

TRANSLATION

Talks by Hakuin
Introductory to Lectures
On the Records of Old Sokkō (6)
(*Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu*)
Translated by
Norman Waddell

WITH GREATEST respect and reverence, I encourage all you superior seekers in the secret depths to devote yourselves to penetrating and clarifying the self as earnestly as you would put out a fire on the top of your head. I urge you to keep boring your way through as assiduously as you would seek a lost article of incalculable worth. I enjoin you to regard the teachings left by the Buddha-patriarchs with the same spirit of hostility you would show toward a person who had murdered both your parents. Anyone who belongs to the school of Zen and does not engage in the doubting and introspection of koan must be considered a deadbeat rascal of the lowest kind, someone who would throw aside his greatest asset. As a teacher of the past said, "At the bottom of great doubt lies great enlightenment. . . . From a full measure of doubt comes a full measure of enlightenment."¹

Don't think the commitments and pressing duties of secular life leave you no time to go about forming a ball of doubt. Don't think your mind is so crowded with confused thoughts you are incapable of devoting yourself singlemindedly to Zen practice. Suppose a man was in a busy market place, pushing his way through the dense crowd, and

¹ The Yuan Rinzai priest Kōhō Gemmyō 高峯原妙 (Kao-feng Yuan-miao). Cf. part 5, *Eastern Buddhist* XXII, 2, p. 102, fn. 36.

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some gold coins dropped out of his pocket into the dirt. Do you think he would just leave them there, forget about them, and continue on his way because of where he was? Do you think someone would leave the gold pieces behind because he was in a crowded place or because the coins were lying in the dirt? Of course not. He would be down there frantically pushing and shoving with tears in his eyes trying to find them. His mind wouldn't rest until he had recovered them. Yet what are a few pieces of gold when set against that priceless jewel found in the headdresses of kings²—the way of inconceivable being that exists within your own mind? Could a jewel of such worth be attained easily, without effort?

There once was a denizen of the Eastern Sea, Redfin Carp by name. He was endowed with an indomitable spirit and unbending integrity, a figure of immense stature among his fellow fish. He was constantly bemoaning the fate of his comrades. "How many untold millions of my brethren proudly swim the vast ocean deeps. They entrust themselves to its boundless silver waves, glide up and down among the swells, sport in the seaweed and kelp. Yet countless of them are taken by baited hooks and caught in nets. They wind up on a chopping block where they are sliced and cooked to fill the bellies of those in the human world. Their bones are cast away and mingle in the dust and mire. Their heads are thrown to the stray dogs. Some are dried or salted for inland markets, to be exposed in stalls and shopfronts for all to see. Not a single one finishes out his natural span. How sad is the life of a fish!"

With these sad musings there came a great welling of spirit in Redfin Carp's breast. He pledged a solemn vow. "I shall swim beyond the Dragon Gates.³ I shall brave the perilous bolts of fire and lightning. I shall transcend the estate of ordinary fish and achieve a place among the sacred order of dragons, ridding myself forever of the terrible suffering to which my race is heir, expunging every trace of our shame and humiliation."

² Lotus Sutra, Anraku-bon.

³ A section of the Yellow River where the current flows with great force between two mountains; said to have been opened by Ta Yu 大禹 (the Great Yu, 2205-2198 B.C.), founder of the Hsia dynasty. Carp who fight their way upstream past this "barrier" are said to transform into dragons.

Waiting until the third day of the third month, when the peach blossoms are in flower and the river is full, he made his way to the entrance of the Yu Barrier. Then, with a flick of his tail, Redfin Carp swam forth.

You men have never laid eyes on the awesome torrent of water that rolls through the Dragon Gates. It falls all the way from the summits of the faroff Kunlun Range with tremendous force. There are wild, thousand-foot waves that rush down through perpendicular gorges towering on either side, carrying away whole hillsides as they go. Angry thunderbolts beat down on all sides with a deafening roar. Moaning whirlwinds whip up poisonous mists. Funnels of noisome vapor spit flashing forks of lightning. Even the mountain spirits are stunned into senselessness; the river spirits are limp with fright. Just a drop of this water will shatter the carapace of a giant tortoise, break the bones of a giant whale.

It was into this maelstrom that Redfin Carp, his splendid golden-red scales girded to the full, his steely teeth thrumming like drums, made a direct all-out assault. Ah! Golden Carp! Golden Carp! You might have chosen an ordinary life out in the boundless ocean. It teems with lesser fish. You would not have gone hungry. Then why? What made you embark on this wild and bitter struggle? What was waiting for you up beyond the Barrier?

After being seared by cliff-shattering bolts of lightning, after being battered by heaven-scorching blasts of thunderfire, his scaly armor burned from head to tail, his fins singed through, Redfin Carp suddenly died the Great Death, and rose again as a divine dragon—a supreme lord of the waters. Now, with the thunder god at his head and the fire god at his rear, flanked right and left by the gods of rain and wind, he moved at will with the clouds clutched in one hand and the mists in the other, bringing new life to the tender shoots withering in long-parched desert lands, keeping the true Dharma safe amid the defilements of the degenerate world.

Had he been content to pass his life like a lame turtle or blind tortoise, feeding on winkles and tiny shrimps, not even all the effort Vasuki, Manasvi and the other Dragon Kings might muster on his behalf could have done him any good. He could never have achieved the great success that he did.

What do I mean by “blind tortoise”? One of the current crop of

sightless, irresponsible bungler-priests who regard koan as nonessential and the Zen interview (*sanzen*) as expedient means on the part of the master. While even such men are not totally devoid of understanding, they are clearly standing outside the gates, whence they peer fecklessly in, mouthing words like,

“The self-nature is naturally pure, the mind-source is deep as an ocean; there is no samsaric existence to be cast aside, there is no nirvana to be sought. It is a sheer and profound stillness, a transparent mass of boundless emptiness. It is here that is found the great treasure inherent in all people. How could anything be lacking?”

Ah, how plausible it sounds! All too plausible. Unfortunately, the words they speak do not possess even a shred of strength in practical application. These people are like snails. The moment anything approaches, they draw in their horns and come to a standstill. They are like lame turtles, pulling in their legs, heads, and tails at the slightest contact and hiding inside their shells. How can any spiritual energy emerge from such an attitude? If they happen to receive a sally from an authentic monk, they react like Master Yang’s pet crane, who couldn’t even move his neck.⁴ There’s no difference between them and those fish who lie helpless on the chopping block, dying ten thousand deaths in their one life, their fate—whether they are to be sliced and served up raw or carved into fillets and roasted over hot coals—entirely in the hands of others. And throughout their ordeal they haven’t the strength even to cry out. Can people of this kind be true descendents of the great Bodhidharma? They assure you that there is “nothing lacking.” But are they happy? Are their minds free of care?

