
Hakuin's Other Life:
Tales of My Childhood

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Introduction

Anyone familiar with Zen master Hakuin's (1686-1769) writings is struck by the large amount of autobiographical material they contain. The inclination to relate episodes from his religious career, unusual in Zen literature, appears in his earliest printed works, and the older he got the more pronounced the tendency became. Almost all these excursions into biography deal with the first thirty or thirty-five years of his life, with the majority of events concentrated on his struggle toward enlightenment as a young monk, which ended in his twenty-fifth year. None of this is hard to explain when we consider that his motive for writing so voluminously in the first place had as its source his express desire to explicate his teaching in such a way that it would serve as an encouragement to younger students engaged in Zen training. Although the writings are also filled with accounts of the words and doings of the great Zen figures of the past, it would seem that the older Hakuin became the more convinced he was that, for teaching purposes, his personal experience was no less valid than that of his illustrious Zen predecessors and, being first hand, could have even greater impact on his readers.

Whatever the case, the fact remains that Hakuin's work is unique in Japanese Zen for the sheer extent of the autobiographical reference it contains. It is seen in the earliest of his major publications, *Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu* (Talks Introductory to Lectures on the Sokkō-roku, 1743) and *Kanzan-shi sendai kimon* (Record of Sendai's Comments on the Poems of

Kanzan, 1741), both in *kambun*, and again later in somewhat expanded form in *Oradegama* (1749–51) and other Japanese writings. The events and episodes scattered through these earlier works are brought together and expanded into the lengthy narrative we find in *Yaemugura* (Goose Grass, 1759). This is further extended into its final and most complete form in *Itsumadegusa* (Wild Ivy, 1766),¹ his last major work published two years before his death.

Yaemugura and *Itsumadegusa* are thus the primary sources for Hakuin's life. Both cover much the same ground, the events of the roughly first third of his life, but *Itsumadegusa* includes more incidents and continues the biography into his early thirties with accounts of the so-called post-satori phase of his career, while *Yaemugura* ends in his twenty-fourth year with the story of his initial enlightenment and subsequent study under the teacher Shōju Rōjin.

This paper contains a translation of the *Yaemugura* autobiography, titled *Sakushin Osana Monogatari*, Tales of My Childhood As a Spur [to Zen Students], which appears in the third *kan* (rendered here as *section*) of the work. First, by way of introduction, I would like to devote a few pages to describing the provenance and content of *Sakushin Osana Monogatari* and the three other independent and seemingly unrelated works which Hakuin yoked together under the title *Yaemugura*.

***Yaemugura* (Goose Grass)**

Yaemugura has a complicated bibliographical history.² It is a composite work, divided into three *kan* (sections) and consisting of four indepen-

dent titles: *Takatsuka shinyō kōki* 高塚四娘孝記, *Emmei jikku kannon-kyō reigenki* 延命十句観音経霊驗, *Sakushin Osana Monogatari* 策進幼稚物語, and *Takayama Yūkichi Monogatari* 高山勇吉物語, the latter two being contained in the third section. The first three of these works were published separately, each of them exceedingly rare. A complete edition of *Yaemugura* containing all four works has yet to be found, making it appear unlikely that it was ever published in that form.

The first section, *Takatsuka shinyō kōki* 高塚四娘孝記 (The Record of Four Filial Sisters of Takatsuka), bears a subtitle telling us that Takatsuka is located in Tōtōmi province, and a postscript stating that the work was written in the 7th month of 1759, when Hakuin was seventy-five. *Takatsuka shinyō kōki* is based on a true story of four orphaned sisters who, at their grandfather's suggestion, in order to advance their parents' interests in the next life, over a period of three years inscribed in *kana* script the entire text of the *Lotus Sutra*. Hakuin said that he composed *Takatsuka shinyō kōki* because he wanted others to know of the young girls' filial devotion, and of the benefits to be gained from venerating the *Lotus Sutra*.³

The tale of the filial young sisters takes up only about twenty pages of the one hundred and eight page work. It is preceded by miraculous tales of people who fell into hell and were enabled to return and describe its sufferings through the miraculous virtue of the *Lotus Sutra*. Embellished with elaborate descriptions of what these people saw and experienced, the stories belong to a genre known as "tales of cause-and-effect" (*inga monogatari*). Such tales had a long history in Japan and were still being produced in Hakuin's day. What makes Hakuin's a bit different are the

references to his own teaching and the attacks on contemporary teachers that he manages to slip into the narratives.

The second section of *Yaemugura*, *Emmei jikku kannon-kyō reigenki* (A Record of Miracles of the *Ten Phrase Kannon Sutra for Prolonging Life*) was, according to a postscript, written in the tenth month of 1759, the same year as *Takatsuka shinyō kōki*. Running to three thick volumes, it too is a collection of miraculous tales, in this case miracles brought about by venerating the Bodhisattva Kannon and by the continuous recitation of the forty-two character *Emmei jikku kannon-kyō*. Here too Hakuin's underlying intent is seen in the Zen teachings he intrudes into the text. This becomes even clearer at the tail-end of *Reigenki* when, after three volumes of tales, the reader is told that "none of the accounts I have related are worth the paper they are printed on. They are nothing more than pictures painted in the sky."⁴ Hakuin then proclaims that he himself possesses a much more effective method for achieving the miracle of bringing people back to life: koan practice, pursued until the breakthrough into satori known as *kenshō* (seeing into the self-nature) is attained, followed by a course of post-satori training (*gogo no shugyō*) designed to clarify and deepen the original attainment.⁵ These themes, satori and post-satori practice, the two essential ingredients of Hakuin's teaching, are given special prominence in *Yaemugura*, particularly in the autobiographical portion of the third section, which he himself referred to as his "work on post-satori practice."

In a notice attached to the title of the *Emmei jikku kannon-kyō reigenki* Hakuin states he is dedicating it to a "lord of Kyūshū," who is unnamed but

who is almost certainly the daimyō Nabeshima Naotsune, 1701-1749, to whom Hakuin dedicated two other books.⁶ By the time the *Reigenki* appeared in print, Naotsune had been dead for over a decade. The published work is no doubt a revised and expanded version of the text he had earlier written for Naotsune.

The third section of *Yaemugura* consists of two separate stories, *Sakushin Osana Monogatari* (Tales of My Childhood to Spur On [Zen] Practicers),⁷ and *Takayama Yūkichi Monogatari* (The Tale of Yūkichi of Takayama), which were apparently published together in 1761.⁸ Hakuin's reason for writing *Sakushin Osana Monogatari* is made clear in the title he gave it. He thought an account of his religious struggle could inspire younger students in their practice and at the same time inform them and others of the importance of koan study, satori, post-satori practice and other themes he thought important.

Sakushin Osana Monogatari is preceded by a lengthy preface which tells briefly how the third section came to be written and why two works so seemingly disparate as *Osana Monogatari* and *Yūkichi Monogatari* came to be published together. In it Hakuin tells the story of an elderly layman who visited him and begged him to write a work in four parts that would explain the absolute necessity of continuing Zen training beyond the attainment of satori. This was needed, he explained, to caution certain students of Hakuin's in Edo who had stopped practicing Zen after they had received his *inka shōmei* testifying to their satori. The man further requested that the work contain the following elements: a description of post-satori practice; a list of people to whom he had awarded *inka shōmei*; lists of temples where

he had lectured, works he had lectured on, and books he had published; and an account of the first part of his life.

Hakuin agreed to the request, saying that he had already written a work on post-satori practice but that he would rewrite it, and that he would also like to add to it a work relating the story of a young boy named Yūkichi who had been possessed by the great *kami* of Takayama in Hida.

Osana Monogatari corresponds to the first and fourth of the layman's requests, and consists of Hakuin's rewriting of a work he had already written on post-satori practice, and a newly-composed narrative of his early career. In this revised form, Hakuin has couched the portion on post-satori practice in the form of a series of teachings he ascribes to his teacher Shōju Rōjin but which are most probably his own.

A manuscript copy of the *Osana Monogatari*, bearing the full title *Jūshōka yūshi retsumyō no tanyu, tsuketari Sakushin osana monogatari*, A list of names and histories of those who have penetrated the initial [Zen] barrier, and tales of my childhood to spur [Zen students],⁹ reveals that in its original form the text also fulfilled the layman's request for a list of people who had received Hakuin's *inka*. The list was deleted from the published text of the third section of *Yaemugura*. None of the other lists requested by the layman are found in any of the existing printed or manuscript copies of the work, although similar lists are found in the biographical narrative *Itsumadegusa* which Hakuin published some five or six years later.

The story of how *Yūkichi Monogatari* came to be written needs to be told in conjunction with a description of the work itself.

Takayama Yūkichi Monogatari is a strange work even by Hakuin's

standards. It is also the rarest of his published writings, with only one or perhaps two copies known. It begins with one Iida Yasuemon, a samurai from Takayama in Hida and lay student of Hakuin, stopping off at Hakuin's temple on his way to Edo and relating the following story of one Kojima Sōsuke of Takayama.

Sōsuke was a layman who had studied with Hakuin and received his *inka shōmei* certifying his satori. He was highly respected by his fellow students for his sincere and upright character, and he had also gained a reputation for Zen lectures he had delivered to various lay groups in the Takayama area. In insight and eloquence he was said to rival Hakuin himself. Sōsuke came from a wealthy family, but they had fallen on bad times, so the townspeople assembled a large sum of money and entrusted it to him to invest in business dealings in Kyoto. Soon after his arrival in Kyoto, however, Sōsuke vanished from sight and was widely thought to have absconded with the money.

Teachers of other Buddhist schools in the Takayama area criticized Hakuin, holding him responsible for disrupting the lives of upstanding citizens by coming to town and indiscriminately handing out large numbers of *inka shōmei* to lay practitioners. They denounced his brand of koan Zen as a perverse travesty of the Buddhist Dharma. Hakuin's followers in Takayama, deeply distressed by this turn of events, were at a loss as to how to respond to the charges.

Just at the time this was happening, a thirteen year old boy of Takayama named Yūkichi was possessed by Takayama Myōjin, the *kami* of the Inari Shrine in Takayama. Speaking through the child, the deity revealed

Sōsuke's present whereabouts and explained that he had not absconded with the funds but had lost them in a risky business venture and was now too ashamed to show his face in Takayama. Sōsuke was a serious man, he went on, a Zen student who had achieved an authentic satori. Although he had made a mistake, he should now be forgiven. Where he had gone wrong, the deity said, was in not engaging in post-satori training after his initial satori. His attainment was thus still incomplete.

