Zen Notes

Takuan

...“Cold Stream”...

TAKUAN STORIES

The stories that follow reflect the legends that grew up around Takuan in the period following his death. Most concern his close relationship with the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu (reigned 1622-1651), and with Iemitsu's retainer and fencing master, Yagyû Munenori (1571-1646). A frequent setting for the stories is Tôkaiji, the temple Iemitsu had erected for Takuan near the shogunal capital, Edo (modern-day Tokyo), in order to keep the master by his side. The selections are drawn from a variety of mainly nineteenth and early twentieth century collections. Many are taken from a recently issued popular collection assembled by Hanazono University's Zen Research Center, Takuan zenji itsuwasen *(Kyoto:2001).*

The Oneness of Things

Once when the Shogun Iemitsu was sympathizing with Takuan's long and painful years of exile, the Master observed: "Man is of the same root as heaven, earth and all things, so it makes no difference where he lives."

At that moment, Iemitsu raised his folding fan and struck the tatami, demanding, "Well, does it hurt?"

The Master, without a moment's hesitation replied, "Exactly like cutting one's nails or hair."

His Majesty's intention was, I understand, to ask Takuan, "If you are one with all things and I strike the tatami, does it hurt *you*?" He was greatly impressed by the ready wit of the master's reply.

The Shogun's Special Meal

The shogun Iemitsu complained to Takuan that none of the food he was served at the palace interested him any longer. Takuan then invited the shogun to a special meal at the temple. He assured Iemitsu that the meal would revive the shogun's jaded appetite, but made him first promise that whatever happened, he would not leave before the meal had concluded.

Iemitsu arrived at the temple prepared for a feast, but as he waited, despite repeated assurances that the meal was almost ready, an hour passed, then two, then three. Eventually, five hours had gone by and the shogun's stomach was growling with hunger.

Only then did Takuan finally appear, bearing a bowl of boiled rice over which was ladled some hot water and a yellow substance, which turned out to be pickled Japanese radish (*daikon*).

So hungry was Iemitsu that he pronounced the food the most delicious he had ever tasted. Takuan then scolded the shogun for his self-indulgence, which kept him from realizing how delicious simple foods can be when one is hungry and one's tastes have not grown jaded. Iemitsu agreed, and the next day demanded the recipe for Takuan's picked radish, which from then became famous as "Takuan pickles," and remains to this day a staple of Zen temple meals and of traditional Japanese kitchens.

Takuan and the Shogun's Monkey

Iemitsu had a favorite pet monkey. When someone would try to hit it with a fan, the monkey would seize the fan before it could be hit. However they exerted their ingenuity, the shogun's samurai retainers all failed to hit the monkey.

Seeing this, Takuan took out his own fan and struck the monkey, which only *after* being hit, grabbed the master's fan. Takuan did this again and again. Amazed, everyone demanded to know how the Master had succeeded.

Takuan explained, "When each of you went to strike the monkey, you betrayed your intention before doing so. The monkey immediately sensed it, and expecting the blow seized the fan. I hit the monkey without any intention in mind; hence it couldn't know what was in store. That is why my blow landed, and only *after* could the monkey seize the fan."

This story was recounted by an elder in my domain.

Takuan's Quick Movement

The shogun Iemitsu was learning the art of quick movement from the sword master Yagyu Munenori. Munenori told the shogun that he couldn't claim to have achieved true agility until on rainy days he could leap from the veranda onto the stepping stones in the garden and back without getting wet. So Iemitsu, whenever he had free time, would practice assiduously to do this.

When Takuan was visiting the castle one rainy day and saw the shogun repeatedly leaping back and forth like this from the veranda, he asked, "Your Majesty, what are you doing?"

"Ah, Takuan!" Iemitsu greeted him. "Lately I've been practicing quick movement, and I'm really making good progress. I can jump out in the rain like this and back again without even getting wet. That's real agility, don't you think?"

"Most impressive," the aged master agreed. "Nevertheless, your movements are still nowhere near as fast as my own."

"Very interesting," Iemitsu said. "Why don't you show me how fast *you* can move."