Genuine monks who negotiated the Way in the past flung themselves and everything they had into their masters’ white-hot forges without a thought for their own lives or well-being. Once their minds were turned to the Way, they too, like Redfin Carp, gathered all their strength and courage and strove until they broke beyond the Dragon Gates. Thereafter, in whatever situation, under whatever circumstance, they functioned with total self-dependence and perfect, unattached freedom. What intense joy and gratification they must have felt. It is these people you must emulate, not the crane. Not those turtles

⁴ Story of a crane that did not perform when its owner’s boasts brought friends to see it.

and snails.

What is a "sacred dragon"? Those authentic patriarchs of the past with a strong and vigorous spirit who committed themselves singlemindedly to the practice of Zen. Ah, you are human beings, aren't you? If you let yourselves be outdone by a fish, you may as well be dead!

You often run up against obstructive demons of yet another type, ones who teach their followers:

"If you want to attain mastery of the Buddha's Way you must, to begin with, empty your mind of birth and death, of arising and subsiding thoughts. Birth and death exists, nirvana exists, heaven and hell exist, because the mind gives rise to them. None of them ever arises unless the mind causes them to. There is thus one and only one thing for you to do: make your minds completely empty."

Falling right into step, the students set out to empty their minds. The trouble is, though they try everything they know, emptying this way, emptying that way, working away at it for months, even years, they find it is like trying to sweep mist away by flailing at it with a pole, or trying to halt a river by blocking it with outstretched arms—they only cause greater confusion.

Suppose a wealthy man mistakenly hired a master thief of the greatest skill and cunning to guard his house and, after seeing his granaries, treasures, and the rest of his fortune dwindle by the day, had several suspicious servants seized, and ordered the thief to interrogate them around the clock until they confessed. The family would be worried sick, the household on the brink of bankruptcy, yet the fortune would go on shrinking as before. All because of the man's original mistake in employing and placing his trust in a thief.

What you must learn from this is that all attempts to empty the mind are in themselves a sure sign that birth-and-death is in progress.

In the *Shurangama Sutra* the Buddha says, "*You have continued to undergo transmigration in the cycle of birth and death from the beginningless past right on up to your present existence because you have acknowledged a thief as your son and heir and thus have remained unaware of the fundamental and changeless truth of your own true nature.*"⁵

⁵ *Shurangama Sutra* (Ryōgon-kyō 楞嚴經, *Leng-yen ching*), T19. 108c.

This passage is explained in a commentary on the *Shurangama Sutra*:

*"The word 'thief' is used to describe the way in which you have been deprived of the virtues and merits of the Dharma's priceless resources. Having been deluded and thus unaware of this situation, you have mistaken this 'thief' for something changeless and true, believing it to be your legitimate heir to whom your most valuable possessions can be entrusted. Instead, you have brought on your own downfall, reduced yourself to endless kalpas of wretchedness and poverty, all because you have been separated from the Dharma treasure."*⁶

If you really want to empty your mind of birth and death, what you should do is to tackle one of the totally impregnable, hard-to-pass koan. When you suddenly merge with the basic root of life and everything ceases to exist, you will know for the first time the profound meaning contained in Yōka Daishi's words, "do not brush illusions away, do not seek the truth of enlightenment."⁷

The Zen master Daie said: "At the present time, the evil one's influence is strong and the Dharma is weak. The great majority of people regard 'reverting to tranquillity and living within it' as the ultimate attainment."⁸

He also said: "A race of sham Zennists has appeared in recent years who regard sitting with dropped eyelids and closed mouths letting illusory thoughts spin through their minds to be the attainment of a marvelous state that surpasses human understanding. They consider it to be the realm of primal Buddhahood 'existing prior to the timeless beginning.' If they do open their mouths and utter so much as a

⁶ *Leng-yen ching shu-chieh meng-ch'ao* 楞嚴經疏解蒙鈔 (*Ryōgon-kyō shokai mōshō*); compiled by Ch'ia ch'ien-i 錢謙益 of the Northern Sung.

⁷ From a line at the beginning of the *Shōdōka* 正道歌 (*Cheng-tao ko*) by Yōka Genkaku 永嘉玄覺 (Yung-chia Yuan-chueh, 675-713). "See the man who has cut himself free from the way of practice, taking it easy with nothing to do, neither brushing illusion away nor seeking the truth of enlightenment." *Shinjinmei, Shōdōka, Jūgyū-zu, Zazen-gi. Zen no goroku* 16 (Chikuma, Tokyo), p. 33.

⁸ *Daie-sho* 大慧書 (*Ta-hui shu*), letters of advice and instruction by the Sung Rinzai priest Daie Sōkō 大慧宗杲 (*Ta-hui Tsung-kao*, 1089-1163) to his followers. The phrase "reverting to tranquillity, living within it" (*tannyū gotan* 潛入合湛), from the *Shurangama Sutra* (T.19.155a), refers to attainment of a state of tranquillity which is still incomplete because dualistic attachment remains. *Daie-sho, Zen no goroku*, 17, p. 27.

syllable, they will immediately tell you that they have slipped out of that marvelous realm. They believe this to be the most fundamental state it is possible to attain. Satori is a mere side issue—'a twig or branch.' Such people are completely mistaken from the time they take their first step along the Way."⁹

These people who ally themselves with the devil are present in great numbers today as well. To them I say, "Never mind for now about what you consider 'nonessentials.' Tell me about your own fundamental matter, the one you are hiding away and treasuring so zealously. What is it like? Is it a solid piece of emptiness that you fix firmly in the ground like a post to fasten mules and horses to? Maybe it is a deep hole of sheer black silence? It is appalling, whatever it is."

It is also a good example of what is called falling into fixed views. It deceives a great many of the foolish and ignorant of the world. It's an ancient dwelling place of evil spirits, an old badger's den, a pitfall that traps people and buries them alive. Although you kept treasuring and defending it till the end of time, it would still be just a fragment from an old coffin. It also goes by the name of "dark cave of the eighth Alaya consciousness."¹⁰ The ancients suffered through a great many hardships as they wandered in arduous pursuit of the truth. It was all for the sole purpose of getting themselves free of just such old nests as these.

Once a person is able to achieve true singlemindedness in his practice and smash apart the old nest of Alaya consciousness into which he has settled, the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom immediately appears, the other three great Wisdoms start to function, and the all-discerning Fivefold Eye opens wide.¹¹

⁹ *Daie-sho*, p. 206.

¹⁰ Of the eight consciousnesses posited by the Yogacara school, the eighth Alaya or storehouse consciousness, located below the realm of conscious awareness, is the deepest ground of the self and source of the first seven consciousnesses, which are produced from "seeds" stored in it. As the condition of illusion in those not fully awakened, it is regarded as that which undergoes birth and death. Students who have attained a state of tranquillity and attach to it in the belief it is ultimate are described as "nesting" within the "dark cave of the eighth consciousness." When this "dark cave" is completely overturned, it transforms into the so-called Great Mirror Wisdom.