At this point in the story, the *kami* (still speaking through Yūkichi) explains post-satori practice à la Hakuin, and proclaims the orthodoxy of Hakuin's koan Zen. He mentions that Hakuin has finished a new book in Japanese on post-satori practice¹⁰ that remains unpublished because he lacks the funds to cover the cost of printing it. After exhorting everyone to chip in and donate the money, the *kami* turns his attention to the priests who criticized Hakuin and reviles them at length in the strongest terms. The *kami* continues preaching through Yūkichi in this vein for two more days, after which Yūkichi finally returns to normal.

The concluding portion of *Yūkichi Monogatari* relates how followers in Takayama raised the necessary funds to publish Hakuin's manuscript but because Hakuin had already received a donation from someone else, he decided to use the money from Takayama to publish another work, "inspired by the story of Yūkichi," that he had just dashed off.

Such is Hakuin's story in the *Yūkichi Monogatari*.

When the Buddhist scholar Tokiwa Daijō suggested that Hakuin had concocted story of Yūkichi as a vehicle for conveying his own ideas,¹¹ he was no doubt voicing sentiments which most readers of *Yūkichi Monogatari*

would share. In a postscript to *Yūkichi Monogatari* Hakuin himself mentions that some readers of the work had taken issue with at least portions of the story. He says they had criticized the tale for “mistakes” it contained, and he admits that mistakes may indeed have crept into the work —after all, he “was writing about something that had happened far away, which he had heard about at third hand.” He also admitted to adding certain things to the text, justifying his action on the grounds that he did it because the preachings young Yūkichi had delivered in Takayama afforded such a wonderful opportunity to encourage people to faith in the Dharma. Although we have no means of ascertaining either the nature or the extent of the alterations Hakuin may have made to the story related to him about Yūkichi's possession, the general impression the reader receives from the strangeness of the tale and from Hakuin's confession of “mistakes” and “additions” is that *Yūkichi Monogatari* is a work of fiction, a tale, like *Yasenkanna*,¹² that Hakuin created as a vehicle for his Zen teaching.

And yet, strangely enough, such is not the case. Two recently published letters from Hakuin to his student Katayama Shunnan, a physician from the village of Hagiwara near Takayama, confirm that a youth named Yūkichi had indeed been possessed by the *kami* of the Takayama Shrine at this time. Hakuin writes in the letters how astonished he was to learn that the *kami* of Takayama had possessed the young boy Yūkichi and delivered various pronouncements through him. He then thanks Mr. Katayama and others for sending him a donation, in response to the deity's urgings, to cover the cost of publishing his work on post-satori practice.¹³

The letters establish that a young boy named Yūkichi of Takayama

had been possessed by the *kami*, that Hakuin first learned about it from transmissions he received from friends in Takayama, and that a donation for publishing his manuscript was collected by people in Takayama and sent to him in response to the *kami*'s urgings. Hence while Hakuin's tale certainly does not relate in precise detail the events that actually took place in Takayama, nor can it be expected to since the information he had was second or third hand, this newly discovered information does enable us to establish the important fact that Hakuin was not engaging in fiction, that many of the essential points in his story seem to have been true.

Translation of *Sakushin Osana Monogatari*

The autobiographical narrative consists of a series of accounts of the religiously significant events of Hakuin's first twenty-four years, including events from his early childhood, his entrance into religious life, and his years of pilgrimage as a young monk. It concludes with a long passage relating the story of his important twenty-fourth year, during which he finally achieved an initial satori and encountered Shōju Rōjin, the priest whom he would later come to regard as his true teacher. The detailed account of his study with Shōju can probably be viewed as an example of post-satori training.¹⁴

For reasons of space I have translated only the autobiographical portion of *Sakushin Osana Monogatari*, sixty-three pages out of seventy-eight in the original text. I have omitted an introductory passage of six pages in which Hakuin sets forth the essentials of his Zen teaching, emphas-

izing the importance of the initial breakthrough into satori known as *kenshō*, and contrasts it with the mistaken teachings offered by most of his contemporaries. Also omitted is another six page passage near the end of the work which contains specific teachings on post-satori practice Hakuin says he heard from Shōju Rōjin but which sound suspiciously like Hakuin himself.

Dates throughout are given as they appear in the text, according to the lunar calendar. In the Western calendar they would fall a month or two earlier.

Notes to Introduction

- 1 For a translation of this work, see *Wild Ivy*.
- 2 The bibliographical details of the work have been sorted out by Yoshizawa Katsuhiro in his recent 3 volume edition of the work in the *Hakuin Zenji hōgo zenshū*, vols. 5-7, Kyoto, 1999-2000. His edition of *Osana Monogatari* in volume 3 has also been invaluable in preparing the translation.
- 3 Hakuin's own veneration of the *Lotus Sutra* began in his childhood, influenced by his mother who was a follower of Nichiren. Although he later dismissed the scripture as a "mere collection of tales of cause and effects," in his final decisive enlightenment at the age of forty-two, he realized why it was considered the "king" of sutras (*Itsumadegusa*).
- 4 Actually, we know that Hakuin was a keen advocate of recitation of the *Emmei jikku kannon-kyō*, but this should be seen within the larger context of his koan Zen.
- 5 At times Hakuin also equates post-satori training with the practice of *Bodhichitta*, the mind of enlightenment, describing it as a life of endless striving to bring about the liberation of all beings.
- 6 *Oradegama and Sashimogusa* also began as letters of religious instruction to this daimyō.
- 7 Hakuin's uses the word *osana* in the title, which translates as "infancy," but only

the first portion of the narrative is concerned with his early childhood; the remainder deals with his life as a young monk up until his twenty-fourth year.

8 *Yaemugura, maki no san*, p. 307.

9 重賞下勇士列名之端由. This list is known from its inclusion in a manuscript of the work. It is not found in any known printed copy.

10 That is, the original work that Hakuin rewrote and published as *Osana Monogatari*.

11 *Hakuin Zenshi Shū*, pp. 25-6. This admirable collection of Hakuin's works contains the only modern edition of *Yūkichi Monogatari*, which is not even mentioned in the *Hakuin Oshō Zenshū*.

12 See the translation of *Yasenkanna* in *Eastern Buddhist* 35: 1, 2002.

13 *Hida-ji to Hakuin*, 1983. Quoted in *Yaemugura, maki no san*, pp. 287-301.

14 While the events he relates following his initial satori can all be construed as promoting post-satori training, in the quite similar narrative he composed later in *Itsumadegusa*, which continues the life until the age of forty-two when he experienced his final decisive enlightenment, the emphasis on post-satori training is much stronger, if only because more space is devoted to that period of his life.

Translation

Tales of My Childhood —The Third Section of *Yaemugura*

八重葎 卷之三. 幼稚物語

Back when I was a young boy of seven or eight, I was called by the name Iwaya.¹ My mother would take me with her when she went to visit a temple of one of the Teaching schools.² Once while we were there we heard the priest describe, in excruciating detail, the terrible torments inflicted on people in the Eight Hot Hells and Eight Cold Hells.³ He had everyone in the hall scared half to death—their teeth were chattering, their knees quaking uncontrollably. I too was assailed by terrible fears. I came to feel as though there was nothing at all I could rely upon. The fears kept gnawing at me day and night. I moped about in a very unhappy state, my eyes red from the constant tears. Of course at such a tender young age, I wasn't able to dispell my fears by discussing them with my friends, so I would go off by myself and, with loud sobbing tears, cry my heart out in secret.

Once when I went into the bath with my mother, she directed the servant girl to keep stoking fire beneath the iron bath cauldron with more and more wood. Flames rushed madly up and around the cauldron, and the sound of the water seething and churning in the tub terrified me. Suddenly, I began howling out great cries of distress that rattled up and down the neighborhood, startling my whole family. They came rushing into the bath, gathered around me and asked anxiously what in the world had happened. Hands grabbed me and lifted me out of the tub. I was crying inconsolably,

kicking and waving my arms and throwing myself wildly about. "Did you burn yourself?" "Did you wrench something?" people asked, eager to discover the cause of such piteous cries of distress. They humored me and tried to coax some response out of me, but I paid no attention to them at all and continued to bawl away at full force.

An uncle who was there said, "This just isn't like him." Then he scolded me.⁴ "If you're going to carry on like this, at least tell us the reason. Why you're worse than a spoiled little girl!"

"Make all these people go away,"⁵ I blubbered. "I'll won't tell anyone but my mother." With that, everyone beat a hasty exit and disappeared out the back.

Alone with my mother, I placed both hands on the floor, bowed my head, and said in a hushed voice, "The truth of the matter is this. In the bath just now, even though you were holding me in your arms, when I saw those flames rising up around the cauldron, when I heard the sound of the water seething in the tub, it frightened me to the marrow of my bones. All I could think of was how much more terrible it would be to have to face the Eight Burning Hells all alone, without you. What would I do? I was so scared that all my courage left me." With that, I let out another loud sob and began bawling again, but my mother put out her hand, stopping me, and said, "Is that what's bothering you? That's not something to be so frightened about."

"Is there some way I can avoid falling into hell?" I asked her.

"If there weren't," she replied, "how could anyone get a good night's sleep?"

"Mother, if you know something, please tell me what it is. Do something to save me from these terrible fears," I said

"Why would I want to hide anything from you? But the bathroom is unclean. It isn't the proper place to discuss it. We'll have a long talk in due course and I'll tell you all about it."

Elated, I placed my palms together in supplication, though not I must confess without some question in my mind as to why she would leave me in such a frightened state, when she could have told me right away. Nonetheless, half weeping, half laughing in my happiness, I climbed back into the bath.

That night, I went to bed with an easy mind, and slept until well past eight the next morning. I awoke to hear the voices of my friends—familiar partners in mischief—who were raising a terrible ruckus in the grove of the Tenjin Shrine behind my house.⁶ Without a thought for the troubles of the previous day I leapt out of bed and dashed outside to join them. They had pulled four or five baby crows down from their nest and were making great sport of tormenting the young creatures.

Seeing this brought me suddenly back to my own problem. If only I could learn how to avoid falling into hell, I could join my friends and share the pleasures they were having. I turned and ran like a flash back into the house. My mother was talking with an elderly physician named Ichikawa Gendō,⁷ so I stood off to the side and waited for them to finish their conversation. After a while he left, and I went in to my mother.

"Please mother, my hair is all tangled and feels uncomfortable. Would you please comb it out and retie it for me."

