

ZEN NOTES



Rinzai Gigen

New Series, Old Season...

(from the editor's uncarved block)

So what's this?... Fall here so soon (for those that read the last page first), jumping over patiently waiting seasons. One fall after another, when will things get back on their feet? How will it all end when it's time to fall again? Even our cover Rinzai clenches his fists to keep the seasons from disarray. Yet maybe there is madness to this purpose, for as those of you on the East coast have noticed, Nature is still waiting for the fall issue, #4, of yesteryear, thereby confusing winter into extended hibernation while the bears quietly forage among the fallen leaves.

That being the case, I wonder if it would be wise to follow soon with a winter issue, considering all the tree blossoms just itching to bloom? Perhaps it's time to shake and mix the seasons to break out of their relentless, cyclic mindset of fall, winter, spring, summer... fall, winter, sprig..... Instead, a summer issue to help with those remaining heating bills, then spring, to get things moving again and when August gets unbearable, a gentle touch of winter cool.

While you ponder such deep, cyclic matters, I would like to report that the long sought successor to Sokei-an's commentary on the Platform Sutra was finally found under an obscure shelf, living among a group of homeless documents. It betrayed its Original Face with the quivering of dusty pages, sending us coughing, when a morsel of dark, expresso chocolate was inadvertently placed on the shelf before it. Having thus revealed itself, it confessed to being a second, incomplete translation of the Rinzai Record, started by Sokei-an just before W.W. II. Since we hope to publish the first translation in book form, ZN seems a perfect place to bring out Sokei-an's later offspring. It agreed wholeheartedly, to the expressode promise of endless offerings...



The cover Rinzai is from a handpainted copy, belonging to the FZI, of a famous painting by Soga Jasoku, who lived in the 15th century. The original is at Daitokuji's Shinjuan. Our copy was much too large for a single scanner pass and lacking a digital camera and time for film photos, it had to be scanned in several passes and then seamlessly patched together. If anyone, other than those peering over my shoulder, can spot all the different patches, then they will rate a free, lifetime subscription to Zen Notes.

Besides, Sokei-an's first lecture on the Rinzai Record, I would also like to start this new series with some excerpts by Sokei-an that Michael Hotz pulled from the autobiography of Sokei-an that he has been working on, *Holding Lotus to the Rock* .

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

TWENTIETH LECTURE

Saturday, November 19th, 1938

"The saliva, the snivel, the slaver, the blood, the sweat, the tears, the urine, and the excrement are to be reduced to the element of water. The temperature of the body is to be reduced to the element of fire. And the motion of the body is to be reduced to the element of wind. When the four great elements are disintegrated, where will your present illusory body be? You must therefore know that your body has no real existence. The conglomeration of the four elements makes the form of your physical existence. It is really like some illusory magic. The relationship between the four elements temporarily brings about the false appearance of the six branches of Indriya. These six roots and the four elements bring about your physical appearance within and without. This animated false entity seems as if it had an ability for reasoning within the heaped skandhas, and this reasoning ability is temporarily called mind."

Sokei-an Says:

In the previous lecture, there were many things which are to be reduced to the element of earth. And here are many names of those which belong to the human body.

"The saliva, the snivel, the slaver, the blood, the sweat, the tears, the urine and the excrement are to be reduced to the element of water." -- This is the usual Buddhist talk!

"The temperature of the body is to be reduced to the element of fire. And the motion of the body is to be reduced to the element of wind." -- This word "wind" is also translated by European scholars as "air." So the four great elements are earth, water, fire, air. But in the original text it is not air -- but wind. They place an emphasis on the energy, the force of wind. They think that energy is wind. These are very primitive arrangements of matter.

The Greeks in their philosophy also counted these four great elements.

Later, in Buddhism, they counted five -- sometimes six. The fifth was ether, and the sixth was consciousness. Consciousness, also, is a form of matter; without matter, consciousness finds no place to reside! Then what is the spiritual element in Buddhism?

The spirit is shunyata, emptiness. But to give it a name is no answer to this question. This shunyata is that which you must attain by yourself -- by your own effort! We cannot talk about it; it cannot be perceived by our senses; it is not vision or thoughts; you cannot conceive it in your consciousness -- because it is not a consciousness of which you are, at present, aware! Nor can you demonstrate the state of Emptiness!