¹¹ The Great Mirror Wisdom (*Daienkyōchi* 大円鏡智), one of four wisdoms posited by the Yogacara school. Free of all defiling illusion, it reflects things as they truly are,

If, on the other hand, he allows himself to be seduced by these latter-day devils into hunkering down inside an old nest and making himself at home there, turning it into a private treasure chamber and spending all his time dusting it, polishing it, sweeping and brushing it clean, what can he hope to achieve? Absolutely nothing. Basically, it is a piece of the eighth consciousness, the same eighth consciousness which enters the womb of a donkey and enters the belly of a horse. So I urgently exhort you to do everything you can, strive with all your strength, to strike down into that dark cave and destroy it.

On that day long ago when the World-Honored One attained his great awakening and clothed himself in the precious celestial robe to expound the true heart of the extensive Flower Garland, he preached for three whole weeks to an audience which listened, without comprehending, as though they were deaf and dumb.¹² Therefore, in order to make salvation accessible to people of mediocre and inferior capacities, he erected a temporary resting place for them to use on the way to ultimate attainment, calling this provisional abode a "phantom dwelling." After that, Shakyamuni attempted to destroy this abode by preaching about it from within the Buddhist order; Layman Vimalakirti attempted to do the same by inveighing against it from without.¹³ They even likened those who attach to it, the adherents of the Two Vehicles (those content just to listen to the Buddha's teaching and those satisfied to enjoy their own private realization) to "supperating old polecats."¹⁴ But in the end they were between them unable to

and is manifested only when the source of illusion, the eighth consciousness, is overturned. The Fivefold Eye (*gogen*, 五眼) is capable of vision and insight of every kind: by the human eye, deva eye, wisdom eye, Dharma eye, and Buddha eye.

¹² Shakyamuni is traditionally thought to have preached the *Avatamsaka* (*Kegon*; *Hua-yen*) *Sutra*, containing the essence of his attainment, immediately after his enlightenment. Since it was beyond the comprehension of ordinary people, he resolved to refrain from further preaching, but later reconsidered and accommodated his teaching to make it more accessible. The Sung priest Engo Kokugon 圓悟克勤 (Yuan-wu K'o-ch'in, 1063-1135) describes him divesting himself of a sublime robe covered with precious [Dharma] gems far beyond the experience of ordinary mortals and putting on instead common garments to preach in the defiled world. *Blue Cliff Records* (*Pi-yen lu*; *Hekigan-roku*), Case 6

¹³ Representing the Buddhist priesthood and laity, respectively.

¹⁴ Attainments of the Shravakas and Pratyeka-buddhas, i.e., the so-called Two "Lesser" Vehicles, considered incomplete.

eradicate that dwelling place at its source in the Alaya consciousness.

Gradually, foster children spawned by adherents of the Two Vehicles multiplied and slowly and imperceptibly spread throughout India and the Western Regions. In time, even China filled with them. There, venerable masters like Sekisō, Shinjō, Bukka, and Myōki set their jaws,¹⁵ clenched their teeth and strove valiantly to root them out, but even for them it was like trying to drive off a big wily rat by clapping your hands. He disappears over here, but he reappears over there, always lurking somewhere, furtively disparaging the true, untransmittable style of the patriarchal teachers. How lamentable!

In Japan, during the Jōkyū (1219–21), Katei (1235–37), Karyaku (1326–28), and Kembu (1334–5) eras, twenty-four wise Zen sages entrusted their lives to the perilous whale-backed eastern seas, cast themselves bodily into the tiger's den, in order to transmit the difficult-to-believe methods of our authentic traditions. They fervently desired to fix the sun of wisdom permanently in the highest branches of the Divine Mulberry; to hang a precious Dharma lamp that would illuminate forever the dark hamlets of the Dragonfly Provinces.¹⁶ How could any of them have foreseen that their transmission would be slandered and maligned by these quietistic psuedo-Zennists and that in less than three hundred years the Zen they had transmitted would be lying in the dust? Would have no more life in it than last night's ashes? Nothing could be more deplorable than to be witness to the wasting away of the true Dharma in a degenerate age like this.

On the other hand, if a single person of superior capacity commits himself to the authentic pursuit of the Way and through sustained effort under the guidance of a true teacher fills with the power of sheer singlemindedness so that his normal processes of thought, perception, consciousness, and emotion cease, so that he comes to resemble an utter fool who has exhausted his stock of words and reason, and everything, including his erstwhile determination to pursue the Way, disappears, his very breath itself hangs almost suspended—at that

¹⁵ Chinese priests Hakuin held in special esteem: Sekisō Jimyō 石霜慈明 (Shih-shuang Tz'u-ming, 986–1039), Shinjō Kokubun 真淨克文 (Hsin-ching K'o-wen, 1025–1102), Engo Kokugon, and Daie Sōkō.

¹⁶ Reference to the 24 priests, 14 Chinese and 10 Japanese, regarded as having introduced separate lines of Zen into Japan during this 150-year period. The Divine Mulberry and Dragonfly Provinces are poetical references to Japan.

point, what a pity that a Buddhist teacher, one who is supposed to act as his "great and good friend," should be unaware that this is the occasion when the tortoise shell is about to crack, the phoenix about to break free of its egg; should not know that these are all favorable signs seen in those poised on the threshold of enlightenment, should be stirred by grandmotherly kindness to immediately give in to tender effeminate feelings of compassion for the student and begin straight off explaining to him the reason for this and the principle for that, dragging him down into the abode of delusory surmise, pushing him down into the cave of intellectual understanding, and then taking a phoney winter melon seal and certifying his enlightenment with the pronouncement,

"You are like this. I am like this too. Preserve it carefully."¹⁷

Ah! Ah! It's up to them if they want to preserve it. The trouble is, they are still as far from the patriarchal groves as earth is from heaven. What are to all appearances acts of kindness on the part of a teacher helping a student are, in fact, doings which will bring about his doom. For his part, the student nods with satisfaction and, without an inkling of the mortal injury he has incurred, prances and frisks about wagging his tail, sure in the knowledge: "Now I have grasped the secret of Bodhidharma's coming from the West."

How are such students to know they haven't made it past any of the patriarchs' Barriers? That the thorny forests of Zen are much much deeper than they can even conceive? What a terrible shame for people of marvelous gifts, unexcelled capacity, who have in it them to become great beams and pillars of the house of Zen, to succumb to these corrupting winds and to spend the rest of their lives in a half-waking, half-drunk state, no different from the dull and witless type of people who never get around to doubting their way through anything! Is it any wonder that the groves of Zen are so barren of real men? Anyone who attaches to half-truths of this kind believing them to be essential and ultimate will probably not even know that he has fallen into the unfortunate category of "scorched buds and shrivelled seeds."¹⁸

¹⁷ Similar to a well-known utterance Sixth Patriarch Enō (Hui-neng) made when he transmitted his Dharma to Nangaku Ejō (Nan-yueh Huai-jang). *Keitoku-dentō roku* (*Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu*), ch. 5, section on Nangaku.