"My, my, what has got into you, young man," laughed my mother. "Next thing you know, the sun will be rising in the west."

She had the servant girl bring her the box with the combs and hair oil, and led me to a secluded veranda in one of the back rooms. I sat straight and upright before my mother, with my hands pressed together and my head bowed down.

"It's nice and quiet here," I said. "Now please tell me how I can avoid falling into Hell like you promised."

"I'll tell you after we fix your hair," she said. "Tell me first. Then you can fix my hair all you want to," I insisted. As we continued to spar back and forth like that, I looked hard into my mother's eyes, and it suddenly dawned on me that she had no idea what to tell me. Because of the fuss I'd been making the previous night, she'd been offering me 'yellow leaves' to get me to stop crying.⁸ I readied myself for another temper tantrum.

Sensing this, my mother put her hand on me. "Wait a second, Iwaya," she said. "I'm not trying to hide anything. All right, I'll tell you. You should worship the deity of the Kitano Shrine.⁹ He will surely help you."

Overjoyed at this piece of advice, I jumped up, pressed my palms together, and performed three scrupulous bows before my mother. Then I stretched out my neck to allow her to comb out my hair. When she finished, I went directly to the shrine room of our house, gave it a good cleaning, hung up an image of Kitano Tenjin, offered flowers and incense, and recited the *Tenjin Sutra* twenty or so times.¹⁰

From then on I would arise every night at first cockcrow. I would purify myself, carefully rinsing out my mouth and washing my hands and

face, and then proceed to the shrine room, where I would light a lamp and prepare offerings of incense and flowers. I would recite the sacred name of Kitano Tenjin,¹¹ and then recite twenty or so repetitions of the *Tenjin Sutra*. Sometime after that, circumstances arose which led me to worship the Bodhisattva Kannon as well.¹² In one or two nights I had the *Fumon-bon* memorized¹³ and was reciting it together with the *Tenjin Sutra* mornings and nights without fail.

At about that time a *Jōruri* performer from the Kansai region named Morioka Kunai came at our area, and a puppet play called *Pot-Wearing Nisshin Shōnin* was performed.¹⁴ In it, Lord Tokimune, the Regent at Kamakura,¹⁵ asks, “Does a person who practices the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* feel the heat of a burning fire?” To this the Shōnin replies, “He can enter a fire without being burned. He can sink into the water without drowning.”¹⁶ Lord Tokimune orders it put to the test. A large iron cauldron heated in a fire until it is red-hot is put over the Shōnin’s head; a red-hot plowshare is clamped around his chest under his arms. Through it all, Nisshin smiles and doesn’t show the slightest sign of any discomfort. The military officials seated along the hall witnessing this are all astonished. To a man, they press their palms together toward the Shōnin in attitudes of deepest reverence.

After witnessing that play I felt a sense of joy well up within me. “How wonderful,” I thought. “If I could be like Nisshin, there would be no need for me to fear Hell. I’ll become a Buddhist priest like him. I’ll exert myself strenuously and unremittingly, endure any austerity or hardship, until I become a genuine religious seeker, equal to the Shōnin in every way.”

When I turned twelve, I went to my mother in private and asked her permission to enter the Buddhist priesthood.¹⁷ Knowing only too well how my constant fear of falling into hell had reduced me to a state of tearful misery, she looked at me and, with tears glistening in her own eyes, nodded her agreement.

From spring of my thirteenth year, I began studying and memorizing all the sutras [I would need to know as a Buddhist monk]. I also started on the *Kuzōshi* anthology of poetical phrases.¹⁸ Although unaware of it at the time, I began reading the anthology on the twenty-fifth of the ninth month and I finished on the twenty-fifth of the eleventh month. Only later did it occur to me that in reading through this work—which is said to take a young monk three years to master—in only sixty days, I had received unseen help from the deity Tenjin.¹⁹

From that day in my twelfth year when the thought of entering the priesthood first entered my head, I began getting up every night at the first crow of the cock and going in secret outside to the well. I would take off all my clothes, grab the well-rope and, hauling up three bucketsful of well water, perform cold-water ablutions by pouring them over my head. In winter, during the coldest weather, the rope would be coated white with ice and frozen stiffly into the hoop-like shape of the bucket. I would first always have to forcibly straighten the rope. After finishing my ablutions, I would press my palms together and fix my thoughts on the heavenly gods and Buddhas and make supplication to them:

“Please help me become a genuine priest, unrivaled throughout the land. If it is not possible, come immediately and hammer me into the earth.”

When I finally got up and slung my clothes over my shoulder to return to the house, my body would be totally numb from the freezing cold. I would be on the brink of losing consciousness. But that did nothing to daunt my ardor. I would recover my senses and head back into the shrine room. There I would hang up a lamp and begin my prostrations and sutra recitations as usual. At the time, no one was even aware that I was engaging in these rigorous austerities.

The next year, on the fifteenth day of the second month, I went to the temple and became a Buddhist monk.²⁰

When I was fifteen, I thought to myself, "I went and had my head shaved by a Buddhist priest. Put on a black robe. But I have yet to experience any sign of the Buddha Way's miraculous power. I test myself with an acupuncture needle or burn moxa on my skin, but the pain is as hard to bear as it ever was. I'm certainly still nowhere near measuring up to Nisshin Shōnin.²¹ I've heard people say that the *Lotus Sutra* is the king among all the sutras the Buddha preached during his lifetime.²² It's claimed that even the spirits of the dead, even demons and devils, often request the *Lotus Sutra* be recited on their behalf."

I went [next door] to the small hermitage of Kane'bō, a priest of one of the Teaching schools,²³ [to study the *Lotus*]. I found a copy of the text, bound sutra-style, set out before the altar, and began to peruse it, rendering it in the Japanese style. It took me two days to read through the entire text. When I finished and closed the last page, I emitted a deep sigh. "For the most part, this sutra merely preaches about cause and effect. True, there are two or three phrases such as the ones about the "true aspect of all

dharms,”²⁴ and there being “but one Vehicle alone.”²⁵ They contain a wonderfully profound meaning, but what sutra doesn't contain some such phrases? If tales of karmic cause and effect possessed real religious merit, shouldn't works like the *Hōgen Monogatari*, *Heiji Monogatari*, *Gempei Seisuiki*, and *Heike Monogatari* possess that merit too?²⁶

From then on, when I saw a copy of the *Lotus Sutra*, I regarded it much the same as I would an ordinary Japanese story book.²⁷ Unfortunately, at that time I didn't possess the Dharma eye that would allow me to read Buddhist sutras. If that eye had been opened, that deep sigh would not have appeared.

At the age of eighteen, I was living in the monks quarters at Byakuge-zan,²⁸ studying a work called *Cheng-tsung tsan*.²⁹ In it I read a passage about the priest Yen-t'ou being set upon by bandits and murdered.³⁰ It was a very discouraging discovery. Yen-t'ou was a great priest, the kind said to come along only once in five hundred years.³¹ “Oh my!” I reflected, “if someone like that could suffer such a fate, how can any ordinary person hope to avoid falling into hell and undergoing its torments?”

I was extremely disheartened. I completely lost my appetite—not a grain of rice would pass my throat. For days on end I struggled on in a state of severe mental anguish. I finally came to the following conclusion: “That story about Nisshin Shōnin is a fairy tale that Chikamatsu cooked up out of some commonplace notions he had in his mind at the time. I deeply regret allowing my belief in a senseless story like that to influence me into shaving my head and becoming a priest. Still, at this point I can't very well just return to being a layman. I'll have to let things work themselves out,

meantime I'll study poetry, literature, calligraphy, and painting³² and try to make a name for myself in one of those fields. As for the future, there is nothing to do but to take what comes. I'll grow old and die along with everyone else, and then just accept whatever hell has to offer."

Once decided in that direction, I focussed my attention on artistic pursuits to the exclusion of all else. Whenever I saw a Buddhist image or a sutra, or anything else of a religious nature, I had no more feeling for them than I would have for the clods of earth at my feet.

The following year, my nineteenth, I joined the assembly of Baō Rōjin in Mino province.³³ I arrived at his temple together with twelve other monks. Baō was an extremely harsh customer, as venomous as they come, almost impossible for a monk to endure. All my fellow monks slipped away and fled to other parts. But I decided to myself, "Sure, they call him the 'Wild Horse of Mino,'"³⁴ and everybody's afraid of him. But no one else in the present age can match his erudition, not to speak of his mastery of poetry and literature. Even if I travelled to Shikoku or even as far as Kyushu, I could hardly hope to encounter another teacher like him. Besides, don't I have a great and talented friend in Onbazan?³⁵ Why should I allow Baō's severity to affect my decision to stay?"

So I remained on alone at Baō's temple. A spare and spartan existence of drawing water, gathering firewood, and cooking rice for meals. One day, Baō set out by himself for Ōgaki.³⁶ Left alone amid the solitude of the deserted temple, I got to thinking: "What a pitiful creature I am. I look like a monk but I'm not. I resemble a layman too, but I'm not a layman."³⁷ I'm not a Confucian, a Shintoist, or follower of Lao Tzu or Chuang Tzu either.

Will my “mind-master” ever settle down and give me some peace?³⁸ What is to become of me!” Streams of tears began cascading down my cheeks.

I happened to raise my gaze upward to the veranda of the Guest Hall, where hundreds of books—Buddhist and nonBuddhist alike—had been stacked on top of desks following the annual airing of the temple library. I lit an offering of incense before the books, performed twenty or so prostrations before them, and prayed earnestly to the gods and Buddhas for their guidance:

I place my trust in the Buddhas of the ten directions and possessors of the ten perfect powers of wisdom, in all the great Bodhisattvas who have realized the path, in the benevolent gods in the heavens who stand guard over the Dharma and the deities enshrined in eighty thousand places throughout this land. Please take pity on me and extend me your imperceptible help. It has been four or five years now since I shaved my head, but I am still at sixes and sevens and have no idea what to do with my life. Which of the paths, Buddhism, Confucianism, or Taoism, I should follow? I am like someone standing at a crossroads without any idea of which way to take.

Beings of compassion and benevolence and bringers of joy and liberation throughout the ten directions, please reveal to me a path on which I may strive forward, with rigorous practice, to the end of my days, sacrificing life and limb together if need be.