The Western scholars speak of "reality" -- but we call it "emptiness." Some Buddhist scholar thinks this is also a form of existence, because the state of non-existence is not a thing that we can name. (And I forget the scholar's name).

The English philosopher, Hume, said that if it is not an existence which belongs to human knowledge, we don't need to think about it or to handle it! But all this is talk. We handle reality and we don't need to speak about it.

I will return to the Buddhist conception of the elements:

"When the four great elements are disintegrated, where will your present illusory body be?" -- This is one of the problems of Zen scholars! "When the four great elements are disintegrated, where will your present illusory body be?" Everyone ponders this at the time of death.

The body which consists of the four great elements will be decomposed and our body and consciousness will both cease to exist. We return to the state of emptiness.

The famous Chinese Buddhist monk who wrote the commentary on this said: "The separation of the four great elements does not necessarily mean death. In our meditation, when we reach Right View, these four elements will be disintegrated!" So in your meditation, the physical body is annihilated -- you need not strive to annihilate it! But when, in your meditation, you reach "original nature" -- there are no more four great elements; by your mind you can conceive that the four great elements are disintegrated! This stage is called Nirvana. Physically, you call it death.

There are two forms of Nirvana; In the first, your mind conceives the existence of your body. In the philosophical conclusion you will reach the state of Nirvana, but it means the

Nirvana which has a "remainder." Of course you are already in the state of Reality.

In the second, you abandon from your mind all philosophical concepts, you are that Reality, and your body no longer exists! This is the Nirvana which has no remainder.

These definitions of Nirvana are very complicated -- they make much argument among the monks. But a true teacher speaks about this in the correct sense -- quite differently from those who have not attained Nirvana. There is a subtle difference between the two forms of Nirvana -- but I hope you can understand it.

In the Nirvana which has no remainder, you are in the state of Reality -- and in that state the four elements which comprise your physical body will cease to exist.

According to the Chinese commentator, this view was described very carefully in the Sutra of Perfect Awakening. But if you think that the four great elements will go away somewhere -- it is illogical! They will be reduced to ether -- but they will never go away.

"Where will your illusory body be then?" Do you think that after your death, you go away? Then where do you go? Nowhere! Are you disconcerted?

"You must therefore know that your own body has no real existence." -- In Sanskrit, this is "emptiness," in English, "ether." Today, you might say electron or proton.

Who then creates this illusion? No one creates it! Your alaya consciousness creates the everlasting illusion. It is the consciousness common to all -- not only to animals but to trees and weeds and everything!

When the power of consciousness is very strong, existence as it appears in the outer world will become ephemeral -- like a rainbow! It will evaporate. But when the alaya consciousness becomes stagnant -- then the outer world remains there forever -- stagnant! One who has a strong consciousness can penetrate this outside existence, but the weak consciousness cannot penetrate it.

The real outside can never be seen by the naked eye -- but by our knowledge we can understand what that reality -- the true objective existence -- is.

"The conglomeration of the four element makes the form of your physical existence." -- Fire, water, earth, air.

"It is really like some illusory magic." -- Mind is the magician; it is a magic lantern! *"The relationship between the four elements temporarily brings about the false appearance of the six branches of Indriya."* -- For this "relationship," in Sanskrit, there is no correct word in English. For this relationship, the Buddha counts two causes: man's consciousness and alaya consciousness. I saw the seed in the ground as the cause of that vegetable, but then there is the rain and the sun on that ground. This "conglomeration" makes the physical body and then the forces of nature nurture it.

"The six branches of Indriya" are the five sense organs and the root, or foundation. The five sense organs are on the outside, and one sense organ on the inside to perceive all the inner phenomena. Together -- they are one perceiving function called "Manus" mind, Man. So, altogether six branches of Indriya. (Held up hand) Five branches (fingers) and one branch (hand).

The six branches were created by relationship. We believe that the universe exists from beginningless beginning to endless end. Everything is living! The human being sleeps a little while -- but there is no death!

"These six roots and the four elements bring about your physical appearance within and without." -- Inside is our Indara mind which can be analyzed into four branches -- the Hindus made this subdivision. Our physical body is the earth. (The mind from the outside is seen as body). "Samyak" is the thoughts created by the element of water; samskara is created by fire; and vijnana is created by the wind. So Alaya consciousness has the force of wind. Wind creates fire, fire creates water, water creates earth -- these are the four stages of the mind.