"Certainly, your Majesty," Takuan replied, and slipping on a pair of garden *geta* [traditional Japanese wooden platform sandals], stepped out into the rain.

As Iemitsu was wondering how the Master was going to demonstrate his agility wearing garden clogs, Takuan faced him, and, soaking wet, announced, "This is my lightning movement!"
"How?" Iemitsu demanded. "You're soaking wet!"

Takuan brushed off the rain, and rebuked the shogun, saying, "Of course if you don't use an umbrella when it rains you're going to get wet like this. If one doesn't get wet, that's not yet true agility. Your Majesty requires more training!"

At these words, it is said, Iemitsu first understood the Master's meaning.

Takuan Helps A Samurai Fight Boredom

Inaba Masamori, lord of Mino, had no time away from his duties at the shogun's castle. Once he asked Takuan, "Please instruct me how I may avoid boredom when I spend long days on my official duties."

Immediately seizing his brush, the Master wrote:

Today never comes again.
Each instant is a foot of precious jade.

And added:

How wretched when we reflect
how day after day departs.
Yesterday will never meet today.

Lord Inaba read what the master had written, and reciting it with deep feeling, he never again, it is said, experienced tedium in the course of his long day and nights of official duties.

No Man, No Horse

Yagyû Munenori rode his horse to Mount Atago.[3] Recalling that the warrior Magaki Heiguro had ridden his horse up and down the mountain's stone steps, Munenori thought he would try to it himself, but found the stairs too steep to manage. "Even if I were able to get to the top," he wondered, "how would I ever get back down?" He led his horse up the slope alongside the steps, but when he tried to take his horse back down the stairs, found it impossible.

The following day Munenori went to Tôkaiji and sought Takuan's advice. " During the Kanei era [1624 - 1643]," he explained to Takuan, "Magaki rode his horse up and down the stone steps of Mount Atago at the request of Lord Hidetsugu.[4] But when I tried the same thing yesterday, I failed utterly."

Takuan replied, "Your Lordship couldn't do it? I can do it."

The Master then suggested they go there together so that he could show Munenori on the spot.

Skeptically, Munenori accompanied Takuan, who, mounting Munenori's horse, proceeded to race easily up and down the stone steps as if they had been level ground.

Astounded, Munenori begged the Master to tell him how he had done it.

"Your Lordship," Takuan replied, "there is no special technique: only that there must be no man on top of the horse, and no horse under the saddle."

Munenori suddenly experienced awakening, and mounting the horse, he, too, rode the stairs as if riding on level ground.

Tôkaiji's "Takuan Guards"

At Tôkaiji in Shinagawa are what are known as "Takuan guards" (*Takuan ban*). These are farmers who belong to the temple's fief and stand guard every night at the temple's gate. I understand that the origin of this is as follows:

Master Takuan being a priest of eminent virtue, his lordship the shogun was greatly devoted to him, summoning Takuan to Edo castle and even visiting him at Tôkaiji on numerous occasions. The Master, however, did not wish to remain constantly at the

[3] In present-day Fukushima Prefecture

[4] (1568-1595). Nephew and heir of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

temple and from time to time would try to leave. His Majesty the shogun was distraught over this and had the local people stand guard to prevent Takuan's departure.

Even after Takuan's death this remained a custom and was maintained as it had been in the past. Today if you ask the local farmers, "Why do you stand guard at Tôkaiji's gate every night?" they'll tell you, "Because otherwise Master Takuan will escape!"

A truly endearing example of the farmers' simple honesty, and one that imparts something of the flavor of long ago....

Tôkaiji's Monks' Tombstones

At Tôkaiji near Takuan's grave, many round stones lie on the ground where they are left to roll onto the road, trampled underfoot by passersby. Yet all these stones were, I understand, the gravestones of the temple's monks. Because they bore no inscription, people outside Tôkaiji didn't realize this. In the temple itself, however, was kept a listing of their locations, charting in detail whose gravestone was number such-and-such to the north or south....