I closed my eyes and slowly approached a pile of books on one of the desks. I reached out with my thumb and forefinger and fished blindly among the stacks until I had fixed on a single volume among them. I pulled it out,

raised it high above my head several times in veneration, then opened it. What a risky gamble I had taken! I might have pulled out a book on medicine or ritual, mathematics or divination, a biography or history, or some Confucian work. Yet marvelously, from among all those volumes, I had chosen the *Ch'an-kuan ts'e-chin*!³⁹ What a wonderful stroke of luck it was for me! Eagerly scanning the page in front of me, I saw four or five lines of marginalia inscribed above the text.⁴⁰ It read: "In the past, when the priest Tz'u-ming was studying at Fen-yang, he sat through the nights without sleep, oblivious to the bitter cold east of the river. Whenever the sleep demon tried to approach, he would tell himself, 'Who am I? While I'm alive, I'm useless to my fellow men. When I die, I'll be completely unknown,' and jab himself in the thigh with a needle sharp gimlet."

The moment I read those words, joyous tears filled my eyes and spilled down my cheeks. They became engraved in my heart forever, and I felt a strong root of faith penetrate into my bones. I found myself dancing mindlessly about with joy. [When Baō returned] I went straight in to see him and told him what had occurred. I procured my own copy of *Ch'an-kuan t'se-chin* and from that time on it never left my side day or night. Even when I was engaged in various daily activities, it was always there with me, rolled up and stuck inside my robe.⁴¹

Within an area five to seven *ri* around Baō's temple in Mino were four or five Zen priests who possessed good reputations as teachers, but all of them preached nothing but the blind and ignorant tenets of "Unborn" Zen.⁴² People from all around, old and young, priests and laity, people of both high and low estate, came to receive their instruction. They swarmed in like

ants, pushing forward in long files day after day. A close friend of mine urged me participate in one of their meetings,⁴³ but I deplored the fact that their essential teaching was such so much at odds with what was set forth in the *Ch'an-kuan t'se-chin*. Never once did I join them, nor would I lend my ear to a single word they spoke. With the *Ch'an-kuan t'se-chin* alone as my teacher, I kept pressing rigorously ahead, striving day and night without ever once letting up in my practice.

Spring of the following year I went to attend Zen lectures on the *Hsi-keng lu*⁴⁴ being given by Banri Oshō at the Jōkō-ji, a large temple in Wakasa province.⁴⁵ While I was there I felt a spirit of great courage, pure and intense, arise unexpectedly within me, filling me with an overwhelming sense of joy.⁴⁶

Leaving Jōkō-ji, I travelled to Iyo province on the island of Shikoku, where I entered the monks hall at the Shōshū-ji in Matsuyama.⁴⁷ While I was there a high-ranking councillor⁴⁸ of the daimyō issued an invitation to have “four or five promising young monks attending the Shōshū-ji lecture meeting” visit him at Matsuyama Castle. I was one of the monks selected.

Our host came out and talked with us. He brought out a large number of scrolls, specimens of calligraphy and such by priests of the past that his ancestors had for generations collected and preserved in their storehouses. He had us read the calligraphy. Finally, he produced a scroll from a set of double paulownia-wood boxes that was further encased in a beautiful pouch of gold brocade. After our initial wonderment we sat up straight and proper, placed our palms together in *gasshō* and performed deep bows. When the scroll was unrolled, we saw that it was a piece of calligraphy by

Ungo Rōshi.⁴⁹ Examining it once or twice, I saw that as far as the nobility of the sentiments expressed in the text was concerned, or the skill and beauty of the brushwork, there was nothing, not a single word or character in this calligraphy that set it apart from any of the twenty or so other scrolls we had seen. Yet obviously this scroll had been treasured and revered in a very special way. Why? Giving the matter some thought, I concluded that it certainly had nothing to do with either the writing style or the brushwork. The reason it was so much more highly prized than all rest was simply because of a definite strength it possessed that had its source in the *kenshō* experience and enlightenment. At the same time I realized that all my privations and tribulations during these many years of practice had been completely mistaken.

When I returned to the monks quarters I gathered together all the calligraphy, dog-eared manuscripts, notes, and other writings I had acquired at different places over many years, rolled them up and bound them. I slipped quietly out to the egg-shaped grave stupas in the cemetery behind the temple and set fire to the lot. My behavior astounded my friends. They looked wonderingly at one another, sure I had taken leave of my senses. From that time on, I focussed with total concentration on my koans alone, boring into them without a moment's letup.

In spring of the following year⁵⁰ I was led by circumstances to hang up my travelling staff in the monks quarters of the Tenshō-ji in Fukuyama,⁵¹ Bingo province. I didn't perform prostrations, I didn't chant sutras, I didn't so much as glance at writings of any kind, and not a mundane word passed from my lips. With the *Ch'an-kuan t'se-chin* as my sole teacher, I worked

doggedly at my koan and never let up.

That autumn I set out for home, travelling by land in the direction of Naniwa in Settsu province. I had been moved to tears when I had first heard the story of how the National Master Daijōshō-ō had travelled back and forth on the Tōkaidō over ten times yet had never once raised his head to look up as he passed beneath Mount Fuji.⁵² The story had become etched in my mind and had engendered a deep respect and reverence for the National Master. A great resolve to achieve the goal I had vowed to reach suddenly rose within me. From then on, to the end of my journey, I did not see any of the mountains, rivers, trees, plants, castles, villages and hamlets I passed. Though wide open, my eyes were blind to all the horses, oxen, pigs, dogs, and other animals moving this way and that along the road.

My traveling companions said, "If you stand on Kyōbashi Bridge in Okayama, Bizen province, and look up at the castle, it is as though you are gazing at the wonderful palace of Hsien-yang."⁵³ It is the most wonderful sight on the whole Tōkaidō." When we reached the bridge my four companions stood in a row against the railing like stacks of brushwood, their eyes all riveted on the castle, all thought of further movement gone from their minds. I was standing there with them, but with eyes closed fast, deeply focussed [on my koan]. I didn't see so much as a single tile the whole time, not an inch of the castle's famous white walls.

Later, as the five of us continued our journey, walking along in single file down the road, it seemed to me as though we had not taken a single step, but were standing in one place completely motionless, and the houses to our right and left and the various trees and plants that lined the road were all

moving slowly backwards in unison. And when we were moving along in a boat we had boarded,⁵⁴ it seemed as though the boat was not moving at all, that we remained completely stationary in one spot, and that the willows, reeds, and lotus flowers that lined the banks were flowing leisurely backward.

We entered the roads of Harima, moving along the bay of Akashi,⁵⁵ stepping in time with the splendid sound of waves striking the shore at Maiko's sandy beach. My thoughts roamed freely along dream-like paths, the sacred grove at Ikuta, the fields at Koyano, were scenes I did not see. Someday the clouds of illusion would clear and all things [Naniwa] be seen as delusions. I climbed the steep slope where the original person is encountered [Ōsaka], passed the waterwheel at the Yodo rapids [Kawase]. A fervent [Atsuta Shrine] and singleminded vow to cease [Owari] transmigrating in the realms of darkness spurred on [Kakegawa] my mind, bent solely on finding [Mitsuke-juku] its original self-nature. But even with the Six Paths⁵⁶ far behind, I faced the sweat-drenched slope [Shiomizaka] so difficult for travellers. Once atop the summit, I could gaze below over the world of reeds [good and evil⁵⁷] at Kuzubakama, then boot it onward down the Dharma path, where even watery rice⁵⁸ is meager, to the station of Mariko,⁵⁹ still firmly pledged to cross beyond [Tegoshi] the rising, falling seas of birth and death [Shōji] and cast aside [Okitsu] the floating world's nerve-rattling strife, and thoughts of fortune good and ill [Sumpu]. At Yui and Kambara, the sorrows of separation and of loss resolved me to down the bitter pill and purge away impurities. Now the sacred mountain [Mount Fuji] towered up, its snowy surface mirrored on the waters of the Fuji

River, on whose current tears float past the size of horse-chestnuts, because of those who have renounced the world. At Yoshiwara, after a brief respite, the heart grew lighter,⁶⁰ as I bent my steps onward to Kashiwabara, from whence, amid the sadness of the floating world [Ukishima] where meetings inevitably must mean farewell, I reached at last Shōin-ji.⁶¹

It was the end of the fourth year of Hōei (1707).⁶²

I had left my home at eighteen. At twenty-two I now returned. My family and friends all gathered to greet me, but the words they spoke to me, about things long in the past, seemed only a cacophonous gabble. My eyes stared straight ahead, my mouth was shut fast, and not a word passed from my lips, not a single sight registered to my eyes. It was as though I was with people I had never seen before. They eyed me doubtfully, standing there in an empty daze as if I were someone who had taken leave of his senses.

There was a priest named Ryū Jōza from Echigo staying at a neighboring temple at the time.⁶³ We were the same age and the moment I met him, it was like a reunion with an old friend. In the course of a long conversation he told me, "There is a man named Shuchō Shuso at the Eigan-ji in Echigo province⁶⁴ a veteran monk of superior parts who has studied with Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku teachers throughout the country. All of them gave him their Dharma certification. He is without doubt an outstanding monk who has attained great spiritual strength through a genuine enlightenment." The moment I heard about the monk I was eager to go and pay him a visit. I learned that by a stroke of good fortune a lecture meeting on the *Jen-t'ien yen-mu*⁶⁵ was scheduled for the following spring at the Eigan-ji.

The day the winter meeting broke up, the fifteenth day of the first

month, I left Suruga with three or four other monks⁶⁶ and proceeded to the Eigan-ji in Echigo to visit the veteran priest I had heard about. Unfortunately, he turned out to be another of those blind and ignorant men who follow the silent illumination, dead sitting practices of Unborn Zen.⁶⁷

Greatly discouraged and despondent, I felt ashamed of myself for having fallen unwittingly into the mistake of acting against the most fundamental aspiration of those Zen figures who appear in the *Ch'an-kuan ts'e-chin*. I had made a difficult trip of a hundred *ri* pursuing a matter which had nothing whatever to do with me, when [I should have known very well that] elucidation of the great matter must never place even a shred of reliance on anything extraneous to one's self.