"This animated false entity seems as if it had an ability for reasoning within the heaped skandhas, ..." -- "Heaped skandhas" means the five senses, the shadows of mind. In these skandhas -- the heaped shadows of mind -- there is some ability of reasoning.

"... and this reasoning ability is temporarily called mind." -- Even the ivy has this! In the darkest corner, it will turn and reach out its little hands to a streak of light. All will strive to exist in better condition, will turn from darkness to the sunlight, from ignorance to enlightenment. It is just instinct -- as in the ivy. But this instinct cannot operate of itself!

The Foothills of Rinzai Roku

(Excerpt from *Holding Lotus to the Rock*, edited by Michael Hotz)

(Sokei-an loved the Record of Rinzai and translated it as his first series of lectures in the early 1930's. He felt that Americans needed original source materials translated and commented upon by a Zen Master and there were none in these early days. Currently this version is being prepared for publication. In November of 1941 Sokei-an began a second Rinzai translation and commentary that was interrupted by his internment at Ellis Island in June 1942. In this issue we begin publishing an excellent set of these lectures as noted by Ruth Fuller Sasaki. As an introduction to Rinzai's Zen here are some excerpts from Sokei-an.)

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In China, where the Zen sect originated, five schools of Zen developed. Rinzai, a Chinese master who lived in the ninth century, was the founder of one of them. From the seventh to the tenth centuries was the famous golden period of the Tang Dynasty, when Chinese civilization reached its highest point. During this epoch, the Zen School of Buddhism swept throughout China. Chinese history in this period was distinguished by a struggle against fierce invaders, Tartars and Turks, "blue-eyed and purple-bearded," from the west. The spirit of China was strong, warlike, so Zen, influenced by the atmosphere of the times, was characterized by bluntness and force, coarser-grained than today. Buddhism once more took on its original form, its original face--as if the Buddha spoke it directly from his own heart. The Zen masters of China at this time were not reading from moth-eaten sutras, but spoke Buddhism as it was written in their own hearts, spoke from the innermost man. They grasped the vital point and were satisfied. Zen is a Buddhism studied from one's own mind. The whole law is written in your mind, in your body. The key to the mystery of the cosmos is really already in your possession. You must read this first and find the law in yourself. Then you open the records of the ancients and say, "Oh, he says exactly what I think!"

Zen in this period was at its height. Students did not study Zen merely by taking sanzen, but by practicing it in daily life. Today we study Zen as one would learn to swim in a pool, but in Rinzai's time, it was like swimming in the ocean. Both teacher and student expressed Zen at each moment of the day's tasks. The mountain

they looked at was a koan; the sky into which they gazed was a koan. Anything and anyone they confronted was a koan.

The Buddhism of Rinzai is different from that of other Buddhists of his time. Rinzai's school has the particular characteristic of being swift and sure--- whenever he says a word, it indicates the real point of understanding. He, as a Zen master, did not speak much philosophy. Many people think the Zen School is only a school of meditation. So they "talk" about Reality and "take" the attitude of meditation. But they are unable to use such an attitude in action, in active life. The old attitude of quiet meditation is good, of course, and is still kept today in Japan in the Soto School, but the active school is Rinzai Zen. Reality is to be grasped in its most active moment. To use an analogy, the Soto school is something like a musical instrument, the strings of which are loose, so you cannot play a tune, though the sound is deep. The Rinzai school is like an instrument in which the strings are all tight. Just touch the strings, and they make a sound.

The Zen School is very queer. We are not really teaching Zen. We are finding Zen in our minds, naturally. We do not explain. We do not say Zen is this or Zen is that. Those with Zen minds are not limited to monks. They are all kinds of people. When we meet – "Ah, that is Zen!" There is no English equivalent for what we call this in the East, but the nearest word is probably "opportunity." We seize an opportunity and grasp the chance of the moment. Other people do not recognize it, so they miss it. In our tradition, to have a great opportunity, you must be prepared to grasp it. If you do not, you must complete your education through many reincarnations. Then how do you express it? Rinzai expressed it with a shout. If you wish to grasp the true view, you had better try immediately in this moment. Otherwise, you must practice zazen for a long time.

