Abe Masao and John B. Cobb, Jr., and the conflict between them, the book does a service by highlighting their positions. If the reader is prompted to go on to Abe and Cobb themselves and study them in more depth and hopefully on to those who primarily influenced them, Nishida-Nishitani and Whitehead-Hartshorne, then it has done a great service.

JOHN S. YOKOTA

THE ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF ZEN MASTER HAKUIN: A Translation of the Sokkō-roku Kaian-fusetsu. By Norman Waddell. Shambhala, Boston and London, 1994, with appendixes, notes, index. ISBN 0-87773972-2 (pbk.)

The *Sokkō-roku Kaian-fusetsu* is a series of informal discourses which Hakuin Ekaku Zenji delivered in the spring of 1740, by way of introducing his teishōs on the records of Hsi-keng Chih-yü, known in Japan as Kidō Chigu, and by his sobriquet Sokkō. Though they are billed very modestly, these talks, as Norman Waddell states in his Introduction, incorporate virtually all of Hakuin's views on Zen Buddhist teaching and training, and proclaim his determination to rectify erroneous views and practices which had, he was convinced, brought about the sharp decline of Zen to be seen in his time.

No Zen teacher writes with the passion of Hakuin. The words fairly thrust forth, like spears with white-hot tips:

> I eagerly await the appearance of just one dimwit of a monk (or even half such a monk), richly endowed with a natural stock of spiritual power and kindled within by a raging religious fire, who will fling himself in the midst of this poison and instantly perish in the Great Death. Rising from that Death, he will arm himself with a calabash of gigantic size and roam the great earth seeking out true and genuine monks. Wherever he encounters one, he will spit in his fist, flex his muscles, fill his calabash with deadly poison and fling a dipperful over the monk. Drenched from head to foot, that monk too will be forced to surrender his life. What a splendid sight to behold!

Yet Hakuin's heroics are not for everyone. I have worked with people who suffered from profound despair and bleak discouragement that was induced by his go-get-'em style. I get the feeling on reading his exhortations that there is something called *kenshō* out there that one must burst into, like a rat smell-

ing the bait and flinging itself against a trick door. Again and again in his writing one finds metaphors of penetrating, breaking into, breaking through and boring through. I want to dissolve those metaphors. Break into what?—may I ask! Nowhere do we find a suggestion that the world and the student might muster together to find realization.

Yet whatever we may think of Hakuin's combativeness, these fiery talks remind us that Zen practice is most certainly not just a matter of sitting and waiting and wishing. Moreover, Hakuin meets his match with his translator. This is only Norman Waddell's second book, but with it he establishes himself among the best contemporary translators of Japanese Zen Buddhist texts. Here is a random sample of Waddell's mastery, in which Hakuin takes a scholar of Hui-neng's *Platform Sutra* to task:

> A common hedgerow monk like Chu-hung whose arbitrary conjectures and wild surmise all come from fossicking around in piles of old rubbish, should not even be mentioned in the same breath as Hui-neng.

Waddell is right there with Hakuin, fairly riding his words. He takes the original juicy, vivid rhetoric, and renders it with uncanny precision, faithful to the original text, faithful to Hakuin's intention, and (I bow in gratitude) faithful to the English language.

"Wild surmise," for example, is an expression imprinted on the literary mind by John Keats, deftly and seamlessly transmuted to this new context. And who would dare to render one of Hakuin's slangy expressions as "fossicking around?" Waddell dares, and does so with the utmost integrity. "To fossick" means "to rummage," a term which some common hedgerow translator might have chosen here, but not our champion. The original meaning of "fossick" was "a troublesome person," and in Australia a fossicker is one who picks into crevices of walls in old mines in hopes of finding gold that others have overlooked. I dare say that "fossicking around" is precisely the expression that Hakuin would have used if he had been writing in English.

Waddell is also a seasoned scholar of Hakuin's oeuvre, and of Asian literature and cultural history generally, as his many pages of eminently readable notes and other appendixes confirm. Read this book!

ROBERT AITKEN