¹⁸ I.e., with no possibility for further growth or development. *Sokkō-roku kaien-fusetsu dasoku* (32v) gives a source for this in the *Lankavatara Sutra*.

Long ago, when Zen master Nangaku sat in front of Baso's hermitage and began polishing a tile, he did so because of his desire to make Baso grasp his true meaning. When teachers of the past left phrases behind them, difficult-to-penetrate koan that would strip students' minds of their chronic inclination to attach to things, they did it because they wanted to kick over that comfortable old nesting place in the Alaya consciousness. Hence a master of the past said, "I made the mistake of burrowing into an old jackal hole for over thirty years myself, it's no mystery to me why so many students do the same."¹⁹

There's no doubt about it, the practice of Zen is a formidable undertaking.

In his later years, Zen master Hōen enjoyed strolling the south corridor of his temple on Mount Goso. One day he saw a visiting monk pass by reading a book. He took it from him and, glancing through it, came to a passage which caught his attention:

"Most Zen students today are able to reach a state of serenity in which their minds and bodies are no longer troubled by afflicting passions, and their attachment to past and future is cut away so that each instant contains all time, but there they stop and abide contently like censers lying useless and forgotten in an ancient cemetery, cold and lifeless, with nothing but the sobbing of dead spirits to break the silence of their world. Assuming this to be the ultimate Zen has to offer them, they remain unaware that what they consider an unsurpassed realm is, in fact, obstructing them so that true knowing and seeing cannot appear and the radiant light of extraordinary spiritual power (jinzū) cannot shine free."

Hōen closed the book and raised his arms in a gesture of self-reproach. "Wonderful!" he exclaimed, "A true teacher! How well he expresses the essentials of the Dharma!"²⁰

He hurried to the quarters of his student Engo, who was serving as head monk, calling out to him, "It's extraordinary! I've come upon something really and truly extraordinary!" He placed the book in

¹⁹ Based (partially) on a waka attributed to Daitō Kokushi (1235-1308). *Dasoku* 33r.

²⁰ Goso Hōen 五祖法演 (Wu-tsung Fa-yen, d. 1104), of the Yōgi (Yang-ch'i) branch of Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen, and teacher of Engo Kokugon. Engo's disciple Daie Sōkō identifies the book as the records of Shinjō Kokubun. T.47.882-3. Cf. Tokiwa, p. 285.

Engo's hands and had him read it too. Then Dharma father and Dharma son congratulated each other on their good fortune, and acclaimed the author with endless refrains of ecstatic praise.

When Daie Sōkō went to study under Zen master Engo for the first time, he had already decided on a course of action. "By the end of the ninety-day summer retreat," he declared to himself, "if Engo has affirmed my understanding like all the other teachers I've been to, I'm going to write a treatise debunking Zen."²¹

Daie, did you really think Engo wouldn't be able to see through the fundamental matter you secretly treasured? If you had persisted in clinging to it like that, revering it and cherishing it for the rest of your life, the great "Reviler of Heaven" would never have emerged.²²

Fortunately, however, a poisonous breeze blowing from the south snuffed Daie's life out at its roots, cutting away past and future.²³ When it happened, his teacher Engo said, "What you've accomplished is not easy. But you've merely finished killing yourself. You're incapable now of coming back to life and raising doubts about the words and phrases of the ancients. You have a serious ailment. You know the saying, 'Release your hold on the edge of the precipice. Die, and then be reborn'? You must believe that there's truth in those words."²⁴

Later, upon hearing Engo say, "What happens when the tree falls

²¹ *Daimin kōsō-den* 大明高僧伝 (*Ta-ming kao-seng ch'uan*), ch. 5, section on Daie Sōkō. *Dasoku* 33r. Daie had studied with teachers of the Ummon and Sōtō schools, as well as with Tandō Bunjun 澆堂文準 (Chan-t'ang Wen-chen, 1061-1115), the teacher of Shinjō Kokubun. before going to Engo in his mid-thirties.

²² Kōmeten 好罵天 (Hao-ma-t'ien). Supposedly a sobriquet Daie assumed; probably a mistake for Kōmejin 好罵人 (Hao-ma-jen), "Great Reviler of Men." Tokiwa, p. 286.

²³ One day, speaking to his assembly, Engo said, "A monk asked Ummon, 'Where do all the Buddhas come from?' Ummon said, 'The Eastern Mountain walks over the water.' Not me. . . . I would say, 'A fragrant breeze comes of itself from the south, and in the palace pavilion a refreshing coolness stirs.'" *Zen Dust*, pp. 163-4. At these words, Daie, "his entire body running with sweat," suddenly attained enlightenment, and "distinctions of past, present, and future ceased to exist." Cf. Tokiwa, pp. 286-7.

²⁴ Seeing that Daie was attached to enlightenment, Engo gave him a post as a special attendant which freed him from all duties and had him come for sanzen three or four times daily. Each time Engo would quote a Zen saying by the T'ang master Daian 大安 (Ta-an, 793-883), "Being and nonbeing is like a wisteria vine wrapped round a tree." and ask, "What does that mean?" Whatever Daie said or did, Engo would immediately declare, "That's not it!" Six month later, Daie had reached a total impasse. He

and the wistaria withers? The same thing happens." Daie suddenly achieved great enlightenment. When Engo tested him with several koan, he passed them easily.

Daie rose to become abbot of the Kinzan monastery, the most important in the land with a thousand resident monks.²⁵ As he supervised his sterling collection of dragons and elephants he was like a hungry eagle gazing over a covey of rabbits. We should feel honored to have a man of such profound attainment among the teachers of our school. Yet, as we have seen, there are some who consider such attainment unimportant—"nonessential." The matter they themselves regard as essential, and secretly cherish, is so worthless that even if you put it out together with a million pieces of gold, you would find no takers.

Engo said, "After the ancients had once achieved awakening, they went off and lived in thatched huts or caves, boiling wild vegetable roots in broken-legged pots to sustain themselves. They weren't interested in making names for themselves or in rising to positions of power. Being perfectly free from all ties whatever, they left turning words for their descendents because they wanted to repay their profound debt to the Buddha-patriarchs."²⁶

The priest Mannan Dōgan wrote a verse comment on the koan Nansen On The Mountain:

Lying on a pillow of coral, eyes filled with tears,
Partly because he likes you, partly because he resents you.

When these lines came to Daie's notice, he immediately ordered his attendant to take down the practice-schedules [and gave his monks a day of rest], saying, "This single turning word amply requites Mannan's debt to the Buddhas."²⁷

asked Engo, "When you were with master Hōen, I understand you asked him that same question. What did he say?" At first Engo just laughed, but finally he told Daie, "He said, 'No depiction could do justice to it.' Then I asked, 'What happens when the tree falls and the wistaria withers?' He said, 'The same thing happens.'" At those words, Daie finally attained great enlightenment. Tokiwa pp. 287-8.

