

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

The Stature of Yasutani Hakuun Rōshi

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Yasutani Rōshi¹ was certainly active with his pen. He could write of many things, and he produced a large number of books. The prefaces, epilogues and postscripts of these books seem to reveal fully his fundamental standpoint regarding the Way, even more than the texts themselves. It occurred to me that if I collected these essays, his true stature would become evident. One way to view them would be in chronological order, but I would like to take up examples without being too strict about sequence.

In 1952, Yasutani Rōshi published a long poem, *Song in Praise of the Shushōgi*,² which carried the subtitle, "The Perfection of the Buddha's Path." He enhanced his dedication of this work to Dōgen Zenji, the first patriarch of the Eihei line, with an epilogue that seems to declare his standpoint very succinctly:

Epilogue to *Song in Praise of the Shushōgi*

September 29, 1952, in reverence, to meet the 700th anniversary of Kōso Busshō Dentō Kokushi Jōyō Daishi (Dōgen), I humbly made this one volume, *Song in Praise of the Shushōgi*. I consecrate it before the Patriarch's memorial tower, offering it as one drop in response to an ocean of kindness. I beg with bows that it be received with mercy.

I became a bonze at the age of five, and I entered the priesthood of the Sōtō Sect at the age of 13. At 16, I joined the assembly of Nishiari Bokusan Zenji, and when I was 17, I went through the ceremony of becoming a substitute priest, cloistering myself for 90 days without going out, under the direct guidance of Retreat Master Akino

¹ Yasutani Hakuun Rōshi (1885-1973).

² *Shushōgi Sanka*. The *Shushōgi* (A Treatise on Proving the Training) is a work compiled from the writings of Dōgen that is used as a summary of principles of the Sōtō Sect.

Kōdō Zenji. Subsequently, I fulfilled the ceremony for Dharma transmission in the room and gratefully acceded as eighty-fourth Dharma successor to Śākyamuni Buddha.

Thereafter, I went for guidance to many teachers: Iwakami Kakujō, Okamura Sogaku, Nozawa Tatsugen, Yokoo Kenshū, Ōbora Ryōun, Tanaka Dōkō and Kishizawa Ian. When I was 40, I was senior priest of a temple, and at 41, I became an independent priest. I was appointed Specially Dispatched Priest for Propagation for the two main temples of the Sōtō Sect, and I went about lecturing in Tokyo and in the Kanagawa area. However, I was altogether a blind fellow, and my mind was not yet at rest. I was at a peak of mental anguish. When I felt I could not endure deceiving myself and others by untrue teaching and irresponsible sermons any longer, my karma opened up, and I was able to meet the master Daiun Shitsu, Harada Sogaku Rōshi. The light of a lantern was brought to the dark night, to my profound joy.

Under Harada Rōshi I underwent strict discipline for just 20 years, and I have become able to distinguish beans from wheat a little bit, so far as the Way is concerned. The debt of my gratitude is too vast for repayment.

Now, when we observe the present state of affairs in Buddhism, and reflect upon the Way of the Patriarchs, we find that the great Dharma has degenerated to earth. People of wicked beliefs are everywhere under heaven. They have no faith in life before, or in life after, and they do not admit that Buddhas really exist. They do not acknowledge the virtue of holding memorial services, do not practice *zazen*, and do not know the substantial nature of pure sitting. They have no insight into what non-thinking might be. They do not know how to utilize old *kōan*. They do not understand how both the Sōtō and Rinzai sects have strong points and shortcomings, evils and excellent characteristics. Almost all such people are uselessly clinging to sectarian views; and in particular, there is not one in a hundred who does not deny self-realization. Alas!