With that, a fierce resolve fired itself within me. Setting the spirit of my great vow before everything else and casting all other concerns aside, I slipped unnoticed into the shrine room of the lords of Toda. The floor was covered with a layer of small, neatly arranged pebbles. There I hid myself and for several days straight sat in zazen like a dead man, becoming like one devoid of sense. I reached the end of reason, reached the limit of words, reached the end of all human skill or ability. Ordinary mental processes, consciousness, and emotions all ceased to function. It was as though I was encased in a sheet of ice ten thousand feet thick,⁶⁸ or sitting inside a bottle of purest crystal. My breath itself seemed to hang suspended. Then, in the middle of the night, a wonderful thing happened. As the sound of a distant bell reached my ears I suddenly broke through into great enlightenment.⁶⁹ It was 'mind and body falling away, falling away mind and body.'⁷⁰ It was 'thrusting the jade pavilion over on its back,' 'smashing apart a thick sheet

of solid ice.' The great void in all the ten directions ceased to exist. The great earth completely and utterly vanished. Not a particle remained.⁷¹ I experienced a joy of an intensity I had never before known. Unthinkingly I shouted out, "How wonderful! Old Yen-t'ou is alive and well! Old Yen-t'ou still lives!" and began clapping my hands and emitting loud hoots of laughter. My companions were completely bewildered by my behavior. They were sure I had taken leave of my senses.

From that time on everyone I saw appeared to exist within a field of gossamer that shimmered and danced in the summer air. I thought to myself, "No one in the past two or three hundred years has experienced such a marvelous breakthrough." My rampant pride soared up like a banner on a mountain peak. My arrogance raced forth like an onrushing tide.

It was the fifth year of the Hōei period [1709]—the spring of my twenty-third year—several days before the opening of the lecture-meeting on the *Jen-t'ien yen-mu*.⁷²

Upwards of two hundred people had gathered to attend the meeting.⁷³ They were quartered in different halls. I was placed in charge⁷⁴ of fifty people who had been housed in a borrowed annex that had been set up in the main hall of the neighboring Kyūshō-ji, a Sōtō temple.⁷⁵ One of my assistants at the annex was named Dan Jōza.⁷⁶

Dan had been over at the main hall. He suddenly came running back in a state of excitement. "A strange monk just arrived," he said. "He's a shabby-looking old veteran between thirty and forty years old,⁷⁷ with a scruffy head of hair and grimy face. His robe is all ragged and he carries

a tattered old travel pouch over his shoulder. He walked in carrying a stout oak staff six or seven feet long which he planted on the ground beside him, balancing it at the tip with his finger.⁷⁸ He didn't even know the proper etiquette required of newly arrived monks. He just stood there in the entrance, straight and unmoving like a great withered tree, asking for permission to stay in a rough Bandō voice.⁷⁹ He's the picture image of a crazy monk. If a man like that is allowed to stay, he's sure to end up having an extremely disruptive influence on the meeting. We'd be much better off getting rid of him as quickly as possible."

Dan, who was gasping for breath by the time he had finished blurting all this out, then took off again to visit the senior monks in the main temple. He soon reappeared, his face contorted in disgust. "Well, something highly disagreeable seems to be shaping up. I heard temple officials over in the main temple discussing what to do with the new arrival. They said since they had no space for him there, they had no choice but to put him up temporarily here at Kyūshō-ji. The abbot is of the same mind, so they'll probably be coming here soon to force him on us. An extremely disagreeable turn of events, if you ask me."

Dan then turned to me. "What's your opinion, senior monk? It seems to me we should refuse him. If we agree and allow him to stay, he's sure to cause a great deal of trouble. It will effect everyone here." Before he had even finished saying this, six or seven of the other monks began adding their voices to the discussion, with brows pinched deep with furrows of concern. "We can't allow it. We can't allow it," they said. "If they're going to accept trouble-makers like him and send them over here to foist off on us, some

serious disturbance is sure to arise that we'll be unable to deal with. Even before this, people have been whispering privately about the Kyūshō-ji annex being the place where they put all the dubious cases. If five or six of these fearless characters who are known for disrupting training halls⁸⁰ all over the country are concentrated in one place, something serious is bound to happen before the meeting is over. It's utterly deplorable. Even you will be unable to control it, senior monk. Why ask for trouble."

Grumbings and mutterings passed quietly through the hall. "Surely the best course of action is to refuse him," they all concluded. But before they had even finished speaking I shook my head, and said,

"Quiet down, all of you! I don't want to hear any more of this endless speculation. I'm tired of it! And as for you, Dan, you aren't doing as I told you and keeping your mind on your practice, so your energy isn't focussed where it should be. That's why when something like this comes up you have plenty of time to go running around, picking up useless bits of mundane gossip about somebody else's troubles or shortcomings. You insist on latching onto these rumors that have nothing to do with you. You go around retailing them to others and end up undermining not only your own religious resolve but that of your companions as well. I don't care who it is enters this hall, the second he makes the slightest move out of line, there's not going to be any questions. I'm just going to throw him out, and that will be the end of it. There's no need for any of you to discuss it any further. When you come down to it, brother Dan, it's the presence of people like you who are disturbing this meeting."

Just as I finished delivering this rebuke, Chō Shuso arrived at the

annex,⁸¹ bringing the new monk with him. He announced in a sincere and obliging manner, "This is Kaku Jōza, who just arrived from Shinano province.⁸² Since both the old and new halls over at the main temple are completely full, we would be deeply obliged if you would let him stay here and afford him the benefit of your guidance."

"To begin with," I replied, "you can see we are very cramped here as well. This hall has been borrowed from the temple of another school.⁸³ If you intend on quartering so many people here, you should be extremely careful to select the best-behaved students. If, on the other hand, you are going to make a point of carefully sifting out the all the ruffians and hall-wreckers that assemble here from different parts and send them to us, then no one here will have a moment's peace of mind day or night. But even if that is not true, I've heard that some of the priests at the main temple are deeply concerned about the situation. They are saying, "The meeting is proceeding exactly according to plan, but we're worried about the Kyūshō-ji annex. If you take five or six notorious hall-wreckers and misfits from around the country and throw them together in one place like that, sooner or later, before the training session is over, a serious incident—something that's going to freeze our livers—is sure to occur. All we can do is sit here with worried looks on our faces, waiting for it to happen." In any case, I'm afraid I have no alternative but to refuse your request."

Before I had finished speaking, Chō Jōza said, "Please don't say that. The head priest himself came to this decision because he thought he could count on you."

"If that is so," I replied, "I must apologize for what I said. In that case,

it would be unseemly of me to refuse. However things turn out, good or ill, I'll do as you say. But if this fellow shows the least sign of any irregular behavior, I'm going to throw him out and send him back to the main temple. Is that agreed?"

"That will be perfectly acceptable to us," the head monk replied. He then turned and cautioned the new monk. "I want you to be completely clear about what we have just agreed to. Make any false step at all and you won't be allowed to stay a moment longer. Devote yourself singlemindedly to your practice. Your mind should be focused solely on the great matter of *kenshō* and enlightenment. And don't forget that any unnecessary talking, loud conversation, laughter or the like is strictly forbidden."

The monk bowed to the floor in agreement.

I threw in some warnings of my own. "When wrong-headed monks with bad habits come around, initially they always appear to be obedient and well-behaved, looking to all the world like genuine seekers who have come to penetrate the secret depths. But after a little as five or ten days, when they have had time to size up their fellow monks, they start treating the temple norms as if they were dirt, the time-honored standards of Zen as though they were balls of matted filth. They pay no attention to the senior monks above them, they bully the younger monks, and drop out in the middle of the training session. Then they disappear and are seen no more. In recent years large numbers of these rascals have appeared in training halls around the country. You've probably heard about them yourself.

"I am Kaku from Suruga province.⁸⁴ You don't want to mix with me. You won't find another monk anywhere in Izu, Kai, Tōtōmi, or Shinano who

can stand up to me. If you start feeling free and easy and get it into your head to start something, I promise I'll deal very severely with you."

"I can see it's going to be pretty intimidating around here," the head monk laughed. "Kaku Jōza, unless you commit yourself to your practice with the greatest care, as though you were living inside a cave of demons or a tiger's den, you're in for big trouble." The head monk then returned to the main temple.

Kaku sat silently and circumspectly, looking a bit sheepish. The other monks in the hall viewed him with obvious contempt. No one even looked at him or spoke to him. He was treated like a menial servant, made to take the lowest-ranking seat in the hall and assigned a desk in the very back of the room.

The next day, as the lecture meeting on the *Jen-t'ien yen-mu* opened, the temple was in a general state of confusion and disorder. That evening four or five of the senior monks from the main hall appeared in the annex. One of them tested a few of monks regarding some passages from the *Jen-t'ien yen-mu* that had been taken up in the lecture. Then they left. The head monk Chō Jōza showed up and after uttering some words about how well the opening had gone, picked up a copy of *Jen-t'ien yen-mu* lying nearby, flipped it open, and made some critical comments on two or three of the passages in the text. Then he too left.

Kaku cautiously approached my desk and asked in a low whisper, "Was the person who just left, the one who said all those things, the head monk at this temple?"

"He was. What about it?" I replied.

"I heard the comments he and the other monk made just now," he replied. "I'd like to say something about them."

"If you have anything to say, say it!" I answered. "If you're correct, I'll confirm it for you. If you're wrong, I'll set you straight."

Kaku smiled, then said, "Now it's not that the remarks the head monk made didn't show some discernment. I'm sure he possesses unusual ability. However none of his comments went beyond the elementary stage of 'seeking advice about one's own ideas'."⁸⁵

I opened a copy of the *Jen-t'ien yen-mu* lying nearby and carefully examined several of the passages that dealt with the great matter so difficult to understand and penetrate. I then realized that Kaku Jōza was indeed a veteran monk of superior capacity. I was both greatly astonished and greatly delighted. "In this day and age," I thought to myself, "what teacher could have produced such a monk?"

When I asked Kaku who his teacher was, he said, "He's a recluse of Iiyama in Shinano province named Shōju Rōjin. He was a student of Shidō Munan Anju, who was himself a direct heir of National Master Daien Hōkan."⁸⁶ Shidō Munan ordained my teacher and always had a special affection for him."

A thrill of delight passed through my heart when I heard those words. I thought, "National Master Hōkan is a figure I have deeply revered and respected for many years. He is the kind of teacher who appears only once in five hundred years. How lucky I am to encounter someone belonging to his Dharma lineage. When the retreat ends here, I'd like to go and study under him."

The night before the lecture meeting ended, I confided my feelings to Kaku. "I'd like to go to Iiyama and request an interview with your teacher. What do you think?"

"It's just what I'd been hoping for," he replied.

The next morning, before the drums and temple bell announced the end of the meeting, Kaku and I slipped away from the temple and were soon hurrying along a deserted back trail up over the pass at Mount Tomikura. We arrived in Iiyama and I was granted an interview with Shōju Rōjin.