Some day in the future you will realize that there was some Asiatic Buddhist monk who was giving lectures on the Record of Rinzai, the record of a Chinese Zen master. I came too soon to this country. These two civilizations (Japan and America), will meet in the future. Now they are fighting, but the fighting is the sign that there will be some contact later. Physical contact is fighting, but mental contact is to exchange minds. Buddhism came into China after the war between China and Central Asia. Buddhism came into Japan after the war between Korea and Japan. War is always introducing Buddhism to the other country.

But in this reply of Rinzai: "When I was sojourning in Obaku's place, I asked him a question three times and I was smitten three times." –by speaking thus, Rinzai was examining this monk, looking at his face, watching his gesture and expression,

No translation of Rinzai's sayings has been made from the Chinese until now (*as of the 1930's, that is...ed*); this is the first time it has been recorded in English. Rinzai says "today." In Rinzai's time, Buddhism in China had reached the highest point of its metaphysical phase. The Chinese had accepted Buddhism from India with their brains. Now they realized it was a "brainy" Buddhism. It is the same in America. It will probably take five hundred years for Buddhism to reach America's heart. An impasse had been reached from which it was impossible to take another step. Rinzai broke out a new channel through which the slow flow poured into a quick stream.

I am in New York and I open my Zen school. Sokei-an is not doing this. New York is not doing this. After 2500 years, from Japan, across seven thousand miles, this is the first time the seed of Buddhism has been transplanted into the soil of the eastern part of America. Who is doing this? Someone will imitate this, will open his own temple of Buddhism. Will he, like Rinzai, take the hoe from my hand? If he is in the right climate and season and circumstances, he will, but he will not be doing it. In religious work, the time, place and conditions are different from banging a painting on a wall or placing an advertisement. A growing seed is a precious thing.

Sokei-an



SOKEI-AN'S COMMENTARY UPON THE RECORD OF RINZAI

FIRST LECTURE

Chapter 1

From this evening on Wednesday evenings through the future, I shall read the translation done by myself of the Record of Rinzai and I shall expound the meaning of the passages of this Record.

This Record was translated by me once before, many years ago. Now I have commenced to re-translate it and to give commentary upon it once more. This will be the final set of lectures on The Record of Rinzai in my life.

I shall read from the first page of the Record, which corresponds to page 155 of the previous translation.

Rinzai's stay in Chinshu can be inferred from these records, but they do not tell us his age when he died. However, from the circumstances, we think that he died between fifty and sixty years of age. So this Record tells us about his life during the ten or twelve years of his stay in Chinshu after he had left his teacher, Kiun Obaku Zenji.

Before he finished his training and left Obaku, Rinzai met Ejaku in the temple of Ejaku's teacher, Izan, to whom he delivered the letter from his teacher. This was in 841 A.D.. Ejaku told Rinzai that when he completed his study he had better go to Hopei. There he would find Fuke Osho who would gladly help him. Ejaku, himself, left his teacher that year, went to Gyosan and made a little hut to live there.

Rinzai's stay in Chinshu came to a conclusion in 860 A.D. when Fuke Osho, whom he met as Ejaku had predicted, died. Then, about sixteen years after Obaku's death in 849 A.D., Rinzai died on April 10th in 866 A.D.

EPISODE 1:

The Governor of the Prefecture, Jo-ji Wo, –Jo-ji is his title. His name was Wo. The Chinese say Wang. An attendant at the Imperial Palace is called Jo-ji. He came to Hopei, on the north side of the Yellow River. Please write very carefully these places and names. It is important. Today this part of China is still called Hopei. and members of the Bureau besought Rinzai to take his seat. –Rinzai had refused many times. Jo-ji beseeched him to speak something about Buddhism.

Taking the high seat Rinzai said: –The so-called high seat is on the platform always in the temple.

"Compelled by circumstances beyond my control I, a mountain monk have yielded to ordinary human conception and have taken this high seat today." –This today is very important. Rinzai studied Zen for many years under Obaku's severe discipline. At about forty or forty-five years of age he came up to the province of Hopei, in north China and stayed in a little temple which stood by the side of the Koda River(Sometimes the name of this river is given as Hota.). This Jo-ji Wo found him or heard about him that he was a disciple of the famous Obaku. The Governor of the Prefecture therefore beseeched him.