I respectfully inquire of the many teachers of Sōtō Zen: "Are there any Buddhas or Patriarchs who did not attain enlightenment? How about Śākyamuni's great realization? How about Dōgen Zenji's accomplishment of the Great Matter? How about the High Patriarch,

guiding Master Jō³ to realization with the *kōan*, 'A single hair penetrates many holes'? How about Master Kai guiding Taisō⁴ to great enlightenment through the words, 'The ordinary mind is the Way'? Some of you say, 'Honored Śākyamuni attained *satori* on behalf of us all; we should simply believe his teachings. It is not necessary for us to attain *satori* personally.' But who among the Patriarchs said such a thing? Some of you say, 'People of today are inferior in spirit to those of old days, so it is absolutely impossible for us in modern times to attain enlightenment.' But who among Zen sages ever said such a thing? These are the words of devils. They are not words from the bosom of Buddha. How about the golden words of a Patriarch, 'The Three Epochs of Dharma [Correct and Direct Dharma, Dharma of Semblance, and Dharma of Decay and Termination] appear only according to whether or not one practices Zen'⁵ Don't you know there is a saying, 'Before the ancient people attained *satori*, they were the same as people of today; after attaining *satori*, people of today are the same as ancient people'⁶

Let me ask the descendants of Dōgen, "Setting aside the 'sō' of Sōtō for a moment, doesn't the 'to' refer to Tōzan Kai Zenji (Tung-shan Chih Ch'an-shih)? Do you know Tōzan's *Five Degrees*, or not? Have you penetrated to the marrow of the *Five Degrees*, or not?" You will know what the *Five Degrees* really are, for the first time, when you penetrate them to the bottom, realize them by experience, and then forget them completely, and forget that you have forgotten. When you have found what these *Five Degrees* really are, you will be able to shatter the cavern of the *Five Degrees of Honor and Virtue*.

Notice that the *Five Degrees of Phenomenal and Essential* analyze and present quite obviously the substance of *satori*. The *Five Degrees of Honor and Virtue* manifest plainly the process of self-realization, the fact that there are orders and stages in practice, the fact that there are degrees of shallow and deep, dark and clear, in realization. When you intimately realize the state of correlation and non-correlation of the

³ Dōgen and his successor Ejō.

⁴ Tetsū Gikai and Keizan, early successors in the line of Dōgen Zenji.

⁵ This quotation was not identifiable.

⁶ From *Hotsuganmon* by Dōgen.

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two kinds of *Five Degrees, Phenomenal and Essential*, and *Honor and Virtue*, and the fact that steps are no other than non-steps, non-steps no other than steps, you will for the first time recognize the minute and exacting characteristics of Dōgen Zen. "Minute" and "exacting" do not simply mean that manner and behavior should be minute and exacting according to rules and regulations, but that the Dharma should be transmitted minutely and exactly. You must accept this and believe it respectfully.

However, I hear there are fellows who are called professors and instructors in Buddhist universities who indiscriminately pour coarse tea into Dōgen's Dharma, cheating and bewildering beginners and long-practicing Zen people as well. They are an unforgivable gang of devils, great thieves of heaven and earth, and should be termed vermin in the body of the lion. They do not realize that they are pitiable people, slandering the Three Treasures, and that they must fall into hell after death. That is because they do not go to true masters for guidance, and are ruined by mistaken, scholastic interpretations of Zen. We cannot regret this too much. Didn't the High Patriarch Dōgen, a genius of outstanding talent, still seek out a true master? Why should we stupid fellows be trifling with our own arbitrary opinions?

Further, we must consider that in the *sbitsu nai*⁷ of the Sōtō Sect, there are the Three Things. Yet, I hear to my regret that among priests of today, there are those who don't even know that the Three Things consist of the Blood Line, the Document of Succession, and the Great Matter. Furthermore, how many priests are there today who have penetrated the essence of the Great Matter to the bottom? Maybe fewer than ten, I suppose. Let me try asking the scholars, "Isn't the Great Matter an illustration of the inner nature of *satori*? The Three Things, as the secret transmission in the room, are one, but when viewed from the standpoint of Zen practice, isn't the Great Fact the most important of the three? How could people who know this deny *satori*?" You should all reflect upon and repent your crime of neglecting Zen study. You should feel shame, and change your ways with awe and fear.