TAKUAN'S ADVICE

The following short text, included in the Takuan record Manshô goroku*, is titled, "Recorded at the Request of an Eminent Man Who Sought My Words on the Dharma."*

The Buddha Dharma is not far off. Apart form the mind, where would you look for it? That's why it's said: 'Have something in mind and you'll be submerged forever; have nothing in mind, and instantly you'll experience true realization.' When I speak of no mind, I'm not saying to be like trees or rocks. Day in, day out we're using the mind, even while all things are nonexistent. You've got to understand the principle of thought and no thought, mind and no mind. Otherwise you'll make your body like a wall and your mind like cold ashes, and then declare, "I've realized the teaching of no mind!" What a shame! Heretical silent illumination Zen! Living in the demon's cave!

Buddha Dharma isn't dreaming wisdom. If you know your mind just as it is, then day in, day out, morning to night, all your manifold activities *are* Buddha Dharma. Without rejecting delusion or clutching enlightenment, you'll put on your robes and eat your rice, with nothing further to do. Don't you remember what Rinzai said? "He who has nothing to do is the noble man!"

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TEACHINGS OF THE ZEN MASTER BASSUI

The following is a letter from the fourteenth-century Rinzai Zen master Bassui Tokusho to a lay adherent. It is reprinted courtesy of Wisdom Books from the new edition of Mud and Water: the Collected Teachings of Zen master Bassui, *translated by Arthur Braverman. (Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA:2002. 256 pages, $14.95)*

To Gesso Seiko, Lord of Aki, from Nakamura:

I received your letter asking how you should practice in order to understand the phrase, "You must give life to the mind that has no dwelling place."

There is no particular approach to studying the Way. Just look directly into your nature and don't get involved in diversions and the flower of your mind will bloom. Thus the sutra says, "Give life to the mind that has no dwelling place." The tens of thousands of phrases uttered by the Buddhas and ancestors are just this one phrase. This mind is one's true nature distinct from all forms. Nature is the Way, the Way is Buddha, and Buddha is mind. This mind is not inside, it is not outside and it is not in the middle. It is neither existence nor is it nothingness. It is neither non-existence nor non-nothingness. It isn't mind, Buddha or object. That's why it is called the mind that has no dwelling place.

The mind sees forms with the eyes and hears voices with the ears. You should simply study the master [of these processes]. An ancient master [Lin-chi I-hsuan] said, "The physical body made up of the four elements cannot discern the sermon you are listening to. The spleen, stomach, liver and gallbladder cannot discern the sermon you are listening to. What is it that can discern this sermon?" [Questioning] in this way, look directly!

If when you look your mind clings to any form or you become attached to a particular meaning and you spend your time conceptualizing, you will be as far from the Way as heaven is from earth. What do you do then to cut off the bonds of life and death? Advance and you'll get lost in reason; retreat and you'll violate the teaching. Neither advancing nor retreating, be like a functioning corpse ceasing [thinking] immediately and practicing without restraint. Surely then you will attain enlightenment and give life to the mind that has no dwelling place. Then you will clarify incomparably uncommon teachings including all the koans and Dharmas.

Layman [P'ang Yun] Ho asked Ma-tsu Tao-i: "What kind of person has no friend among Dharmas?" Ma-tsu replied: "I will respond to you when you have swallowed all the water in the West River in one gulp." Hearing this, Layman Ho was enlightened. Look! What does this mean? Does this refer to the statement, "You must give life to the mind that has no dwelling place" or does it refer to the one who is listening to the Dharma? If you still don't understand, ask yourself who is listening to the voice right now? Focus your energy and look this instant! Life and death are essential matters, impermanence moves swiftly on. Don't waster your time. It waits for no one.

Your mind is fundamentally Buddha. Realize it and you are Buddha. Lose sight of it and you are an ordinary person. Whether asleep or awake, whether standing or sitting, simply inquire, "What is my mind?" and look at the source where thoughts arise. Wondering what it is that understand things in this way, that propels this body, that performs work, that advances and retreats, ask yourself: "What is it, after all?" Aspire only to realize this yourself, constantly inquiring, never negligent, and even if you don't realize it in this lifetime you will surely do so in the next. Never doubt this!