The old teacher took one look at me and immediately asked, "How do you see Chao-chou's Mu?"⁸⁷

"No way to lay a hand or foot on it," I replied.

Shōju reached out, pushed the end of my nose with his fingers, and said, "Well I just got a hand on it!"

I was unable to utter a single word. He had crushed my pride and arrogance as easily as if he had smashed an egg with a large rock. [After that,] his blistering shouts, the furious blows from his fists shattered my spirit and struck terror into my heart. Once he picked me up and threw me off the veranda of the temple like he was tossing a kitten. I landed on the ground four or five feet below, losing consciousness. I was completely dead to the world⁸⁸ and lay there for what must have been about an hour. The old man stood above me on the veranda clapping his hands with glee and emitting loud brays of laughter. I finally recovered my senses, got up and bowed to him three times. He took pity on me and assigned me a koan—Su-shan's Memorial Tower—to work on.⁸⁹

"Work singlemindedly on this story," he told me. "Long ago, after

Hsi-keng Rōshi had once died the Great Death,⁹⁰ he bored into this same story for four long years, and he eventually emerged as a great shade tree without equal in all of China. It is said that Hsi-keng's descendents increased by the day in this country as well.⁹¹ But even if one of these descendents were to achieve eighteen great satoris and small satoris beyond count,⁹² so long as he did not penetrate this story, he cannot be recognized as a true disciple of the Japanese teacher Daiō and his disciple Daitō.”⁹³

With that, I began gnawing on the koan from the front. I went at it from the sides. I forgot both food and sleep. The tremendous sense of joy I had experienced [in my previous enlightenment] was now all transformed into a boundless agony. I pushed myself merciless, putting forth ten times the effort I had back in the shrine room at Eigan-ji.

One day, I took my bowl and went into the village below Iiyama castle. I stationed myself beside the gate of a house and stood there totally motionless, a lump of blank oblivion. Out of the blue a local madman, eyes bulging out, dashed up to me brandishing a broom in his hands and began striking me furiously about the head with the broom handle,⁹⁴ leaving my sedge hat in tatters. I was taken totally by surprise and given a terrible fright. I toppled over unconscious and lay on the ground for about a hour. People who witnessed the attack thought the man had killed me. After a while, however, I regained my senses and picked myself up off the ground. As I did, I suddenly found that I had penetrated several koans that until that time I had been totally unable to get any grip on at all. I had bored into them right to their roots and smashed them to smithereens.

Beside myself with joy, I walked slowly and exultantly back to the

hermitage. Shōju, who was standing on the veranda, took one look at me approaching in the distance and called out with a smile on his face, "Have you attained something?" I went up to him and related to him the particulars of my realization. He was extremely pleased. He proceeded to throw up a ten thousand-fold barrier before me. He laid out a thicket of thorns and briars a thousand-fold deep. But before the day was out, I had passed through them all without a single hitch. Scarcely able to contain his joy, Shōju came up beside me, took out his fan, and patted me with it on the back three times. "Excellent, truly excellent. But do not be satisfied with this small attainment. The farther you go into enlightenment, the harder you must strive. The more you understand, the greater you must work. You must not rest until the day you die."

[At this point in the narrative Hakuin inserts series of instructions he said he heard from Shōju Rōjin similar to those found at the same point in the Itsumadegusa narrative. They stress the need for Hakuin to continue his practice in the "post-satori" phase of his training, attack the "quietistic" methods of contemporary Zen teachers, and set forth the essentials of authentic Zen training. Hakuin then resumes the autobiographical narrative.]

In winter of that same year—the fifth of the Hōei era [1709]—a letter arrived from home informing me that my old teacher, Nyoga Rōjin,⁹⁵ who had long been ill and did not have much longer to live, was alone without anyone to attend to his personal needs. I therefore left Shōju's hermitage to return to my home temple in Suruga. Shōju, staff in hand, walked along with me for about one *ri*. When we parted, he took my hand in his and gave me the following words of advice: "When you leave here, do not, even for

a small period of time, let up in your efforts. Strive, and continue to strive at all times, to extend the gift of the Dharma for the salvation of all beings. Work with one or two students with a capacity like your own. You will requite in that way the profound debt you owe the Buddha-patriarchs.”

I left Shōju with tears of regret welling in my eyes and bent my steps toward Suruga. Over the next year or so, I ministered to Nyoga Rōjin's needs. At the same time, I did not neglect my practice. I sat for eight sticks of incense every night,⁹⁶ never missing a single night either in the stifling heat of summer or in the piercing cold of winter.

Notes for *Yaemugura*

- 1 His childhood name was Iwajirō 岩次郎. The name Iwaya 岩野 (possibly read Iwano) appears nowhere else in Hakuin's writings.
- 2 教院, a temple of a Buddhist school other than Zen or Ritsu. According to *Itsumadegusa*, this was Shōgen-ji 昌源寺, a Nichiren temple in Hara. In the *Nempu*, these visits are placed in his tenth year; in *Oradegama* (see next note), Hakuin says he was “six or seven.”
- 3 “When I was six or seven years old my mother took me to a temple for the first time and we listened to a sermon on the hells as described in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. The priest dwelt eloquently on the torments of the Hells of Wailing, Searing Heat, Incessant Suffering, and the Red Lotus. So vivid was the priest's description that it sent shivers down the spines of both monks and laymen and made their hair stand on end in terror. Returning home, I took stock of the deeds of my short life and felt that there was but little hope for me. I did not know which way to turn and I was gooseflesh all over. In secret I took up the chapter on Kannon from the *Lotus Sutra* and the *dharani* on Great Compassion and recited them day and night.” *Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings*, pp. 115–116.
- 4 According to *Itsumadegusa*, this was Asanuma Hachirō, the husband of one's of Hakuin's sisters.

- 5 According to *Isumadegusa*, people had come from the neighboring houses when they heard his yells. *Wild Ivy*, p. 12.
- 6 A sacred grove (*Tenjin no mori*) attached to the Tenjin Shrine was located between the Omodaka-ya 沢潟屋, the inn run by Hakuin's family, and the Sainen-ji.
- 7 市川玄道. This is Gendō's sole appearance in Hakuin's records; nothing further is known about him.
- 8 Giving children yellow leaves and telling them they are gold to get them to stop crying is a metaphor for expedient means (*hōben*) from the *Nirvana Sutra*, ch. 20: "When a young child is crying, its mother will show it some yellow poplar leaves and say, 'Don't cry. Don't cry. Look, I'll give you some gold.' Seeing the leaves the child thinks they are real gold and stops crying. But the yellow leaves are not really gold."
- 9 The statesman and scholar Sugawara Michizane was enshrined at the Kitano Shrine in Kyoto in 987; he later came to be worshipped as Kitano Tenjin 北野天神, the patron deity of calligraphy, letters, and culture in general. He was revered in the *terakoya* schools of the Edo period as the patron of learning and calligraphy.
- 10 The *Tenjin Sutra* (*Tenjin-kyō*, 天神經), probably composed around the beginning of the Edo period, was used during the Edo period to promote the worship of Tenjin among children in *terakoya* temple schools. The "sutra" text, which incorporates elements of the Tenjin cult and Buddhism, is generally Buddhist in vocabulary but with a meaning that is sometimes unclear.
- 11 "Namu Tenman Daijizai Tenjin" (Homage to Tenjin, deity of great freedom, deity of the Tenmangu Shrine). Cf. previous footnote.
- 12 In *Isumadegusa* Hakuin writes: "Someone told me that when it came to the spiritual efficacy of gods and Buddhas, none could excell that of the Bodhisattva Kannon. I began forthwith to learn the *Fumon-bon*, and in only one or two nights I had it memorized." The *Hakuin nempu*, age eleven, records that young Hakuin "heard that the Bodhisattva Kannon, the *Fumon-bon* and the *Daihijishinju* 大悲神呪 all possessed great spiritual efficacy," and immediately made them the focus of his religious practice.
- 13 The *Fumon-bon* ("Universal Gate chapter"), the 25th chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, known independently as the *Kannon Sutra*.
- 14 Nothing is known about Morioka Kunai 森岡宮内. In the *Isumadegusa* account

Hakuin says he saw the performance at the village of Suwa (probably Ōsuwa 大諏訪 or Kosuwa 小諏訪, located several villages east of Hara). The play in question, about the evangelist Nichiren priest Nisshin Shōnin (1407–1488), known as “Pot-wearing Nisshin,” is probably *Nisshin Shōnin tokkōki* (The Virtuous Conduct of Nisshin Shōnin), a work by Chikamatsu Monzaemon that was first performed at the beginning of the Genroku era (1688–1704).

- 15 The shogun involved in this incident (and in Chikamatsu's play) was Ashikaga Yoshinori, not Tokimune.
- 16 These words about a true believer in the *Lotus Sutra* being able to enter a fire without being burned, etc., are found in the *Fumon-bon* or *Kannon Sutra*, as well as in early Confucian and Taoist works.
- 17 This is age thirteen in the *Hakuin nempu* and *Draft nempu*.
- 18 句雙紙. A collection of Chinese phrases culled from Chinese and Zen literature used in Zen study. Sometimes called the *Zenrinkushū*. It was said to take a young Zen monk three years to memorize it.
- 19 The twenty-fifth is the birth day of Sugawara Michizane (later the deity Tenjin).
- 20 “His parents finally assented to his entering the priesthood, and on the 25th of the second month he went to Tanrei (So)den, received the tonsure, and was given the name Ekaku” (*Nempu*, 1699, Hakuin's 14th year).
- 21 See above, note 13.
- 22 It is so described in the *Lotus Sutra* itself, *Yakuō bosatsu honji* chapter.
- 23 閑恵坊 (the *Nempu* and *Draft Nempu* have 咸恵坊). A parenthetical note attached to the *Draft Nempu* says of Kane'bō that he was “a priest of the Shōdai 唱題宗 (Nichiren) school, who constructed a hut next to the Sainen-ji and devoted himself to chanting [the *Lotus*] sutra. He had nothing but the deepest affection for the master's [Hakuin's] ability and courage.” The Sainen-ji was a temple of the Ji Sect located next to Shōin-ji.
- 24 The idea that all the things in this world of distinction and relativities are, as such, manifestations of true suchness is preached in the *Hōben* chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- 25 The idea that the *Lotus* is the supreme teaching—the one vehicle—is preached in the *Hōben* chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.
- 26 Classical war chronicles written in the 12th century.