⁷ "in the room," a reference to secret or classical teachings.

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My old master Daiun, to whom I owe deep gratitude, grieved over our sect for fifty or sixty years, always on this important matter. I succeed to the intention of my beneficent master, and do not hesitate to operate in order to bring the dead to life. I have written this book, *Song in Praise of the Shushōgi*, and I offer it reverently before the memorial tower of the Patriarchs. I share it with brothers of the Four Oceans, with my earnest desire that they not misunderstand the profound purport of realization in exquisite practice, and further that they penetrate to the deepest way of oneness of practice and realization.

What I am today is nothing more than the gift of my Original Teacher, the great priest Bengaku Ryōgi; my instructor, the great priest Sonkyō Genpō; the Chief Nun Chūgaku Soci; as well as the virtuous priests mentioned earlier, and elder and younger brothers in Dharma with whom I have favorable or reversed affinity. Truly I cannot find words to express my deep emotion and thanks for their benevolence. Here, with respect, I celebrate the Ten Thousand Spirits of the Three Words, and pray to solemnize their land.

A propitious day of autumn, 1952
Descendant of the Cloud⁸

Yasutani Ryōkō

This will perhaps clarify the basic standpoint of Yasutani Rōshi regarding the Way.

When we refer to his personal chronology, we find he attended his first *sesshin* with Harada Rōshi in 1925, when he was 41 years old. Two years later, in 1927, when he was 43, his *kenshō* was approved at the *Rōhatsu Sesshin* at the monastery Hosshinji, in Obama.⁹ We may imagine his intense practice during those days. It is quite unusual to attain *kenshō* at one's second *sesshin*.

In the preface to his *Sbōyōraku Dokugo* (*Soliloquy on the Ts'ung Jung Lu*), Hakuun Shitsu wrote as follows:

Engo Zenji (Yuan-wu Ch'an shih), who wrote the instructions and brief and longer critical comments included in the *Hekiganshū* (*Pi Yen Chi*), and Wanshi Zenji, who wrote the poems of praise included in the

⁸ Harada Rōshi's name, Daiun, means "Great Cloud."

⁹ Rōhatsu Sesshin is the great winter retreat of eight days. This was Yasutani Rōshi's second *sesshin* with Harada Rōshi.

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Sbōyōroku, were men of almost the same period, but Wanshi seems to have been the elder. They were intimate Dharma friends, but each of them had strong points, and they held views and positions regarding principles of guidance in Zen which did not compromise with the other at all. Here the strong points of Rinzai and Sōtō emerge clearly of themselves. I believe it is most desirable for Zen students to study both the *Hekigansbū* and the *Sbōyōroku* intimately, and thus grasp the strong points of both Rinzai and Sōtō.

Rinzai Zen and Sōtō Zen each have distinctive coloration, and strong features, but these strong features are likely to become weak and harmful, so, I believe, it is very important for each side to be correctly studied, the strong points of each taken together, and the weak and harmful points of each to be redeemed. I don't agree with those who stick to their own sectarian view and reject the other.

Wanshi Zenji said, "I begin with *samādhi* and do *prajñā* later." He was encouraging the cultivation of diligent sitting and the development of *samādhi*-power. Of course the essential importance of *kenshō* and *satori* are clearly expressed in his poems of praise in the *Sbōyōroku*. On the other hand, Engo Zenji said, "I begin with *prajñā* and do *samādhi* later." He sets up the way of *kenshō* and *satori* as the first problem, and plans the cultivation of *samādhi*-power by degrees. Thus, in their theory of principle, the two are entirely different, but their Dharma relationship seems to have been always intimate. It is said that when Wanshi was about to pass away, he entrusted his affairs entirely to Engo, and Engo, in turn, earnestly responded to this trust. Now, as descendants of those ancient sages, let us cast off sectarian ego, rid ourselves of prejudice, and study the strong points of both Rinzai and Sōtō. Then each of us can devise unique ways of guidance, without following the dusty paths of others—responding to the times and to the country, and endeavoring to guide people freely.