When you decide to practice zazen, don't consider what is good or bad. When thoughts occur, don't try to stop them. Simply question immediately what this mind of yours is. Though you question deeply in this manner, no method will give you the knowledge. Remaining in a state of not knowing, the way through thinking will cease, you will lose all sense of a 'me' in your body and you will realize that there is no thing you can call the mind. Asking what it is [that realizes], return to yourself and look. The mind that wants to know will disappear as will all teaching, and you will be like the empty sky. When mind realizes that it is like the empty sky and penetrates to the depths, you will awaken to the realization that there is no Buddha outside of this mind and there is no mind outside of the Buddha.

Now you will know for the first time that when you listen without your ears, you can truly hear, and when you see without your eyes you can see all the Buddhas from the past, present and future. But these words taken as they are will not enlighten you. You have to actually realize this for yourself. Look, look! What is your mind? Be careful! Though it is said that fundamentally the original nature of people is naturally the Buddha, if you don't believe it and instead you seek the Buddha and the Way elsewhere, you will not attain enlightenment and will be pulled around by good and bad karma, not being able to escape transmigrating through endless cycles of birth and death.

The source of much karma is discriminating feelings. Put an end to discriminating feelings and you'll be free. If by realizing your own nature you extinguish these discriminating feelings, it will be like blowing on a fire buried in ash--the fire emerging and the ash eradicated.

When doing zazen don't be upset as thoughts occur, but don't savor them either. Just trace them back to their origin, looking at the source without letting it disturb you. If you do this and you eradicate discriminating feelings derived from the source of all thoughts, it will be like the destruction of ash in flames through fanning the fire. Though delusions are erased and nothing remains in your heart, though there is no separation between inner and outer and though you are like a clear and empty sky, pure in all directions, this is not enlightenment. If you take this to be Buddha-nature, it would be like seeing shadows and thinking they are real. Now you will have to work more diligently at gathering your energy to look at this mind that hears sounds.

Your physical body composed of the four elements is like an illusion; it is not reality. The mind, however, is not apart from the physical body. The empty sky does not see forms nor does it hear voices. So what is it in you that hears voices and knows the different sounds? Ask yourself. Raise a great doubt until all discrimination between right and wrong is eliminated and views of existence and nothingness disappear like a light turned off on a dark night. Though you still may not know who you are, you know there is a self that hears all sounds.

Up to this point though you tried to know what hears these sounds it has eluded you. As you press the mind in every way, suddenly you will have a great awakening and be like a dead man revived, clapping your hands and laughing out loud. Then for the first time you will now that your mind is Buddha.

If I were asked what form "this mind is Buddha" takes, I would respond: The fish plays on top of a tree and the bird flies under water. What does this mean? If you don't understand, investigate yourself thoroughly. Who is the master that sees and hears? Don't waster your time. It waits for no one.

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

TWENTY-FOURTH LECTURE

Saturday, January 7th, 1939

"*Because seeing is pure, the sense of sight is pure; hence the dust of hearing is pure. Because hearing is pure, the root of the ear is pure. Because the root of the ear is pure, the sense of hearing is pure. Because the sense of hearing is pure, the dust of consciousness is pure. Thus the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind are also pure.*

O Obedient One! Because the roots of the senses are pure, the dust of color is pure. Color is pure; hence the dust of sound is pure; thus smell, taste, touch, and mind-stuff is also pure."

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

The Buddha answered the question asked by Samantanetra Bodhisattva: "What is pure seeing?"

"Pure seeing," in your modern English term, could be called "aesthetics." What is the pure aesthetic view? Pure sense-perception not blended with deluded mind.

The Buddha's answer began in the previous lecture which I have already translated.

1. You must destroy all notions which you are entertaining in your mind.

2. You must attain the state of absolute Reality.

3. When you attain this state, you must realize that it is Reality in your own terms. Usually people think that the state of Reality is beyond the sense -- and therefore a state of nothing. It is, to our sense perception, a state of nothing; if you can still see and hear -- you are still in the phenomenal state. The state of original being is beyond the five senses.