- 27 *Kana zōshi*—books of short, easily comprehensible stories written using the *kana* syllabary.
- 28 Byakuge-zan 白華山 is the “mountain” name of the Zensō-ji 禪叢寺 in Shimizu, a temple affiliated with the Myōshin-ji.
- 29 The full title is *Wu-chia Cheng-tsung tsan* (Praise of the Five Houses of the True School), a mid-13th century work by Hsi-sou Shao-t’an of the Sung, containing biographies of 74 eminent Zen monks.
- 30 The story Hakuin alludes to from the *Wu-chia Cheng-tsung tsan* biography of Yen-t’ou Chüan-huo is as follows: One day Yen-t’ou told the assembly, “When I leave you, I’ll do it after emitting a loud shout.” When bandits attacked and overran the temple, because they found nothing to steal they ended up putting the monks to the sword. Yen-t’ou remained completely calm and collected to the end and, before being killed, he emitted a loud shout that was heard for several leagues.
- 31 In Zen literature reference to a great teacher appearing only once every five hundred years is found in the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Pi-yen lu*), case 26. The ultimate source is *Mencius*.
- 32 These were not considered proper pastimes for Zen monks. Yoshizawa (*Yaemugura, maki no san*, p. 134) cites this passage from the *Ta-hui wu-k’u* 大慧武庫, an anecdotal collection by the Sung priest Ta-hui Tsung-kaō: “Zen master Yuan-tsung remarked during a snowfall. ‘This snow falls on three kinds of monks. The best ones are doing zazen in the training hall, the average ones are dipping their brushes in ink and composing verses on the snow, and the inferior ones are sitting around the fire discussing food.’”
- 33 Baō Sōchiku 馬翁宗竹, 1629–1711. Almost all we know of this priest comes from Hakuin’s writings.
- 34 Cf. *Itsumadegusa*: “He was by nature hard and sharp as flint, rough and ruthless to the core—as forbidding as they come. He spewed his venom wholesale; everyone received an equal dose regardless of rank or ability.” *Wild Ivy*, p. 19.
- 35 溫馬山, n. d. The *Hakuin Nempu* has 穩馬山. The *Draft Nempu* and *Hakuin Nempu* include a parenthetical note that identifies this man as a son of the Neo-Confucian teacher Kumazawa Banzan. The *Draft Nempu* says that the character Ba 馬 in his name was taken from his teacher Baō. According to *Itsumadegusa*, “Onbazan was

Baō's sole disciple at the time and a poet of some reputation, who would drop over from time to time and help me [Hakuin] with the composition of linked verse. We would start off our sessions by composing a hundred lines between us, Onbazan doing the first line, I matching it. It never took long to accomplish this—about the time for a couple sticks of incense to burn down.” *Wild Ivy*, p. 20.

36 A note in the *Draft Nempu*, age 22, gives more detail of Baō's trips into Ōgaki. He had become infatuated with a woman named Jukei who lived in the city. Cf. *Hakuin Oshō shōden*, pp. 460–61.

37 Cf. “He resembles a monk but is not a monk; resembles a layman but is not a layman. The Buddha refers to such a person as a ‘bat-monk,’ or as a “shavepate layman” *Hsi-men ching hsiin* 緇門警訓.

38 “Mind-master” 主心, a term unique to Hakuin, refers to the mind in an essential sense as the cause and source of all thought and action.

39 *Ch'an-kuan ts'e-chin* 禪関策進 (*Spurring Students Through the Zen Barriers*). A compilation, with comments, of 110 passages from Zen and other Buddhist texts relating to Zen practice by the noted Ming priest Yün-ch'i Chu-hung, whose advocacy of “Nembutsu Zen” is the subject of severe criticism throughout Hakuin's writings. It was first published in Japan in 1656.

40 The text has 首らに書き入れたる三五行有り, although Yoshizawa suggests that this may refer to printed headnotes (*Yaemugura, maki no san*, p. 140). In any case, the following passage that Hakuin quotes is virtually identical to that which appears directly in the text of the *Ch'an-kuan ts'e-chin*, presumably obviating the need for a note of any kind.

41 Some of Hakuin's students had the *Ch'an-kuan ts'e-chin* reprinted in 1762 with a preface by Tōrei. Hakuin first learned of the project when handed a newly-printed copy of the book. He described his feelings in a letter: “I raised the book up in reverence two or three times, unable to stop the tears falling down my cheeks. My joy was extreme. I felt like jumping up and dancing about the room I could have received no greater expression of Dharma gratitude. This book has meant more to me than anything else, even my teachers or my parents ... During my pilgrimage ... it never left my side.” Quoted in *Shamon Hakuin*, p. 70.

42 According to the *Nempu*, age 22, three of these followers of Bankei's Yōtaku's Zen

teaching were Masaki Ryōkō, Tarumaru Sokai, and Nanzen Keryū of the Hofuku-ji in Horato.

- 43 This is perhaps the assembly Nanzen Keryū held at the Hofukuji at this time that Hakuin describes in *Isumadegusa*. *Wild Ivy*, p. 21.
- 44 息耕録, *Record of Hsi-keng*. Hsi-keng is a literary name used by the Sung priest Hsü-tang Chih-yü. The correct title of the work is the *Hsü-tang chih-yü yu-lu*.
- 45 The Myōshin-ji priest Banri Oshō 万里須鉄, 1650-1713, of the Jōkōji 常高寺.
- 46 According to the *Nempu*, age 22, while Hakuin was at Jōkōji, "he chanced to read a line of verse the Chinese priest Yün-chu Hsiao-shun had written upon returning home to resume the abbotship of Ch'i-hsien temple: 'How often I rejoice; how often I grow angry.' The moment he read it his eyes filled with tears. He had experienced something he had never known before."
- 47 Shōshū-ji 正宗寺. The incumbent was Itsuzen Gijun 逸禪宜俊, d. 1703. According to the *Nempu*, age 22, he was lecturing on the *Fo-tsu san ching* 仏祖三經 (Three Teachings of the Buddha-patriarchs).
- 48 According to the *Hara-chō shi* 原町史 (p. 359), this person was Okudaira Fuji-zaemon, *Karō* 家老 serving Matsudaira Sadanao, the daimyō of Matsuyama Castle.
- 49 Ungo Kiyō, 1582-1659, a prominent Myōshin-ji priest associated with the Zuigan-ji at Matsushima near Sendai. According to *Isumadegusa* and the *Nempu* the calligraphy was by Daigu Sōchiku, 1584-1669, another prominent Myōshin-ji priest. Both priests have highly idiosyncratic calligraphy that would fit the description Hakuin gives here, so it is impossible to determine whose calligraphy Hakuin actually saw.
- 50 The 4th year of Hōei, 1707. Hakuin was 22 years old.
- 51 "In the spring, at the urging of a former brother monk, I travelled to Fukuyama and joined the brotherhood at the Tenshō-ji 天祥寺." *Isumadegusa*; *Wild Ivy*, p. 24. In the *Draft Nempu* and *Nempu* this is given as Tenju-ji 天寿寺. Tenshō-ji was the family temple of the Kokudaira branch of the Matsudaira clan.
- 52 Daijō shōō 大定聖応 is the honorific *kokushi* 国師 ("National Master") title of Kanzan Egen 関山慧玄, 1277-1360, founder of the Myōshin-ji. This story may be based on the account in the *Kanzan kokushi betsuden* 関山国師別伝, which does not mention ten trips: "Kanzan was asked by his teacher Daitō Kokushi, "When you passed through Suruga province, did you see Mount Fuji?" "No, I didn't," replied Kanzan.

Daitō praised him, “Egan Zōsu, that is how it is when a person is utterly devoted to the Way.” Katō Shōshun, “Ōzen Fuzen's *Kanzan kokushi betsuden ni tsuite*” (*Zengaku kenkyū*, 61).

53 Hsien-yang 咸陽, capital of the Ch'in empire.

54 “When they reached the city of Hyōgo, they bought passage on a boat.” *Nempu*, age 23. From Hyōgo (present day Kobe), they sailed as far as Osaka.

55 The italicized passage is composed in a highly allusive style parodying the *michiyuki* passages found in Japanese military chronicles, Noh, etc.. In it Hakuin catalogues the famous places and sites (some are identified in brackets) he passed on his trip home along the edge of the Inland Sea and then through central Honshū to Hara. Using various Buddhist themes Hakuin plays on the place names. A similar passage is found at this same point in the narrative in *Itsumadegusa*.

56 The six ways of transmigratory existence.

57 Both *yoshi*, good, and *ashi*, bad, also mean reed.

58 *Chameshi sukunaki nori no michi* ちゃめし少なき法りの道. A play on a popular food of rice cooked in lightly salted water or tea and topped with laver (*nori*).

59 Mariko 鞠子, a post station on the Tōkaidō; here Hakuin plays on the meaning of the word “kickball”, of the kind used in a popular Japanese game.

60 Because now he is just a short way from Shōin-ji.

61 There was a large plot of swampy land around Hakuin's home village of Hara, and to approaching travellers the village seemed to be floating on water. It was thus called Uki-ga-shima no Hara, “Hara (field) floating like an island.”

62 According to the *Nempu*, he reached home in the tenth month.

63 Ryū Jōza 隆上座 (Jōza and Shuso, both referring to senior monks, seem to be used interchangeably in Hakuin's works). According to the account in the *Nempu*, age 23, “Chō Shuso, a disciple of [the Ōbaku priest] Egoku Dōmyō, took up residence at Tokugenji. He was accompanied by Kin Shuso, Ryū, and Ei. The master paid a visit to Chō.” It seems, however, that the priest at Tokugenji was Ryū Jōza, not Chō Shuso, and that Chō, hearing about Ryū Jōza, went to Tokugenji to visit him. A note by Katō in his edition of the *Nempu* identifies Ryū as Shōgen Genryū 紹厳玄隆, d. 1765, who later received *inka* from Shōju Rōjin and became incumbent at the Fukusenji 福泉寺 in Hitachi province.