"Whenever I attempt to present the great code of the Buddha's teaching according to the view of Bodhidharma, at once I can find no word to utter." –To speak real Zen we cannot find a word to indicate real Zen. A sneeze indicates Zen; inspiration and expiration indicate Zen. There is nothing to speak about except this present moment. "and you can find no place on earth which gives you access to it." –I have no word to speak and you have no place to stand, "This place is the place which gives me access to Zen," There is no such place. There is no particular moment. Any place and any time will give you access to Zen.

"When I have been so earnestly entreated today by the Governor, how can I conceal the code of this teaching?" –Don't misunderstand Rinzai's speech. I said I cannot speak a word and you have no place to stand which will give you access to Zen. You think I am concealing something from you... I have already told you everything of Zen.

In Christian terms: if I mimic your ministers' speech, God conceals nothing. Just you cannot see, I conceal nothing. How can I conceal anything?

"If there is a well-skilled warrior who can array his battle-line

and unroll his banner," –Rinzai allegorically called monks of attainment 'warriors.' "let him appear here and prove his skill to the multitude !" –Zen is not a teaching which can be disclosed by lectures or by speech. It appears in action. It appears before your eyes. "I will put him to the test." –Rinzai said he would examine any such monk.

A monk questioned Rinzai: "What is the cardinal principle of Buddhism?" Rinzai gave a "HO!" – "**HO!**" was Rinzai's answer!

The monk bowed. The monk bowed to the floor. This bow is not the usual bow. In it the monk expressed, "I am grateful for your teaching. I am completely satisfied."

This was no ordinary monk. Perhaps he was one of Rinzai's disciples. Rinzai had several disciples who understood Zen quite well. Among them were Sanshu, who made this record, and Enshu who became his heir.

Rinzai said: "This monk is capable of contending with me!" –In one word, "You understand too and I can talk with you." Rinzai gave his acknowledgement that this monk understood Zen,

EPISODE 2:

This is the second incident. All are very short... a second monk appeared.

A monk questioned: "O Master, the music you recite is of what school?" –It is not music the monk is speaking of, but Zen. "From whom do you inherit your fashion of Zen?" –In other words, whose heir are you? In a Zen student's life, his teacher is very important. "We call a teacher in this country someone who teaches something, receiving a salary from the school. A Zen teacher is not such a teacher, In the Zen school, teacher and disciple are more father and child. If there were no teacher, there would be no Zen. Zen cannot be invented by any single person. It has been transmitted through generations. It cannot be transmitted as we teach something to a child. The disciple must find his own enlightenment and the teacher gives him acknowledgment of his attainments.

Rinzai said: "When I was sojourning in Obaku's place, I asked him a question three times and I was smitten by him three times." This story is recorded on a later page, so I shall not spend time on it now.

"How will he understand my words? If he can, he will react to me in some special manner." (Such was the mind of Rinzai.)

The monk was perplexed." —He couldn't understand why Obaku had smitten Rinzai and why Rinzai had asked the question three times. Rinzai realized that this monk was incapable of understanding the story.

Rinzai gave a HO! and smote him on the back, saying: "Do not drive a nail into the empty sky!"

Visualize the circumstances. This monk was standing very near to Rinzai. It seems to me that this monk was someone who had come from a distance. He came very near to Rinzai and asked this quite impertinent question. In this monk's attitude, there was something of opposition to Rinzai.

"O Master, the music you recite is of what school?" He began to speak poetically before the Governor and he questioned Rinzai: "Who are you? From where do you come? Whose disciple are you? What kind of Zen do you know?" In these short sentences, the fact that his mind is against Rinzai is clearly revealed. He spoke very politely, but his mind is against Rinzai. Perhaps in his mind, he was saying: "This is another imitation of a Zen monk."

Then Rinzai replied to him, saying: "When I was sojourning in Obaku's place I asked him a question three times." There was a little hook on this string. The monk was confused.

"Do not drive a nail into the sky!"—Don't do any unnecessary thing. To drive a nail into the sky is to do an unnecessary thing. Don't pretend to be doing something when you are doing something unnecessary.

Previously, a monk had asked of Nansen's disciple, Shuyu San (the name of a weed which has a pink flower shaped like rice), "Osho, what is Tao?" Shuyu San answered: "Don't drive a nail into the sky!" (Don't ask unnecessary questions.)

I have heard that this expression, "Don't drive a nail into the sky" is in the Mahaparanirvana Sutra, but as yet I have not come upon it myself.