Speaking of strong points in the *Sbōyōroku*, we may note the careful discretion used in the selection and arrangement of the *kōan* (themes). For example, the case, "The World-Honored One Ascends the Rost-
rum" is placed first, and the case, "Bodhidharma: Completely Vacant" is placed second. Of course, many *kōan* appear in both the *Hekiganroku* and the *Sbōyōroku*, but there are many more which appear in only one or the other. We can see the difference in views between the two books

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in the selection of *kōan*, and in the way the same *kōan* are treated and savored, and in the style of the poems of praise.

In 1962, when Hakuun Shitsu was 78, he sent his *Go-i, Sanki, Sanjū, Jūjūinkai Dokugo* (*Soliloquy on the Five Degrees, the Three-Fold Turning, the Three-Fold Gathering and the Ten Grave Prohibitions*) into the world. The reader should not by-pass either the preface or the postscripts of this work.

In the preface he says,

When Dōgen Zenji first went to see Tendō Nyojō Zenji (T'ien-tung Ju-ching Ch'an shih), Nyojō said to him, "Last night I saw a reverend person in a dream, holding a branch of plum blossoms. It seemed to be Tōzan Zenji. You will be the second coming of Tōzan." After that, Dōgen thought of himself as the second Tōzan.

Needless to say, the *Five Degrees* were the work of Tōzan Zenji. Tendō Nyojō entrusted them to Dōgen when the latter was about to return to Japan, but Dōgen did not use them during his entire life. Why? We should understand that this was a living choice, relating to harmful conditions of his time.

In Tōzan Zenji's time, distinctions in degree were disregarded, and "one-sheet" *satori* of equality prevailed. The *Five Degrees* were a Dharma teaching to redeem this poor condition, and to convey the Zen of distinction in degree, to clarify shallow and deep, dark and light within the state of *satori*, and of course the orders and steps in the process of training.

However, in Dōgen Zenji's time, the situation was reversed. The Zen of *kōan* practice in the Rinzai line prevailed, and most people were attached to the Zen of degrees. The Samadhi, King-Samadhi, in which everything is the one taste of equality, was forgotten. So Dōgen Zenji mainly encouraged *sbikantaza*, and stressed the importance of personifying the Supreme Way. Therefore, he never used the *Five Degrees*.

How about the present day? Rinzai Zen maintains its inertia as a Zen of degrees without change. Sōtō Zen has fallen into a wicked Zen of no content and is in the dark about realization. As a consequence, the Way of *kenshō* and *satori* is denied, and the process and order of training are disregarded. With just speaking the word, "*sbikantaza*," and not discerning the true inner substance of *sbikantaza*, true practice and true training are almost extinguished.

If Dōgen Zenji were to appear at this present time, I am sure he

would certainly clarify the Zen of degrees and utilize freely the *Five Degrees* of Tōzan Zenji.

Complete devotion to degrees, or complete devotion to no-degrees—these are by no means the Zen of Buddha's Way. Degrees are themselves no-degree; no-degree is itself degrees—this is the true Zen of Buddhas and Patriarchs. It is called the "Practice-Realization, by nature undefiled"; or "Even to proceed, [the essence] is the same as before." "The Gate of Oneness of cause and effect." Of course, "practice and realization" means degrees; "undefiled" means no-degree; "proceeding" means degrees; "same as before" means no-degree; "cause and effect" are degrees; "oneness" is no-degree.

I have heard that once, when Watanabe Genshu Zenji had attained eminence at the head monastery of Sōjiji, and was being installed as abbot, he ascended the rostrum and astonished the great assembly which filled the hall by crying out in a loud voice, "I reverently cast this one petal of incense into the censor for the sake of my reverend master the great priest Shaku Sōen Zenji,¹⁰ to requite the loving kindness of his lofty Dharma milk."