- 64 Eigan-ji 英厳寺, the family temple (*bodaiji*) of Toda Tadazane, 1651-1729, head of the Takada clan of Echigo. The head priest at the time was Shōtetsu Soron 生鉄素庵. Shuchō Shuso 主張主座 is probably the head monk Chō Shuza 長首座 who appears several pages below. In *Itsumadegusa* he appears as Chō Shuso 長首座, “the senior monk I [Hakuin] had come to Echigo to meet, [who] appeared at the detached residence hall, bringing the villainous new arrival with him.” *Wild Ivy*, p. 28. Chō Shuso (Shuchō Shuso) would seem to be the disciple of Egoku Dōmyō the *Nemphu* describes (see note 63) as having taken up residence at Tokugen-ji in Hara, though beyond these facts nothing is known about him.
- 65 人天眼目 (*The Eye of Men and Gods*). A Sung work that sets forth the basic teaching styles of the five main Zen schools of China in passages selected from the sayings and verses of their principal figures.
- 66 The *Nemphu* and *Draft Nemphu* statement that one of the monks Hakuin travelled with was Chō must be mistaken (see above, note 63).
- 67 “Silent illumination” (*mokushō*) Zen, generally referring to practices of the Sōtō school, in Hakuin’s writings can point to any type of Zen practice not directed toward the *kenshō* experience. For this reason, it is to Hakuin virtually the same as the “Unborn (*fushō*) Zen” taught by the 17th century Zen master Bankei Yōtaku, whose teaching attained great popularity that continued into the 18th century. It was particularly strong in the areas where Hakuin was travelling.
- 68 Hakuin’s own way of describing the mental state just prior to the opening of enlightenment. Cf. *Oradegama*, “It was as though I were frozen solid in the midst of an ice sheet extending tens of thousands of miles. A purity filled my breast and I could neither go forward nor retreat. To all intents and purposes I was out of my mind and the Mu alone remained.” *Selected Writings*, p. 118.
- 69 “One night I sat until dawn. Suddenly, I heard the sound of a bell in a distant temple. It was faint, but the instant it entered my ear, I penetrated through the bottom, and all the dusts fell away. It was as though an immense bell had been struck right beside my ear. Suddenly I experienced great enlightenment.” *Nemphu*, age 24.
- 70 Famous words of Dōgen Kigen, spoken following his enlightenment while studying with the Chinese priest Ju-ching in China. There are many versions of the story. In the *Eihei sanso gyōgōki* version, Ju-ching entered the monk’s hall and remonstrated

with a monk who was nodding off by saying, "Zazen is body and mind dropping off. What do you expect to attain by just sleeping!" Dōgen, hearing these words, had a sudden great enlightenment. Early that morning he went to the abbot's chambers, lit some incense, and performed his bows. Ju-ching said, "Why do you light incense?" "Body and mind falling off," he replied. "Body and mind falling off, falling off body and mind," said Ju-ching. "This was just a temporary 'twig-and-branch' experience," said Dōgen. "Don't confirm me arbitrarily." I do not confirm you arbitrarily," said Ju-ching. "What is this arbitrarily not confirming," said Dōgen. "Falling off. Falling off," said Ju-ching. Although Hakuin constantly attacked the "silent illumination" (*mokushō*) practice methods of contemporary Sōtō Zen, he always expressed the highest regard for Dōgen, whose enlightenment experience as recorded above is fully in keeping with the principles of Hakuin's own *kenshō*-centered Zen.

- 71 Compare the following from *Keisō dokuzui*, Hakuin's recorded sayings: "If you go forward, without fear and without retreating, it will be like suddenly smashing your way free from a sheet of solid ice, like shoving over a jade pavilion. You will become one with the world in the ten directions, heaven and hell, and it will all at once shatter away. This is the occasion when you strike down into the field of the eighth consciousness and break beyond it. The world in the ten directions and emptiness all cease to exist, not a particle remains of the great earth. The great and perfect light [of the mirror wisdom] suddenly shines forth in pure and perfect clarity. There is nothing whatever to which it may be compared."
- 72 According to the *Nempu* the enlightenment happened after the lecture meeting had begun.
- 73 According to *Itsumadegusa* there were five hundred in attendance.
- 74 Hakuin uses an unusual word here, *shinanko* 指南子. Its meaning can be determined from the context in which he uses the word in *Itsumadegusa*.
- 75 久昌寺.
- 76 Dan Jōza 團上座: Kyōsui Edan 鏡水慧團, d. 1740, a Dharma heir of Shōju Rōjin who later served as head of the Rinzai-ji in Sumpu, not far from Hara.
- 77 This is the most detailed account in Hakuin's records of the new arrival, Dōju Sōkaku 道樹宗覚 (格), 1679-1730, who was to figure importantly in his life. At the time, Sōkaku was actually twenty-nine.

- 78 By balancing the staff in this way he could grab it and put it to use at an instant's notice. *Yaemugura, maki no san*, p. 157.
- 79 Bandō is a roughly-defined region of east central Honshū surrounding the city of Edo. A Bandō accent would have a harsh, gruff provincial ring.
- 80 The precise meaning of the phrase *bōmatsu shageki* 鵬末沙鷗 (“fearless characters”; it appears two more times below) is unclear. Found neither in specialist dictionaries nor in the Shogakkan *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, it may be a kind of temple argot (隠語) used in training halls of the time. In a passage describing these same events in *Itsumadegusa*, Hakuin uses another phrase, 房宿義碩, which is also unrecorded, with apparently similar significance, that is, referring to particularly fearless and formidable “hall-smashers” (道場破り), ruffian-monks who went around the country disrupting religious meetings.
- 81 This no doubt the Shūchō Shuso 主張首座 who appeared before (note 64). In *Itsumadegusa* Hakuin says that Chō was the “man of the Way I originally came to Echigo to see.” *Wild Ivy*, p. 28.
- 82 Sō-kaku. See above, note 77.
- 83 Kyūshō-ji was a Sōtō temple. See above, note 75.
- 84 The text has Hakuin using the humorous name Suruga-zuru 駿河鶴, “Crane from Suruga [Province].” The character for *Kaku*, from Hakuin's name *E-kaku*, meaning “Crane,” may also be read *zuru* (*tsuru*); his home town of Hara is in Suruga province.
- 85 *Teige-mon* 呈解問 is a term that appears in the text for the lecture meeting, *Jen-t'ien yen-mu*, ch. 2, in a section where Zen master Fen-yang classifies the questions proposed by Zen monks into eighteen gradated types, beginning with those that ask for simple instruction, up to the final, and deepest, “silent question.” *Teige-mon*, the second of the classifications, is an elementary stage.
- 86 Shōju Rōjin 正受老人, 1642–1721; he studied with Shidō Munan Anju 至道無難庵主, 1603–1676, at the Tōhoku-an 東北庵 in the Azabu district of Edo; Daien Hōkan 大圓寶鑑 is the honorific “National Master” (*kokushi*) title of Shidō Munan's teacher Gudō Tōshoku, 1577–1661, 愚堂東塾. It is to Gudō's lineage that Hakuin would later affiliate himself.
- 87 A monk asked master Chao-chou, “Has the dog a Buddha-nature or not?” Chao-chou answered, “Mu” (literally, “Nothing” or “Not”).

88 Literally, “[I died] the Great Death (*taishi ichiban* 大死一番).” As a Zen technical term *taishi ichiban* normally would signify great enlightenment, which isn’t plausible in this context. I follow Yoshizawa, who interprets it as referring to mere loss of consciousness.

89 Su-shan’s Memorial Tower 疎山寿塔. Found in Miura and Sasaki, *Zen Dust*, p. 60.

90 The Lin-chi Sung priest Hsü-t’ang Chih-yü (see next note) attained enlightenment while working on the Old Sail Not Yet Raised koan and went to his teacher Yün-an P’u-yen’s chambers to inform him of his breakthrough. The moment he entered the door the master could tell he had penetrated the koan but instead of asking him about it, he asked him about another koan, Nan-chüan Kills the Cat. Hsü-t’ang replied immediately, “There’s nowhere on earth you can put it.” Yün-an smiled, confirming Hsü-t’ang’s understanding. But for the next six months Hsü-t’ang’s mind was still not at peace and he still did not feel free when he engaged others in dialogue. He left Yün-an and worked for four years on Su-shan’s Memorial Tower. One day he suddenly grasped “the point at which the old Buddha on Ta-yü peak emits shafts of dazzling light” (a phrase that appears in the koan). From then on he was perfectly free, and the great pride that had made him despise other students vanished. Now, when he looked at koans he had previously penetrated, his understanding of them was altogether different and he realized clearly that this had nothing at all to do with words. *Hsü-t’ang yu-lu*, ch. 4.

91 The words “descendents will increase day by day” appear in a verse Hsü-t’ang awarded Nampo Jōmyō when the latter was about to return home to Japan: “He visited Zen teachers, practiced with great devotion; Where the path came to an end, he kept on going [or, His search at an end, he returns to his homeland]; Clearly, Jōmyō preaches together with old Hsü-t’ang; My descendents will increase daily beyond the Eastern Seas.” This verse came to be known in Japanese Zen as “Hsü-t’ang’s prophecy.” Found in *Daiō kokushi goroku* and *Empō dentō-roku*. The authentic Zen lineage according to Hakuin—that stressing attainment of *kenshō*—reached Japan in the Dharma transmission from the Chinese priest Hsü-t’ang to his Japanese student Nampo Jōmyō (Daiō Kokushi), from Nampo Jōmyō to Shūhō Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi) and on to Kanzan Egen, founder of the Myōshin-ji line to which Hakuin belonged. Three hundred later, this same transmission reached Hakuin by way of

Gudō Tōshoku, Shidō Munan, and Shōju Rōjin.

92 Hakuin frequently alludes to the Sung master Ta-hui Tsung-kao's statement that he had experienced eighteen great satoris and countless small ones. Although no source for the statement has been found in Ta-hui's records, it does appear in a 17th century work titled *Chu-ch'uang erh-pi* (Jottings at the Bamboo Window, Second Series), by the noted Ming priest Yün-chi Chu-hung.

93 Daiō was a disciple of Hsü-t'ang, and Daitō a disciple of Daiō.

94 The *Hakuin Nempu*, age 24, describes this incident differently: "An old woman came out of the house and told him to leave. The master just stood there with a stupid look on his face. The woman, losing her temper, grabbed a bamboo broom. 'Didn't you hear me?' she said, brandishing it over her head. 'I told you to go somewhere else!' She gave him a hard swat with the broom." According to the *Itsumadegusa* account, Hakuin was attacked by a man who lived in the house, who is described by bystanders as "a crazy man."

95 如可老人. Nyoga Rōjin (in other works Nyoga Rōshi) is thought to refer to Hakuin's original teacher Sokudō Fueki, 息道普益, d. 1712, of Daishō-ji in Numazu. There is a discrepancy in Hakuin's chronology here: He stated above that he received the letter from home in 1709, although according to the *Nempu* he left Shōju's temple in 1708.

96 One stick of incense burns for about forty minutes.

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