²⁵ The Kinzan 徑山 (Ching-shan) monastery near the Southern Sung capital, Hangchow.

²⁶ *Blue Cliff Records*, Case 25.

²⁷ Wan-an Tao-yen (沩庵道顔, 1094-1164), an heir of Daie. Quoted from the *Goke-shōjūsan* 五家正宗贊 (*Wu-chia cheng-tsung-tsan*). A monk visited Nansen Fugan 南泉普

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Most people arrange their altars with lamps and incense holders; they set out offerings of tea, flowers and sweets; they prostrate themselves over and over, perform various other practices around the clock; they even inflict burns on their fingers, arms, and bodies. But none of that repays even a tenth of the debt they owe the Buddhas. How, then, is it possible for a single couplet from an old poem that cuts away entanglements and complications to immediately repay that debt—and repay it in full? This question is by no means an idle or trivial one. Daie was the Dragon Gate of his age, a towering shade tree who provided shelter to over 1700 students. Do you suppose a man of his stature would utter such words frivolously?

In the past, Haryō had his Three Turning Words. His teacher Ummon Daishi told his disciples, “When I die, I don’t want you to hold funeral observances of any kind. I just want each of you to take these three turning words and work on them.”²⁸

■ (Nan-ch’uan P’u-yuan) who was living by himself in a small hut. Nansen told him he had something to do up the mountain and asked him to carry some food to him when the mealtime came. When the monk didn’t appear, Nansen returned and found the cooking vessels smashed and the monk asleep; thereupon he stretched out and took a nap himself. When he awoke, the monk was gone. In later years, Nansen said, “Back when I was living by myself in a small hut, I had a visit from a splendid monk. I’ve never seen him since.” *Keitoku dentō-roku*, ch. 8. According to Tokiwa, Mannan’s verse comment may allude to an encounter he had with a laywoman who was studying with Daie while Mannan was head monk at Daie’s temple. Daie allowed the woman to stay in the abbot’s quarters, despite Mannan’s objections, on the grounds that she was “no ordinary woman.” When finally, at Daie’s insistence, Mannan went to see her, she asked him if he wished a worldly meeting or a spiritual one. He indicated the latter, but when he entered her room he found her lying on her back, completely naked. “What kind of place is that?” said Mannan, pointing at her. “The place from which all the Buddhas of the Three Worlds, all six Zen patriarchs, and all the venerable priests in the land have emerged,” she said. “Would you allow me to enter there?” he asked. “It isn’t a place donkeys and horses can go,” she said. Mannan was unable to reply. “The meeting is over,” she said, and turned her back to him. “*Hakuin zenji Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu o yonde*,” *Annual Report of Researches of Matsugaoka Bunko*, No. 4, 1990, pp. 105–7.

²⁸ The Three Turning Words of Haryō Kōkan 巴陵顯聖 (Pa-ling Hao-chien, n.d.), an heir of Ummon Bun’en (Yun-men Wen-yen, 862–949): 1. What is the Way? A clear-eyed man falls into a well. 2. What is the Blown Hair Sword? Each branch on the coral holds up the moon. 3. A monk asked Haryō, “What is the school of Devadatta?” “Filling a silver bowl with snow,” Haryō replied. *Blue Cliff Records*, Case 13.

Now do you really think that a Zen patriarch like Ummon would be espousing “non-essentials” just because he preferred them over offerings of flowers, sweets and rare foods?

Engo writes: *“If one of my monks came forward and said, ‘Since there is essentially no moving up toward satori and no moving back toward the everyday world, what’s the use of practicing Zen?’ I’d just say, ‘I can see that you’re living in a pitchdark hole with the other dead souls.’”* How sad!²⁹

“Many people like to cite the sayings of the Buddhist sages, or some words from the sutras such as ‘ordinary speech, subtle speech, it all comes from the same ultimate source,’ persuaded that they really understand their meaning. If any of you are operating under such an assumption, you’d better give up Zen. Devote your life to scholarship and become a great exegete.”

“Nowadays you often hear people say, ‘There’s essentially no such thing as satori. The gate or teaching of satori was established as a way of making this fact known to people.’ If that’s the way you think, you’re like a flea on the body of a lion, sustaining itself by drinking its lifeblood. Don’t you know the ancient’s words, ‘If the source is not deep, the stream is not long; if the wisdom is not great, the discernment is not far-reaching’? If the Buddha Dharma was a teaching that had been created or fabricated as you say, how could it possibly have survived to the present day?”

Chōsha Keijin sent a monk to the priest Tōjin Nyoe, who belonged to the same lineage as his teacher Nansen. The monk asked him, “What was it like after you saw Nansen?”

Nyoe was silent.

“What was it like before you saw Nansen?” he asked.

“There wasn’t any difference,” said Nyoe.

The monk returned to Chōsha and reported Nyoe’s response. Chōsha set forth his own understanding in a verse:³⁰

²⁹ Here Hakuin has spliced together three different passages from the *Blue Cliff Records*: this first paragraph (except for the final sentence which was inserted by Hakuin) is taken from Engo’s introductory statement in Case 77; the second paragraph from Case 77; the third paragraph from Case 53.

³⁰ Nansen Fugan and Tōji Nyoe 東寺如会 (Tung-ssu Ju-hui, 744–823) were heirs of Baso Dōitsu (Ma-tsu Tao-i); Chōsha Keijin 長沙景岑 (Ch’ang-sha Ching-ts’en, n.d.) was one of Nansen’s heirs. I follow the emendation in Tokiwa, p. 293.

KAIEN FUSETSU

Perched motionless at the tip of a 100-foot pole
The man has attainment, but hasn't made it real.
He must advance one more step beyond the tip
And reveal his whole body in the ten directions.

Afterwards, Sanshō Enen sent a monk named Shū Jōza to ask Chōsha some questions.³¹

"When Nansen passed away, where did he go?" said Shū.

"When Sekitō was just a young monk, he went to visit the Sixth Patriarch," said Chōsha.

"I'm not asking about when Sekitō was a young monk," replied Shū. "I want to know where Nansen went when he died."

"Give it deep consideration," said Chōsha.

"You're like a noble old pine tree towering thousands of feet in the winter sky," said Shū. "You're not like a bamboo shoot springing straight up through the rocks."

Chōsha was silent.

"Thank you for your answers," said Shū.

Chōsha was still silent.

Shū returned to Sanshō and told him about his meeting with Chōsha.

"If that's the way Chōsha is," said Sanshō, "he's a good seven steps ahead of Rinzai."³²

³¹ Sanshō Enen 三聖慧然 (San-sheng Hui-jan, n.d.), an heir of Rinzai Gigen (Lin-chi I-hsuan). The story of Nansen's death is a famous koan. When Nansen was about to die, the head monk asked him where he would be a hundred years hence. "A water buffalo at the foot of the hill," he answered. "Do you mind if I follow you?" asked the monk. "If you do," replied Nansen, "you must hold a stalk of grass in your mouth."