But the Buddha said that such an aloof state is just your own notion and not the state of original being. It is because one thinks

that the state of Reality is beyond phenomenal existence that he believes existence to be filthy and sinful. The Buddha does not accept this conclusion! At the same time, he used it as a contrivance to loosen people from their attachment to the phenomenal state; he thought they must be uprooted once and thrown into the state of absolute purity. But this is not absolute purity -- while it exists in your brain, it is a notion, and not the state of Reality.

When you enter the true state of Reality, you do not need to close your eyes and ears, and to reject this existence.

You must forget the dualistic view -- phenomenon or noumenon, material or real. When you attain the state in which there is neither phenomenon nor noumenon -- that is called the state of Perfect Awakening. It is this state of which the Buddha is speaking.

4. Then, standing upon this state of Perfect Awakening, to observe all existence and to accept everything without attaching yourself to it. Detachment, in Buddhism, is explained in such a way; it is not mere aloofness.

"*Because seeing is pure, the root of the eye is pure.*" -- The Buddha is speaking of the purity of the eighteen realms, or kingdoms. In Sanskrit, this is called "Astadadhatava" -- a very important Buddhist term which has no exact translation.

In meditation, Shakyamuni Buddha took quite an analytical attitude toward this world. Your scientists also take an analytical attitude, observing everything through magnifying lenses; matter is analyzed into electron and proton. But the Buddha's analytical view is entirely different; his attitude is diametrically opposite to the Western attitude! He studied his own mind, by analysis, in meditation.

Oriental meditation is not just sitting quietly or falling asleep! Nor is it meditating upon something, nor looking to some Mahatma to establish communication! Some think that in meditation they will get into the astral body -- go to Tibet -- meet a White Master -- "Oh, how do you do! How is enlightenment today?" We do not give a fig or a straw for such notions!

In our meditation we make an analysis of our whole being. Such analysis has been practiced through 2500 years, and has developed into our Zen today.

Today in the Western world there is this psychoanalysis. They analyze dreams, but they do not analyze consciousness itself -- they analyze this jumble of mind-stuff!

We analyze the whole objective existence in three parts; it is the sub-analysis of the eighteen dhatus.

First, ...rajas -- objective. The Chinese translate this as "dust," but in English it is "filth" or "objective existence."

Second,...Indriya -- sense organs: eye, ear, nose, etc.

Third, ...Jnana -- semi material existence in our mind.

These three realms are each analyzed into six realms.

Of course Western philosophy recognizes the outside existence in its five objective postures -- but the Eastern way is to include semi-material existence: dreams, memories of the outside such as names and scenes. These do not cover space, but they have a "place" and are called mind-stuff. (I borrowed this term "mind-stuff" from Eddington. He uses it many times. It is good for my purpose.)

This Indriya includes the sense organs -- five outside and one inside --our mind. So there are six consciousnesses (consciousness is subdivided into six states).

The sixth consciousness is "mana" -- mind. This consciousness is analyzed into four states.

This is the first scheme of the Buddha's profound philosophy on which to meditate.

Meditating upon each of these states, the Buddha failed to find any individual entity, or person! Each one appears as a person -- but it is a temporary existence! So the Buddha concluded that there is no separate self, the great "Anatman Doctrine."

When I was a child, I asked a Christian missionary about God. "Our God is a person. You have only emptiness!" "But what kind of a person?"

The personal God of Christianity is a very serious question! We cannot think of whom you call "God" according to the shape of a man. Of course the Buddhist does not worship the empty sky; our consciousness pervades the universe, but it has no particular shape. It can be done from the standpoint of art -- as Michelangelo did God and Christ, the son. Anyhow, this is a very minor point in Buddhism.

So the Eighteen Dhatus are the first scheme of Buddhism upon which the Buddha meditated. "Because seeing is pure, the

root of the eye is pure." This is not moral purity. When you understand the conclusion, you will not speak of "purity or of filth" -- but if you must use words: "Everything is pure!" That is all.