(From notes of Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Nov 12, 1941)

RECORD OF THE MARVELOUS POWER OF IMMOVABLE WISDOM

by Takuan Sôhō [1573-1645]

(Part 4, The Conclusion)

*Without attaching anywhere, let the mind manifest
itself.¹*

These characters are read *ômushojûji jôgoshin*. What is meant is that in performing any action, when you deliberately *try* to do it, the mind attaches to the action you are performing. Instead, without attaching anywhere, you should let the mind manifest *itself*.

Unless the mind manifests itself where it belongs, your hand won't even move. When [your hand] moves, the mind which is abiding there manifests itself; and while that happens, [if] you don't *attach* to it, that's what it means to be master of all the various Ways. It is from this attaching mind that the mind of clinging arises, and transmigration arises from there, as well. This attaching mind constitutes the fetters of birth and death.

What this phrase ["Without attaching anywhere..."] conveys is that when you gaze at the cherry blossoms or the crimson autumn leaves, even while admiring the leaves or the blossoms you don't attach to them. A poem of Jien² says:

*Even the cherry blossoms
whose fragrance fills my brushwood gate--
Let them be
How regrettable it is
That people have spent
their days in the world gazing upon them*

That is to say, the cherry blossoms emit their fragrance without attachment; but we attach our mind to the blossoms as we gaze upon them and regrettably are stained by this sort of attachment. Not to attach the mind in any particular place, whatever you see or hear, constitutes ultimate mastery.

¹ A celebrated phrase from the Diamond Sutra (J: *Kongokyô*). T.8 (no. 235), p. 749c.

² 1155-1225) Late Heian-Early Kamakura-period literary monk, best known as author of *Gukansho*.

A commentary on [the meaning of] reverence says, "One should concentrate [the mind] in one place and not let it stray³ ." That is, concentrate the mind in one spot and do not let it go elsewhere. Even when you draw your sword and kill the enemy behind you, it's essential that you not let your mind be caught up by the killing of the enemy. Particularly when receiving the honor of a special mission from your lord, you must carry it out with the [same] spirit of reverence.

In Buddhism, too, there is the mind of reverence. What's called the "reverence bell"⁴ means that one shows reverence by ringing a bell three times and joining one's palms. This mind of reverence that addresses itself to the buddhas signifies the same thing as "concentrating the mind in one place and not letting it stray" and "one mind, undisturbed"⁵ . However, in Buddhism the mind of reverence does not constitute the ultimate. It is the teaching of how to keep the mind from being captured or disturbed. As this practice matures over the months and years, whatever place you have your mind go, you will reach the state of [perfect] freedom.

The state of not being attached anywhere, referred to above, is the stage of ultimate attainment. The mind of reverence is the stage in which you rein in the mind, preventing it from "straying," thinking if you let it go free it's out of control, so that you're careful to always keep the mind tightly restrained. This is a temporary measure, for the moment only, to keep the mind from being distracted. But if the mind is kept like that all the time, it becomes inflexible. An example of this stage of practice is when you catch a baby sparrow, and then have to keep the cat always tied up tightly to its leash, never letting it loose. When you keep your mind, like the cat, on a tight leash, making it unfree, it can't function spontaneously. [However,] once you have the cat well trained, you [can] untie it and let it go wherever it likes, so that even if it's right next to the sparrow, it won't grab it. To practice like this is what is meant by the phrase "Without being attached anywhere let the mind manifest itself." It means that in using your mind you let it go free, as if you were turning loose the cat, so that even though it goes wherever it pleases, the mind doesn't attach [anywhere].

³ A celebrated phrase of the Ch'eng brothers, Ch'eng Ming-te (1032-1085) and Ch'eng I-ch'uan (1033-1107), prominent Sung Neo-Confucians who stressed sincerity and reverence as the essence of moral cultivation.

⁴ *Keihaku no kane*. At Buddhist temples, this term refers to a large metal bell suspended from a beam and struck with a wooden mallet to announce ceremonies. The bell customarily struck in what are actually three increasingly rapid series of tones. The term *keihaku* itself may refer to the formula liturgical speech that opens the ceremony, and pays reverence to the buddhas, the Three Treasures, etc.

⁵ *Isshin furan*. A Buddhist phrase expressing the idea of singleminded concentration.