Chōsha answers the monk's question about Nansen with a reply about Sekitō Kisen 石頭希遷 (Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien, 700-90) and Enō (Hui-neng). When Enō was about to die and Sekitō asked him where he should continue his study, Enō answered, "Deeply deliberate" 尋思去; this reply is said also to mean "Go visit Ssu 思" (=Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu 青原行思, Seigen Gyōshi, d. 740, one of Enō's students). Sekitō went to study with Seigen and eventually became his heir. Chōsha's reply "Give it deep deliberation" 教伊尋思去 thus parallels the one Enō gave.

³² E.g., when Rinzai was about to die, he said, "After I'm gone, don't let the treasure of my true Dharma eye die out." "How could your disciples allow that to happen?" asked Sanshō. "If you are asked about it, what will you say?" said Rinzai. Sanshō gave a loud Katsu. "I would never have thought the treasure of my true Dharma eye would die out when it reached this blind jackass!" said Rinzai. *Rinzai-roku*, *Zen*

Now both Rinzai and Chōsha are beyond question genuine dragons of the Buddha ocean. They are the celestial phoenix and auspicious unicorn that frequent the gardens of the patriarchs. There is no one comparable to them. Having far transcended all forms and appearances, they move slowly or move quickly in response to changing conditions like huge masses of blazing fire, like iron stakes burning at white heat. Neither gods nor demons can perceive their traces; neither devils nor nonBuddhists can discern their activity. Who could conceive their limits? Who could ascertain their differences?

Yet when Sanshō, who was himself a direct Dharma heir of Rinzai, heard what Chōsha had said, he praised him as being superior to his own teacher! Can words be so awesomely difficult? You must understand, however, that within what is to you a mass of entangling verbal complications is contained a small but wonderful element which is able to work miracles.

When Zen master Sekisō passed away and the brotherhood asked the head monk to succeed him as abbot, Zen master Kyūhō,³³ who had previously served as the master's attendant, came and addressed them. He posed a question to the head monk, "The master often told us to 'cease all activity,' to 'do nothing whatever,' to 'become so cold and lifeless the spirits of the dead will come sighing around you,' to 'become a bolt of fine white silk,' to 'become the dead ashes in a censer left forgotten in an ancient graveyard,' to 'become so that the present instant is ten thousand years.'

"What is the meaning of these instructions? If you show that you grasp them, you are the next abbot. If you show that you do not, you aren't the man for the job."

"His words," said the head monk, "refer to the essential oneness of all things."³⁴

"You have failed to understand the master's meaning," said Kyūhō.

"Get some incense ready," replied the head monk. "If I have not terminated my life by the time that incense burns, it will mean I grasped the master's meaning. If I am still living, it will mean I did not."

no goroku, 10, p. 230.

³³ Sekisō Keishō 石霜慶緒 (Shih-shuang Ch'ing-chu, 807-888), fifth generation in the Seigen line. Kyūhō Dōken 九峯道虔 (Chiu-feng Tao-ch'ien, n.d.).

³⁴ *Isshikihen* 一色辺. The realm of undifferentiated sameness attained when all dualities are transcended.

Kyūhō lit a stick of incense. Before it had burned down the head monk had ceased breathing. Kyūhō patted the dead man on the back, and said, "Others have died while seated; some have died while standing. But you have just succeeded in proving that you could not have even seen the master's meaning in your dreams."

Often those who approach the end of their lives having devoted themselves singlemindedly to the practice of the Way will regard the solitude of their final hours, sitting in the light of a solitary lamp, as the last great and difficult barrier of their religious quest, and as the smoke from the incense burns down they will move quietly and calmly into death, without having made an authentic Zen utterance of any kind. It is then Kyūhō is patting on the back when he says, "You haven't grasped your late master's meaning." We must reflect deeply on those words.

Once Zen master Ungo of Kōshū had an attendant take a pair of trousers to a monk who was living by himself in a grass hut. The monk refused the trousers, saying he already had the pair that he was born with. When Ungo was informed of the monk's reply, he sent the attendant back to ask the question, "What did you wear prior to your birth?" The monk was unable to answer. Later, the monk died, and when his body was cremated, relics were found among his ashes. When these were brought to Ungo, he said, "I'd much rather have had one phrase from him in response to that question I asked when he was living than ten bushels of relics from a dead man."³⁵

It is said that the relics found among the ashes of virtuous priests are produced as a natural result of meditation and wisdom they attained in their previous lives. Whenever a relic is discovered after a cremation, even if it is only the size of a millet grain or mustard seed, there is a great rush of people, men and women, young and old, priests and laymen, crowding around to marvel at it and worship it with expressions of deep veneration. But doesn't Ungo say that ten bushels of such relics would not be worth a single phrase uttered while the monk was alive? What is this "one phrase" that it could be more esteemed than

³⁵ Ungo Dōyō 雲居道膺 (Yun-chu Tao-ying, d. 902), a disciple of Tōzan Ryōkai (Tung-shan Liang-chieh), co-founder of the Sōtō (Ts'ao-tung) school of Zen. Relics are tiny gem-like fragments of a hardness said to be virtually indestructible that are found among the ashes of a person of extreme virtue after his body cremated.

genuine Buddhist relics which everyone venerates so deeply? This is a question that baffled me for a long time.

After the priest Hōan had retired to the Shifuku-in, he received an invitation to come to the monastery at Kinzan from the abbot Mōan Gensō, who appointed him to the post of senior priest. One of the monks at the monastery, Hō Jōza, was a man of penetrating insight. He would always be there when the abbot or senior priest was receiving students and could invariably get the best of an opponent by seizing the slightest opening and turning his thrusts aside with a sudden and swift attack.³⁶

One day, as Hōan was teaching students, Hō Jōza came into the room. Hōan was speaking and was midway through a passage he was quoting from the *Hōzō-ron*, "amid heaven and earth, in all the universe, there is here. . ."³⁷ when Hō looked as though he wanted to say something. Hōan suddenly slapped him and drove him out of the room.

Actually, Hō had planned to interject a comment the moment Hōan had finished the quotation, and Hōan had anticipated him. Hō was convinced that Hōan was deliberately out to humiliate him. After Hō left Hōan's room, he returned to his place in the meditation hall and expired. When his body was cremated, villagers from the neighboring areas found some relics among his ashes. They took them and presented them to Hōan. Hōan held them up and said, "Hō Jōza. Even if there had been ten bushels of these among your ashes, I'd set them aside. I just want that one turning word while you were alive!" With that, he threw the relics to the ground. They turned out to be merely bits of pus and blood.