This Watanabe Zenji had for many years trained under Shaku Sōen Zenji, Abbot of the Engakuji Branch of Rinzai Zen, and had attained the seal of his Dharma succession. It is said that Watanabe Zenji frequently went from Sōjiji to Engakuji at Kamakura to pay homage before the grave of Shaku Sōen.

The writer has been favored with Watanabe Zenji's kindness, and has received his personal calligraphy and alms money on a number of occasions. This story occurred to me in connection with teachers of Dharma succession, and I just include it incidently.

For the fundamental spirit of the Hakuun Shitsu's *Sbōbōgenzō Sankyū* (*Penetrating Inquiries into the Sbōbōgenzō*), we should examine the forward of the first volume, *Genjō Kōan Sankyū* (*Penetrating Inquiries into the Genjō Kōan*), where he says,

This *Sbōbōgenzō* has been the treasury of our Sect for about 600 years, and has been almost unknown in the world. Nishiari Bokusan Zenji

¹⁰ It seems that Yasutani Rōshi erred in his recollection of this story and that the reference should be to Miyagi Sokai Zenji, an earlier abbot of Engakuji.

spent his entire life researching *Sbōbōgenzō*, and lectured on it for the sake of his students. This glimpse, published as *Sbōbōgenzō Keiteki* (*The Opening Way of the Sbōbōgenzō*), is still widely accepted everywhere. When I was a young monk at the temple Denshinji, in Shimada, Shizuoka Prefecture, I served him as his attendant disciple. At that time, in the same town of Shimada, at the temple Jōgoji, a ninety day public Zen meeting was held, and every day Nishiari Zenji delivered *teishō* on the *Sbōbōgenzō*, to which I listened attentively. Of course, this was at a time when my ear was not opened to hear, so I just listened obediently. Now all that I can recall of his words was his sweeping denunciation of the *kōan* Zen of the Rinzai School.

When I was about 16 or 17 years old, I held two questions about Buddhism. The first of these was, "It is clear from public records that all patriarchs who succeeded Śākyamuni, without a single exception, experienced *kenshō* (*satori*). Why is it that beginning with Nishiari Bokusan and continuing through his distinguished and talented successors, no one can speak to the central point of whether or not there is such a thing as *kenshō*? Why is it that they do not show us the way to *kenshō*? Why don't they guide us?" I could not understand.

And the other question was about after death. I asked many questions about this, but could not receive any clear response. It was like trying to catch a catfish with a gourd. There were only roundabout answers, and I could not grasp the main point.

Then, by force of circumstances, for ten years, between the ages of 30 and 40, I pursued the daily life of an educator. When I was 41, I first met with Harada Sogaku Zenji, and from then on for about twenty years, I did *sanzen* with him, and began at last to resolve the questions I had held over so many years.

While I mainly inquired about the questions in *sanzen* with Harada Rōshi, I also listened to his *teishō*, chiefly on the *Mumonkan*, *Hekiganroku*, *Sbōyōroku* and so on. I heard Harada Rōshi's *teishō* on the *Sbōbōgenzō* just a few dozen times in Tokyo, when I was between 60 and 70 years old.

Accordingly, I have still no more than wet my finger at inquiring penetratingly into the *Sbōbōgenzō*. However, beginning with Nishiari Zenji's *Keiteki*, I have examined closely the commentaries on the *Sbōbōgenzō* of many modern people, and though it is rude to say it, they have failed badly in their efforts to grasp its main points. So, I

have no time to reflect upon my own lack of maturity, and I send forth this *Genjō Kōan* as the first chirp of penetrating inquiry.

It goes without saying that Nishiari Zenji was a priest of excellent learning and virtue, but even a green priest like me will not affirm his eye of *satori*. I know that whatever one may say, it was a great exploit for Nishiari Zenji to make Dōgen Zenji's *Sbōbōgenzō* widely known in the world. At the same time, he degraded the *Sbōbōgenzō* into intellection, and dealt with it as an object for studying Zen theory.

