond the river a few peaks rise blue.

KEMPŌ, addressing the assembly, said: "When you raise up one, do not raise up two. If you let one go, it will fall into the second."

Ummon stepped forward and said: "Yesterday a man came from Tendai and went to Kinzan."

"When Kempō plucks the strings, Ummon recognizes the tune," said the Master. "But tell me, who is the one who appreciates it? Do you understand?"

The tune is ended, the man remains unseen.
 Beyond the river a few peaks rise blue.

Zoku kosonshuku goroku

*Kōbe o ko sureba zanshō ari
 Moto kore jūkyo no nishi*

Lifting up my head,
 There is the evening glow;
 From the beginning
 It has been to the west of my dwelling.

THE PERFECT TRUE NATURE

Reaching the limit of the Principle, words and feeling are forgotten.

What is there to which to compare it?

Now at last the frosty-night moon

Of itself falls into yonder valley.

The ripening fruit grows heavy with the weight of the monkeys,

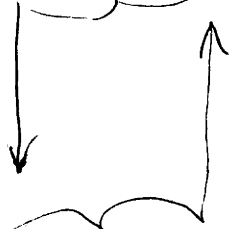
The lengthening hills resemble a dimly-seen road.

Lifting up my head, there is the evening-glow;

From the beginning it has been to the west of my dwelling.

Hogen Buneki
 Hogen goroku

元 舉
 是 頭
 住 殘
 居 照
 西 在



江 曲
 上 終
 數 人
 峯 不
 青 見

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