An ancient said that "of the seventeen hundred eminent masters included in the *Records of the Lamp*, relics were found among the ashes of only fourteen. Of the eighty monks who appear in the *Biographies*

³⁶ Hōan Sōsen 破庵祖先 (P'o-an Tsu-hsien, 1136-1211), an heir of Mittan Kanketsu (Mi-an Hsien-chieh), in the fourth generation from Engo. Mōan Gensō 蒙庵元聰 (Meng-an Yuan-ts'ung, d. 1209); an heir of Butsugen Seion (Fo-yen Ching-yuan). Hō Jōza 實上座 (Pao Shang-tso, n.d.).

³⁷ Lines from the *Hōzō-ron* 寶藏論 (*Pao-tsang lun*), attributed to the early Chinese scholar-monk Sōjō 僧肇 (Seng-chao, 374-414). The full quotation is: "Within heaven and earth, in the midst of the universe, there is a precious jewel lying hidden inside a mountain of form." Ummon quotes these words in Case 62 of the *Blue Cliff Records*.

from the Groves of Zen, relics were recovered from the ashes of only a few. Moreover, there are just two things our school holds essential: thorough attainment of self-realization and thorough mastery in instructing others. That means being armed with the fangs and claws that spur students onward by dissolving their attachments and breaking off their chains. Buddhists also call this 'transmitting the Dharma, ferrying people to the other shore.' Everything else is unimportant."³⁸

The teachers of our Zen school have in their possession moves and maneuvers which are hard to believe, hard to understand, hard to penetrate, and hard to realize. They can take someone whose mind seems dead, devoid of consciousness, and transform him into a bright-eyed monk of awesome vitality. We call these methods the fangs and claws of the Dharma cave. It is like when an old tiger gives a long, terrifying roar and emerges from the forest, throwing such fear into the rabbits, foxes, badgers and their kind that their livers petrify and their eyes fix in glassy stares and they wobble around on rubbery knees, piddling and shitting involuntarily. Why do they react that way? Because the tiger is armed with claws of steel and a shining set of golden fangs like razor-sharp swords. Without those weapons, tigers would be no different from other animals.

Hence these words by a Zen master of the past: "In the first year of the Kien-chung era (1101), I obtained at the quarters of a now-deceased friend a copy of Zen master Tōzan Shūshō's recorded sayings compiled by his disciple Fukugon Ryōga. It contained words and phrases of great subtlety and profundity—the veritable claws and fangs of the Dharma cave."³⁹

At the start of the Chien-tao era (1165–74), when Katsudō Eon was abbot at Kokusei-ji, he happened to see a verse tribute that Wakuan Shitai had dedicated to an image of the Bodhisattva Kannon.

³⁸ Jōchū Muon 恕中無懼 (Shu-chung Wu-yun, 1309–86), of the Yōgi branch. Quoted from his collection of Zen anecdotes, *Sannan zatsuroku* 山庵雜錄 (*Shan-an tsa-lu*). The *Records of the Lamp* (*Keitoku dentō-roku*) is said to consist of accounts of 1700 Zen figures. *Biographies from the Groves of Zen* (*Zenrin sōbō-den* 禪林僧宝伝 *Ch'an-lin seng-pao ch'uan*), compiled by Kakuhan Ekō 覺範慧洪 (Chueh-fan Hui-hung, 1071–1128), of the Ōryō branch.

³⁹ Kakuhan Ekō, from his *Rinkan-roku* 林間錄 (*Lin-men lu*), a collection of Zen anecdotes with Kakuhan's comments. Tōzan Shūshō 洞山守初 (Tung-shan Shou-ch'u, 910–90), an heir of Ummon Bun'en. Fukugon Ryōga 福嚴良雅 (Fu-yen Liang-ya, n.d.).

By not abiding in his original being
 He confuses people all over the world;
 I gaze up at his venerable form,
 At eyes that seem almost devoid of sight—
 The natural beauties of Chang-an are timeless,
 Why should anyone grope blindly along its walls?

Katsudō was beside himself with joy. "I had no idea there was someone of such ability among Master Shian's followers," he exclaimed. He had search made and finally located Wakuan at the Kōshin-ji. There, in the presence of a large gathering of people, he begged Wakuan to come and serve as his head monk.⁴⁰

Often I hear people say how hard it is to judge others correctly. It was a problem even for the sages of olden times. Yet here is Katsudō, praising a man after reading only a few lines of verse he had written, then asking him to become head monk of his temple! Could it really have been as easy as that? Perhaps Katsudō acted with undue haste. Or, perhaps there really is something in those lines of verse. These questions deserve our closest scrutiny.

Zen master Suian Shiichi of Jinzū-an, speaking to students in his chambers, said, "The western barbarian has no beard."

One of the monks went to Wakuan Shitai and told him what Suian had said. "A starving dog even eats cotton wool," declared Wakuan.

The monk withdrew, then went back and reported Wakuan's words to Suian. "The man who uttered that is capable of teaching an assembly of five hundred monks," said Suian.⁴¹

When Tōsu Daidō of Jōshū heard someone quote Zen master

⁴⁰ Katsudō Eon 踏堂慧遠 (Hsia-tao Hui-yuan, 1103-76) and Shian (Gokoku) Keigen 此庵[慶園]景元 (Tz'u-an [Hu-kuo] Ching-yuan, 1095-1146) were both heirs of Engo Kokugon. Wakuan Shitai 威庵師体 (Huo-an Shih-t'i, 1108-1179) was a disciple of Shian. The Bodhisattva Kannon, "observing the sounds of the world's suffering" by relying on the sense of hearing, abandons his fundamental appearance and assumes different forms in response to the needs of sentient beings. This entire passage appears in the *Zenmon hōkun* 禪門寶訓 (*Ch'an-men pao-hsun*), ch. 2.

⁴¹ Shui-an Shih-i, 水庵師一, 1107-76, of Ching-tz'u yuan 淨慧院. Wakuan is known for his question, "Why has the western barbarian no beard?" (*Mumonkan, Wu-men kuan*, Case 4). The "western barbarian" has traditionally been understood as referring to Bodhidharma, hence: "Why does the bearded Bodhidharma have no beard?" In his footnote to this passage (pp. 307-8), Tokiwa Gishin presents a convincing argument

Daizui's words, "It goes along," he lit some incense, made a deep bow in the direction of Daizui's temple, and said, "An old Buddha has appeared in Western Shu."⁴²

See how a clear-sighted Zen master is able to perceive everything at a single glance without the slightest error? Just like the famous mirror of the Chin Emperor which reflected all one's vital organs.