The essential matter of *kenshō gadō* (realization and enlightenment) was rubbed out of our Sect, and the *Sbōbōgenzō* became simply an object of ordinary scholarship. I think it must be said that Nishiari Zenji, throughout his career, was a scholar-monk from first to last, and the resulting evil of his theoretical Zen became a significant source of later events.

The disciples of Nishiari Zenji, too, have sought to be his worthy students, and have perpetuated the evil of his teaching. So it is my earnest wish, in place of Nishiari Zenji, to correct to some degree the evil which he left, in order to requite his benevolence and that of his disciples, which they have extended over many years.

His *Brief Biography* cites Shinjuku, Shimizu Village, Shuntō District, Shizuoka Prefecture, as the place where the birth-cry of Hakuun Rōshi was first heard. He was the third son of Katō Eikichi, and was named Seisaku. The change of his name to Yasutani came in his twelfth year, when he was ordained as a disciple of the priest, Yasutani Ryōgi, at the temple, Teishinji, in the town of Kambara, Anbara District, also in Shizuoka Prefecture.

It seems that as far as civil law is concerned, he was an adopted child. He wrote a detailed account of his memories of his early childhood in the journal, *Shunjū*, published by the Shunjūsha, issues 65 through 71. In those days, his father had a little candy store in Shinjuku, Shimizu Village, beside the Tokai Highway. His economic circumstances seem to have been rather difficult. His mother was a deeply devoted, saintly woman, and when she was pregnant with the Rōshi, she vowed that if her child were a boy, she would have him become a priest.

His mother came from a family named Amari of Nagasawa, in the same village, and about the time she was born, her family fell into penury, and suffered extreme hardship. However, this Amari family was descended from a samurai

named Amari Saemonnojō, one of four famous vassals of a famous lord, Takeda Shingen. Upon the fall of the house of Takeda, this samurai escaped and dropped out of sight in the district of Itō. With this heritage, we may imagine that his mother was not only pious, but had a fine character, with an excellent mind and a strong will.

There is a mysterious story about his birth which we should not forget.

Beside his birthplace, there was a small temple of the Sōtō Sect. A blind nun lived there who was always reciting the *Hannya Sbingyō* (*Heart Sutra*). It was his mother's important work to take care of her. It was said that if you had this nun pray for you, you could recover from illness, or find lost articles; and people called with requests one after another without ceasing. When she prayed, she recited the *Hannya Sbingyō* a thousand times, single-mindedly. This was called the "Thousand-Times *Sbingyō*". Hearing that her helper was pregnant, she removed a single bead from the *juzu* (rosary) she used in counting while reciting the sutra, and told the mother to swallow this bead in order to have an easy birth. The mother gratefully accepted the bead and swallowed it.

Thanks to this, the birth was easy, it is said. When giving the baby his first bath, the mother discovered that his left hand somehow would not open. She was finally able to open it, and found that it had been tightly grasping the *juzu* bead which she had swallowed. Hakuun Rōshi wrote:

I heard this story from my mother, and from my elder sister, when I was seven or eight years old, and I did not have any special thoughts about it. Later, in middle school, I studied biology, and I felt that it was a foolish story that couldn't be true. Yet I firmly believed that my mother could not lie, so the problem of the *juzu* remained a question in my heart for a very long time.

This incident was the principal factor in causing him to realize his deep Dharma affinity, and as he progressed into the depths of Buddhism he came to accept the incident without reservation. It certainly seems that such unconditional affirmation was not a mere abstract idea, for it lived continuously in his Buddhism, and the mystery at the time of his birth was inwardly linked to it. Perhaps it would seem natural for him to hold such faith as a Buddhist but faith today is usually reasoning. Aren't there fewer and fewer people with such a faith?

When he was four years old, he was sent to a little temple in the town of Ōhito. Apparently his mother did not ask his consent, but just left him there and went home. He did not remember this part of the story, but did recall what happened next. This is his account:

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Well, I probably pondered on how I could get home, but I don't remember that part. I just recall that I resolutely refused to speak or to eat. This went on for two or three days, I don't remember. I won the battle decisively, and my mother was called to fetch me. Even then, I was silent. It is said that as she carried me on her back out of the compound to the street outside, I began to sing. I heard that from my mother later, but I don't remember it myself.