This is a Mahayana sutra. In the Hinayana sutras, the Buddha tries to uproot the minds of all those people who are stuck in words. He used many contrivances, called "upayas." It means "precious fraud." From the true view, there is no such thing as "endless purity" or "bottomless filth."

But standing upon this Indriya -- the roots of the senses -- we can say that all is pure. This is the true standpoint of observation!

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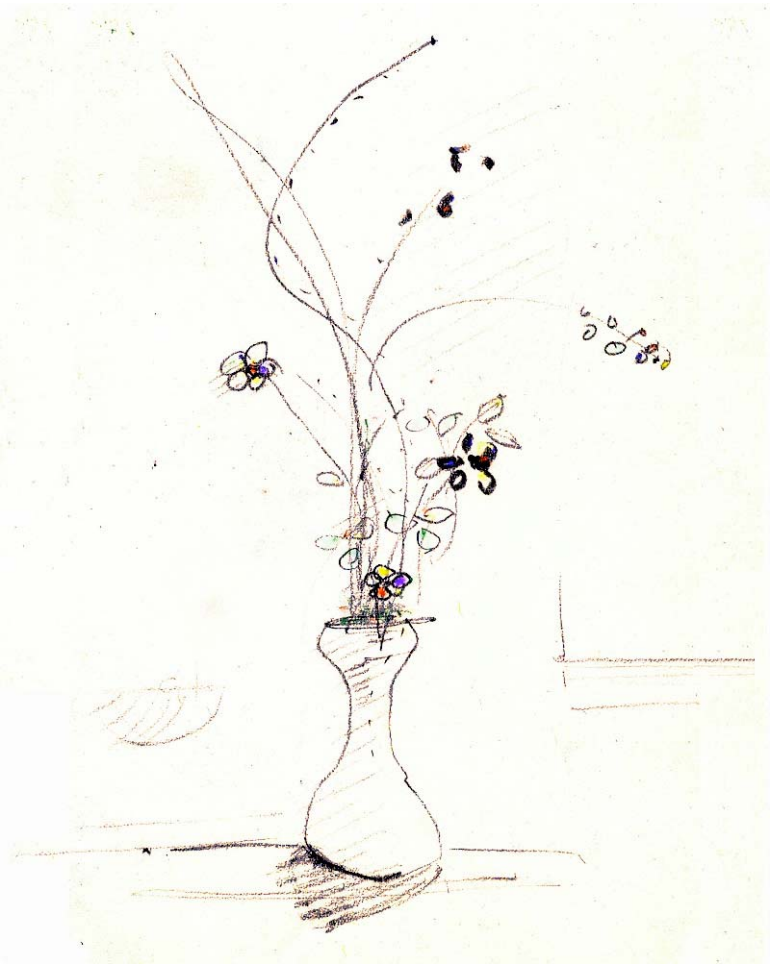


Thoughts of Takuan

When Buddhism's law flourishes it is harmonious with the world's law. When the world's law flourishes it is harmonious with Buddhism's law. The Way is simply one's daily activities. Apart from one's daily activities, no Way exists. For Buddhas, there is no law. Sentient beings, since they're deluded, try to rid themselves of their delusions by artificially establishing temporary [notions of] right and wrong, existence and non-existence, after which they develop all sorts of words and speech, and this they call law. If sentient beings were not deluded, there would be no right and wrong, existence and non-existence, true and false. And without right and wrong, existence and non-existence, true and false, there's no need for words and speech. Then why would one talk about any law? It's not as if there's a thing called enlightenment that you realize. What you call being enlightened is [just] delusion. Unless you're deluded, there *is* no enlightenment!