Once when Tōzan Gyōsō had just started training under Zen master Monju Ōshin, Monju posed the following question to instruct his monks: "Straight hooks catch black dragons. Bent hooks catch frogs and earthworms. Does anyone have a dragon?" There was a longish pause, then Monju said, "This is a waste of effort. The tortoise hair grows longer by the minute." At those words, Tōzan had a sudden realization.⁴³

Later, while Tōzan was at Mount Ungo serving as keeper of lamps, he heard a visiting monk say that the Great Sage of Ssu-chou (an incarnation of Kannon) had recently made an appearance in Yang-chou. When the monk then asked, "What do you think the Great Sage is up to appearing in Yang-chou like that?" Tōzan said, "Even a superior man has a liking for wealth, but he knows the proper way to get it."⁴⁴

Later the same monk reported Tōzan's words to Shō Anjū of Renge

that the "bearded Indian" is in fact Shishi 獅子 (Shih-t'zu), the 24th Indian Zen patriarch who, while teaching in a kingdom in northern India, was unjustly accused of betraying the king's trust and beheaded by the enraged monarch. *Keitoku dentō-roku*, ch. 2. Wakuan's question would thus become: "Why has the bearded western barbarian no head?" My translation follows the traditional interpretation, since I suspect that is the one Hakuin had in mind.

⁴² T'ou-tzu Ta-tung, 投子大同, 819-914, of the Seigen line. A monk asked Taizui Hōshin 大隨法真 (Ta-sui Fa-chen, 878-963), "When the world-ending kalpa fire comes and everything is consumed in the conflagration, will 'this' too be destroyed?" "Yes, destroyed," replied Taizui. "Then does 'it' go along with the rest?" asked the monk. "'It' goes along" 隨他去 replied Taizui. *Blue Cliff Records*, Case 29.

⁴³ Tung-shan Hsiao-ts'ung 洞山曉聰, d. 1030. Wen-chu Ying-hsin, 文殊応真, n.d. *Goke shōjū-san*, ch. 4. Cf. Tokiwa, p. 310. Hakuin has brushed in a marginal note here that says, "You won't come to grips with these words in three years or even five years!"

⁴⁴ According to the account in the *Keitoku dentō-roku* (ch. 27), the Central Asian monk Sōgya 僧伽 (Seng-ch'ieh, 628-710) settled down in Ssu-chou 泗州 (Chiang-su province), helping those in difficulty and always carrying a willow branch in his hand. When people asked, "What is [your] name?" he answered, "[My] name is what." When they asked, "What land [are you] from?" he said, "[I'm] from what land." He

Peak. "Ummon's descendents are still alive and well!" exclaimed Shō in astonishment. Although it was late at night, he lit an offering of incense and made deep bows in the direction of Mount Ungo.⁴⁵

I have read about this Shō Anjū. He was a Dharma son of Busen Dōshin.⁴⁶ A Dharma grandson of Ummon himself. The sharpness of his Zen activity was unexcelled. He tested it on others for over twenty years, but never found anyone who could stand up to his thrusts. Had all the Buddhas appeared together from all their countless Buddha-lands, emitting boundless radiance, exercising inconceivable powers, employing at will the eight marvelous virtues inherent in their voices and their four kinds of unhindered eloquence and preached the Dharma so that it fell like rain, they still couldn't have got this hardnosed old saddlehorn of a bonze to pay them the slightest heed. But look at him. He hears a few words that slipped from Gyōsō's mouth and immediately he lights incense and prostrates himself in the direction of Gyōsō's temple. Why? What can it mean? The words Gyōsō uttered are found in the Confucian Analects.⁴⁷ Shō Anjū must have known them. Yet when he heard them he was bowled over in amazement. He went into transports of joy. Had he taken leave of his senses? Could it be that he was just stupid? Or, on the other hand, perhaps there is something here that should be greatly valued. Certainly, it is a question for us to deeply ponder.

Once while Zen master Butsugen Seion was serving at the Ryūmon-ji, one of the monks was bitten by a snake. The master took the incident up as he was teaching in his chambers.⁴⁸

"How could a monk of the Ryūmon-ji allow himself to get bitten by a snake?" he asked.

became known as the Great Sage of Ssu-chou (Ssu-chou Ta-sheng 泗州大聖), received the devoted patronage of Emperor Chung-tsung and was revered as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Kannon. Cf. Tokiwa's long note, pp. 310-3.

⁴⁵ Hsiang An-chu 祥庵主 of Lien-hua feng 蓮華峯 at Mount T'ien-t'ai. Hakuin's description of him below is based on Engo's commentary in Case 25 of the *Blue Cliff Records*, part of which he has already quoted above (see p. 125).

⁴⁶ Feng-hsien Tao-shen 奉先道深, n. d.

⁴⁷ Not found in the Analects. *Kanwa-daijiten* gives this as the only pre-modern occurrence of the saying (II.852a).

⁴⁸ Fo-yen Ching-yuan 仏眼清遠, 1067-1120. An heir of Goso Hōen. The entire passage appears in *Goke shōjū-san*, ch. 2.

None of the comments the monks offered were acceptable to Butsugen. Then Kōan Zengo said, "He displayed the marks of the great man that he is." The master immediately nodded his affirmation.⁴⁹

When Kōan's words came to the notice of Zen master Engo Kokugon at the Shōkaku-ji, he declared in admiration, "If there's someone like that at Ryūmon-ji, the paths of the Eastern Mountain aren't desolate yet."⁵⁰

Can anyone tell me what Engo means by "desolate"? Is he saying that the place is not barren, that it is not experiencing difficulty? Is he referring to the noise and activity caused by crowds of monks?

I've read that "the Buddha Dharma consists in doing what is right and proper, not in prosperity."⁵¹ So even if a temple was filled with two or three hundred blind eggplants and gourds [monks] consuming all the buckets of white rice set before them like ravenous wolves or hungry silkworms and they were subjected to rigorous discipline, twelve-hour-days of zazen without rest, if none of those monks was truly committed to the Way, Engo would no doubt consider that temple a barren place that had fallen on hard times. But if there was even half a monk sitting with knees bent and chin pulled in, doggedly doing zazen, even if he was living in a tiny old room with leaky roofs and damp floors in a dirty, remote back lane, if he was singlemindedly devoted to penetrating the truth, Engo would surely regard his place as rich and prosperous.

This would suggest that what the ancients regarded as lonely and desolate would be considered thriving prosperity by people today, and what people today regard as thriving prosperity would have been considered lonely and desolate by the ancients. How can our school have fallen into such decline?

⁴⁹ Kao-an Shan-wu 高庵善悟, 1074-1132. An heir of Butsugen Seion.

⁵⁰ Engo served at the Shōkaku-ji 昭覺寺 (Chao-chueh-ssu) in Szechuan from 1102-1110. Eastern Mountain 東山 (Tōzan; Tung-shan) is another name for Goso-zan 五祖山 (Wu-tsu shan); here Engo refers to the Zen of his teacher Goso Hōen.

⁵¹ Kidō Chigu (Hsu-tang Chih-yu). Kidō's words continue, "When it is true, the gods and demons cannot penetrate its reason. When it is properous, they quickly become jealous of its good fortune." *Kokuyaku zenshū sōsho* II, vol. 6, p. 369.