As I read this, I recall the well-known saying, "The spirit of the three year old child lasts to age one hundred," and I am filled with admiration.

After that, when Hakuun Rōshi was five years old, he was sent to a Rinzai temple named Fukuju-in, in Kuryō, Nishiura, Numazu City. Tsuyama Genpō Oshō undertook his education. Though a priest of a country temple, it seems that he was a scholar and a splendid teacher.

Hakuun Rōshi was brought up strictly, but with deep love. Reminiscing about this, he said:

Today, I fully realize that my education under him established the unmovable foundation of my entire life.

When he was eleven, he was obliged by circumstances to move from Fukuju-in to the temple Daichūji, in the outskirts of Numazu. He had a fight there with one of the elder disciples, and as he was isolated without support in this situation, his father came after him, and he lived for a while in his true home. When he was 12, as he notes in his memoirs, he was placed again in a temple, this one named Teishinji, of the Sōtō Sect. So at this time he changed from the Rinzai to the Sōtō school. This was with the help of the nun who had given his mother the bead of the *juzu*. Rōshi maintained true Buddhism in the harmony of Rinzai and Sōtō throughout his life, taking up strong points and casting out shortcomings. I think this fact had its source in the deep karma in his early years.

Looking back, it seems that his entire life was a series of battles. So far as the Dharma is concerned, the target of these battles may be considered simply as the destruction of evil ways and the establishment of the true Dharma. It was the broad announcement of "The Authentically Transmitted Way of Buddha." To bring this into clearer focus: His main purpose was to propagate the indispensable place of *kenshō*, Realization of the Way, in Zen. Can we not say that he exhausted all his energy for that purpose?

The battles of Hakuun Rōshi against evil ways were completely thorough. His words "to destroy the wicked and establish the righteous," were sometimes too bitter and vehement. So we heard voices raising such criticisms as, "He

needn't say that much," or "Isn't he really harming his own virtue?" Further, there was the criticism, "In the *Jūjūkinkai (Ten Grave Prohibitions)*, there is the precept, 'Don't speak of faults of others.' From the standpoint of this commandment, how about his speaking so badly of others, especially in such a loud manner regarding disciples of Buddha?"

Of course Hakuun Rōshi knew all about this commandment, but he dared to continue anyway. He reviled and scolded, maintaining firmly the positive position, "From the standpoint of the commandment, we must correct mistaken and haphazard Dharma-preaching, even among Buddha's disciples. If we neglect to do this, we are violating the commandment not to speak of the faults of others." I think he might have been glad to fall into hell for such abusive actions, if necessary.

Another of his battles was a battle within himself. It was, so to speak, a battle of his karma. He appeared to carry this to extreme fierceness. Perhaps some people may feel that to speak of battling a karma is nonsense, for there is no slipping away from karma—one can only follow it faithfully. But that isn't so. The aspiration to extinguish bad karma of the past and to cultivate happy karma for the future—this is, as it were, the practice of the Buddhist. In Rōshi's case particularly, I imagine that he sharpened his very flesh and bones with this secret battle. Of this too, may we cite, "To practice in secret."

May it be said that he was an idealist? Once he felt that he was right, he plunged ahead, disregarding completely all force of circumstance, all environmental factors, all perverse reactions, and all obstacles on the way.

After the war, when permission was given for the separate independence of temples, he seized the initiative and separated from the Sōtō Sect, adopting a position of direct connection with Dōgen Zenji. This was what Harada Sogaku Rōshi had long since vigorously advocated, and it was Hakuun Rōshi who brought it to fulfillment. It seems that perhaps time, place, and degree were not completely ripened for Harada Rōshi.

Translated by Yamada Kōun and
Robert Aitken