Applied to your lordship's art of combat, this means you don't attach the mind to the hand that is wielding the sword. Completely forgetting the hand that is wielding [the sword], strike and kill your opponent, [but] don't fix the mind *on* your opponent. Realize that your opponent is empty, that you are empty, that both the hand wielding the sword and the sword being wielded are empty. Don't even let your mind be captured by emptiness!

It is said that the Zen Master Wu-hsüeh of Kamakura¹ was captured in the course of the disturbances in China, and was [about] to be killed when he recited the *gatha*, "Cleaving the spring wind in a flash of lightning." Whereupon [the Mongol warrior] abandoned his sword and fled². Wu-hsueh's meaning [in the poem] is that the swift raising of the sword is like a flash of lightning, without any intention or thought. The sword that is striking is also without intention, as is the person who is doing the killing, and even the one who is being killed. The one who kills is empty, his sword is empty, and the one who is attacked is empty, too. Thus the one who attacks is not a person. And the sword that strikes is not a sword. For the one who is attacked, it is just like cleaving in a lightning flash the breeze blowing in the spring sky. This is the mind that is never attached. The sword itself certainly has no awareness of slashing through the breeze. To completely forget the mind this way in carrying out all your myriad activities constitutes the stage of mastery.

In performing dance movements, one holds a folding fan in one's hand and stamps one's feet. [But] if you are thinking, "I'm going to move my hands and feet right! I'm going to dance well!" instead of [simply] forgetting about it, that's not what's meant by mastery. So long as your mind still attaches to your hands and feet, your movement can't be splendid in all respects. All movement that fails to completely and utterly relinquish the mind is bad.

Recover the Lost Mind ...

This is a saying of Mencius. It means, find the mind which

¹ The Zen Master Wu-hsüeh Tsu-yüan (Mugaku Sôgen, 1226-1286), founder of Engakuji, the famous Zen temple in Kamakura.

² When invading Mongol armies reached Wu-hsueh's temple, one of the Mongol troops is said to have prepared to kill him with his sword, when Wu-hsueh calmly recited the following *gatha*, or Buddhist poem:

In the vast universe
Not even room to set down a single staff
What joy--the self is empty, and things are empty, too
The precious three-foot great Mongol sword
Cleaves the spring wind in a flash of lightning.

Taken aback, the soldier is said to have fled the scene.

has been lost and return it to yourself. For example, when you lose a cat, dog, or chicken that's run away, you go looking for it, find it and bring it back to your house. So the mind, being master of the body, when the mind runs away, taking an evil path, how can you not find it and bring it back? It's only natural for you to do so.

On the other hand, Shao K'ang-chieh says⁵ "Let the mind go!" This is completely different [from Mencius]. According to this kind of approach, keeping the mind tightly restrained only exhausts you, with the result that, like the cat [on the leash], the body isn't able to function. So, thoroughly train the mind not to attach to things or to be stained by them, just leaving it alone and freeing it to go anywhere at all.

Since the mind is stained by and attached to things, the beginner's stage of practice is to think, "Don't let it be stained, don't let it be attached; find it and bring it back to yourself." Be like the lotus, unstained by the mud. Even if the lotus is in the mud, it's no problem. Just as a finely polished piece of crystal is unstained if it falls into the mud, in using your mind, let it go where it wants. If you tightly restrain the mind, it becomes inflexible. Keeping the mind tightly reined in is strictly for beginners! If you spend your whole life in that state, you'll never assume the superior position,⁶ but end up in the inferior position and be killed. When you are still training, Mencius' approach of "recovering the lost mind" is fine. But when you arrive at ultimate mastery, that is Shao K'ang-chieh's "Let the mind go!"

Master Chung-feng⁷ says, "Free the mind now!" This means exactly the same as "Let the mind go!" It means recover the lost mind, [but] don't restrain it, don't keep it in any particular place. There is also the saying, "Make yourself steadfast!" These, too, are Chung-feng's words. They mean that one [should] maintain a steady mind, without backsliding. What this means is to hold fast to the sort of mind that doesn't backslide into the stage in which you just try once or twice, but then get tired and invariably give up.

⁵ Shao K'ang-chieh, or Shao Yung (1011-1077), a Northern Sung Neo-Confucian influenced by Taoism. He taught that the mind was the source of the universe and the universe the source of the mind, stressing the unity between heaven and man, things and self. He lived free from worldly cares in the slums, refusing invitations to serve in the bureaucracy.