* * *

So long as those of us in this world consider that we have come as guests, we will be untroubled. When presented with food that's to our liking, we think we're being well-treated. But even when the food is not to our taste, since we're guests, we've got to praise it and eat it all up. Whether it's the heat of summer or winter's chill, since we're guests, we must bear it. Grandchildren, children, sisters and brothers--when you think of these as fellow guests, you will live together in harmony, so that you can depart the world without any attachment:

Brought into this world by our parents
We came as temporary guests
So we can, without attachment
Return to our original home

* * *

You have asked me to jot down my thoughts on what is meant by the terms no thought and no mind. The Chinese characters for no thought I read as "having no thoughts;" those for no mind as "having no mind." By "thought" we mean going back over what is past, thinking about it again and again without letting it go. By "mind," we mean pondering this way and that about what is happening here in the present. You may imagine that as human beings it is impossible for us to keep from thinking about what is past or to refrain from thinking about what is happening in the present, so that no thought and no mind are not really possible; but such things exist all the same. What is called no mind is something one needs.

What are they, then, no thought and no mind? Your response to they myriad things is to linger there and attach to them. It is not for you to kill those who are sinful, not for you to kill any of the multitude of innocent living things.

(*Ketsujoshu*)

Grief

(Takuan's daimyo patron Hosokawa Tadatoshi wrote the following in a report from Edo, the shogunate's capital, to his domain):

Master Takuan is well and daily increases in the Shogun's favor. I often have the opportunity to speak with [Takuan], and the better I get to know him, the more impressed with him I become. A fascinating phenomenon!

Some time ago there was a parent grieving the loss of his child, who had been killed. I heard something interesting in this connection. A person came and told the parent, "Do not grieve for what is gone forever." To which the Master declared, "Grieve as much as you want! In happiness, be happy; in sadness, be sad. This is the supreme truth of Buddhism."

Taking [the Master's] words as they are, it seems as if [he] is no different from ordinary people. It made me understand that by being happy or sad, sharing the same feelings as ordinary people, one enters the place that is [lofty as] the mountains, [deep as] the ocean.

(*Hosokawa keki*)

BOOKS NOTED

Recently received from Wisdom Press, *Where the World Does Not Follow: Buddhist China in Picture and Poem* (Somerville, MA, 143 pp.), a handsome collection of stunning photos of China by Seven R. Johnson, matched with Mike O'Connor's fine translations of Tang dynasty poetry--all related more or less to the world of Chinese Buddhism and of Buddhist and Taoist recluses. Also a real plus for students of Chinese culture: the poems are accompanied by their original Chinese texts.

Last Instructions From an Old Monk

I have no disciple who has succeeded to my Dharma. If by any chance after I'm dead someone claims to be my disciple, he's nothing but a Dharma thief. This should be reported to the authorities and punished as a serious crime!

Since I have no disciple who's succeeded to my Dharma, how can there by anyone who assumes the role of chief mourner, receiving guests who come to pay their respects? People will probably come from our own and other Buddhist schools to chant sutras. The head priest of the temple here should go out alone in front of the main gate and in accordance with my rule, tell them to go home. Whatever you do, don't ask them in !

During my lifetime, I brought back the robe and bowl[1] to my teacher's pagoda, so I'm just a useless monk in a plain black robe.

After my death there are to be no portraits of me in purple robes hung in the temple. A single image of a circle will substitute for my portrait. People may offer flowers, candles, or incense as they wish.

There are to be no offerings whatever of water or food.

Those who wish to do so, may light one stick of incense and place it in their own portable incense burner.[2] This is at those persons' own discretion. It has nothing to do with me.

If anyone brings a condolence gift, even if it's only a mustard seed, you are not to accept it. Following my rule, promptly return the items. This goes for both priests and lay people alike.

After I'm gone, you are not to accept any posthumous Zen master titles for me.

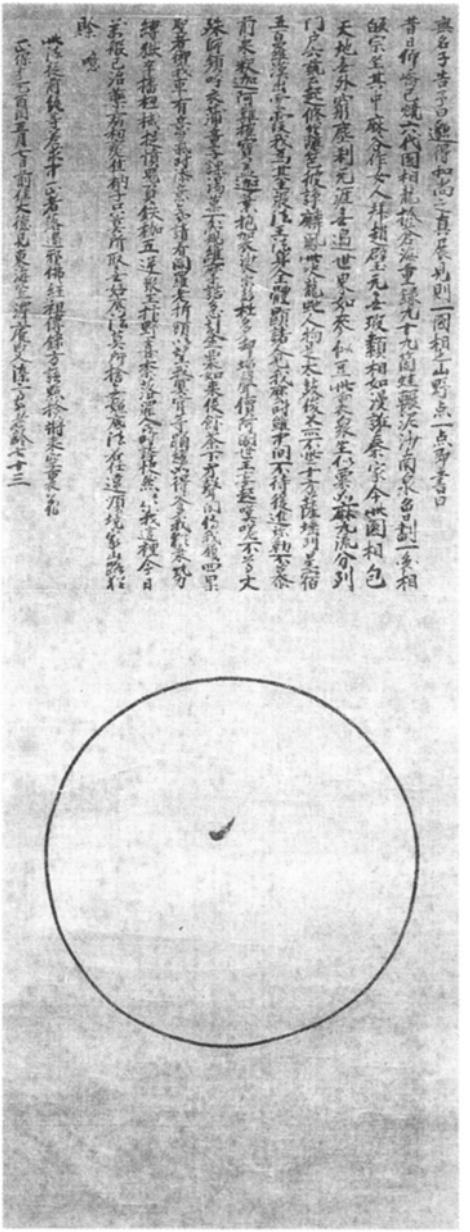
(*Banshô goroku, zenshû* II:185-188)

* * * * *

[1]Symbols of the transmission in Zen. A teacher's robe and bowl might be passed on to his senior disciple and heir.

[2]Takuan implies that he doesn't want a permanent incense burner to be placed at the altar for people to pay their respects; people are welcome however to come and light incense in their own personal incense burner, which they will then take away.

Takuan's Self Portrait



Publications

The Institute is pleased to report that a New York Publisher, Four Walls Eight Windows at 39 W14 Street, N.Y.C., is publishing, this spring, Sokei-an's autobiography, "Holding the Lotus to the Rock", compiled and edited by Michael Hotz. Below is a slightly reformatted version of the book's ad in their spring 2003 "*New Titles*" catalog. The Institute plans to have some copies for sale soon.

Michael Hotz, Editor

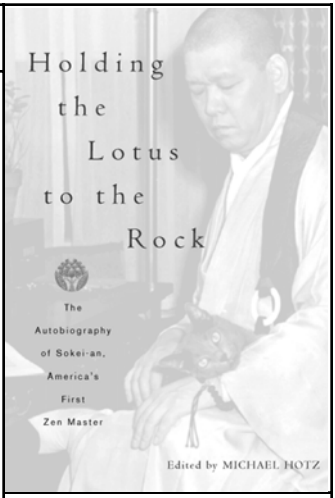
HOLDING THE LOTUS TO THE ROCK

The Autobiography of Sokei-an,
America's First Zen Master

Sokei-an Sasaki was not your average boring Zen master. In many respects,Sokei-an (1882-1945)was the original Dharma Bum:a sculptor,poet,Zen student,and journalist whose favorite subject was America.

Sokei-an arrived in San Francisco in 1906 with the mission of bringing Zen to America.After his teacher returned to Japan,he wandered alone through the American West and lived a wild bohemian life in the Greenwich Village of the Roaring Twenties.He became the first Zen master to make America his permanent home and the first to write,lecture and give Zen interviews (sanzen)entirely in English.His accounts of his childhood in Japan,his struggle to transform himself through Zen, his experiences teaching Zen to New Yorkers (which led to the founding of the First Zen Institute of America),his run-in with the FBI and his internment on Ellis Island — are all conveyed with charm and ironic humor by an accomplished writer and Zen master with a distinctive and intimate voice.

Michael Hotz has been president of the First Zen Institute for six years, and associated with it since 1965. He lives in New York City.



The autobiography of the man who introduced Zen Buddhism to America

NONFICTION/RELIGION
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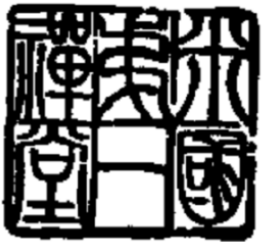

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