⁶ *Jōdan*, *gedan*. These are positions, or postures, in Japanese fencing. In *jōdan*, the superior, offensive posture, the swordsman's blade is raised over his head to strike at the opponent. In *gedan*, the inferior, defensive posture, the point of the sword is lowered.

⁷ The Yuan dynasty Zen master Chung-feng Ming-pen (Chúhō Myōhōn, 1263-1323). I have been unable to identify the source of the phrases attributed to Chung-feng by Takuan.

*A ball hurled onto a rushing torrent, never staying
still from one instant to the next.*¹

This [expression] means that when you hurl a ball onto a raging torrent, it rides along, tossed on the waves, never stopping anywhere.

*Cutting off past and future.*²

Not letting go of the past mind and holding on to the present mind after the fact are wrong. What is being said here is, "Sever the boundary between past and present, remove it! Cut off both past and future, let them go!" That is, don't attach the mind [anywhere].

*Water, being heated, rises; fire, descending,
clouds appear.*³

*The fields of Musashi
Today they are aflame
My lover is hiding in the spring grass
And I, too, am hiding there.*⁴

Someone, expressing the essence of this poem, wrote :

*When white clouds gather
It is ready to fade--
The morning glory's flower*

(Translated and copyrighted by Peter Haskel)

¹ T'ou-tzu's response in Case Eighty of the Blue Cliff Record, referred to previously. Here Takuan employs what is apparently an *ateji*, or homophone, a character with the same sound but a different meaning from the original. The final character of the original text is the character "to flow," (read in Sino-Japanese *ru*, or *ryū*), but Takuan has, deliberately or inadvertently, substituted the similarly read character meaning "to stop" or "stay still."

² *Zengo saidan*. An expression indicating reality's transcendence of the conventional categories of time, i.e., past, present, and future.

³ The meaning of this passage is unclear and the translation is tentative. It would appear to be a quotation from a Chinese work, but I have been unable to identify the source.

⁴ A poem from the twelfth chapter of *Ise Monogatari*, a work by the poet Ariwara no Narihira (823-880). A man is said to have run off with someone's married daughter and took her to Musashino, where they were pursued by the provincial governor. Concealing themselves in the grass, they were noticed by passerbys, who believed them to be thieves in hiding, and set fire to the grass. The woman recited this poem, and her husband, being among the bystanders, begged the field not be burned.

Hmmm....



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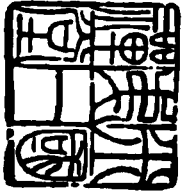
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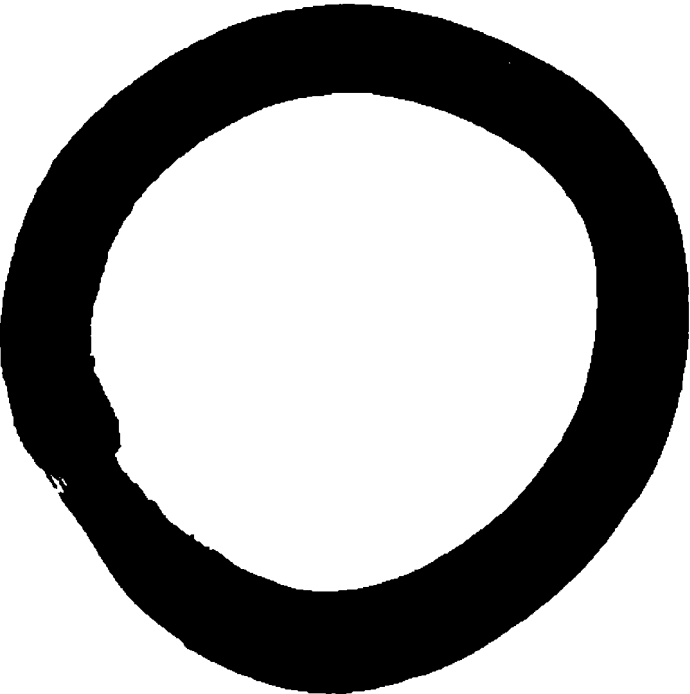
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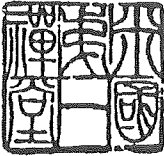


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