

ON THE I-THOU RELATION IN ZEN BUDDHISM

I

Kyōzan (Ejaku) asked Sanshō (Enen): "What is your name?" Sanshō replied, "My name is Ejaku." "Ejaku!" said Kyōzan, "that's me!" "Well then," replied Sanshō, "my name is Enen." Kyōzan roared with laughter.

仰山問三聖，汝名什麼，聖言慧寂，山言慧寂是我，  
聖言我名慧然，仰山呵呵大笑。

Daitō Kokushi said of this: "Whither does [this] go?"

師著語言，什麼處去也。

The sun shines warmly, the spring snow clears;  
The jaws of the plum and the face of the willow vie with  
their fragrant freshness.  
The occasion for poetry and spiritual divertissement holds  
boundless meaning,  
Permitted only to the man who wanders in the fields and  
arduously composes poetry.<sup>1</sup>

煦日影中雪鬢春  
梅腮柳面鬪芳新  
詩緣風興無限意  
獨許苦吟野外人

This encounter between Kyōzan and Sanshō is an old and well known Zen kōan included in the collection entitled *The Blue*

<sup>1</sup> 大盤錄. *Daitō-roku* ("The Sayings of Daitō Kokushi"), book 3, fasc. 11, under "Juko" 頌古. Also 桃安圖語. *Kwaiankoku-go*, book 5, under "Juko."

*Cliff Records*<sup>1</sup> where it bears the title "Kyōzan Roars with Laughter." It can be said to show the true significance in the encounter of one man with another.

We are continually encountering others: within the family, our wives and children; at work, our colleagues; on the streets or in conveyances, men who are complete strangers to us. Through history we are able to meet men of hundreds, even thousands of years ago. Still we do not consider such encounters unusual, and we certainly do not marvel at them. Yet what is to be found at the deepest ground in the encounter between man and man? Basically what is it that makes such an occurrence possible? This *mondo* probes these questions and unfolds and makes clear the boundless horror and the infinite beauty that are included at the depths of this everyday event.

It must be emphasized that such an investigation is utterly impossible to accomplish from without, from some place distant to the encounter. Neither is it possible to accomplish it by means of biological, sociological, anthropological, ethical, or other such methods. All such explanations want to solve the whole problem at a place that has not attained the deepest ground.

For example, no matter how much man speaks of human rights, no matter how much he debates them, the problem of the encounter between men will never be solved in such a way. From such a standpoint one remains helpless before the Hobbesian *homo homini lupus*, or the "wolfish man" of the German mystic Heinrich Seuse. The Kantian standpoint of the personality, wherein one acknowledges another's personal dignity, cannot reach to the depths which lie enclosed in the encounters between men; philosophical and theological probings do not generally extend to the boundless abysses that lie hidden here. One cannot, for example, resist the impression that in viewing the problem of man's relation to man from within the *communio sanctorum* of the Christian church, one is, as an old Chinese proverb puts it, scratching an itchy foot with-

<sup>1</sup> 碧巖錄. J., *Hekigan-roku*; C., *Pi-yen-lu*.

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out taking off the shoe. One does, to be sure, reach the spot that itches, but only indirectly because of the leather in between. Since Martin Buber, such an encounter has been emphasized as being a personal relation between "I" and "Thou." This is no doubt true, but it is obvious that there lies a great problem hidden right in the depths of this personal I-Thou relation. The Zen "exploration" takes its departure from this problem.

Here, two points will be thoroughly and uncompromisingly taken into account. The first is that the *I* as well as the *Thou* are absolutes in their respective subjectivities. The second is that the *I* and the *Thou* directly through their relation upon one another are, on the other hand, absolutely relative.

The subject as an absolute has been conceived in various ways, that every man is a wolf to every other man is but one expression of absolute subjectivity. Another is the Kantian concept of personality, where man's moral will is autonomous and in no way permits determination from without, not even from God. So it is with personality in the religious sense as well, with the *I* in the same relation to God as it is to the "Absolute other" (or Absolute *Thou*). All these naturally indicate, each in its own dimension, the absoluteness of the individual subjectivity which permits no surrogation. All these standpoints, however, allow either over or else within man as individual something that has the character of law or of the universal. Through this Universal the relationship of one individual to another is established, and the individual is partially relativized and thus checked on the way to absolute individuation.

The universal takes many forms. For men who encounter one another as wolves, it is the state and the authority of its laws; for the ethical personality, it is practical reason and its moral law; for the religious personality, it is the "Absolute Other" and divine law that become the universal ground for the relation between men. But the general structure of these relations — the relationship between individuals based on the universal — always has a halfway character about it, and this lack results in a twofold obscurity. While, on the one hand, the individual accepts an unsubstitutable

subjectivity (and with it an accordingly complete freedom), still all individuals are at the same time subordinated to some kind of universal. In relation to this subordination all individuals are equal; that means each individual person can represent any other individual. To give an example: A funeral takes place in the neighborhood, so the head of the household wants to offer condolences as the representative of his whole family. Perhaps, however, he is prevented from doing so, and his wife goes in his stead. If they are both unable to attend the funeral, the eldest son might undertake the task. Each can in a similar manner represent the family, and therefore the members of the family can mutually represent one another. This implies, however, nothing else than the possibility of substitution or surrogation. Freedom arises from the impossibility of individual substitution. Equality arises from the possibility of this substitution. A union of freedom and sameness or equality therefore implies an imperfect freedom. That is to say, when each individual is related to a universal, thereby creating a mutual relation as well, then the individual loses his absoluteness, and is relativized. This is one of the obscurities; all the difficulties concerning the relation of freedom and equality return to it.

But this imperfect freedom implies, when considered from the other side, an imperfect sameness of equality as well. Subordination to a universal cannot completely absorb the freedom of the individual as individual. Freedom, which escapes from the net of universality, sometimes arouses itself and becomes freedom untrammelled by law. The power of the state's law cannot wholly transform the wolf into a sheep, therefore he will occasionally commit some violent act in a limited sphere, or on a grand scale he may become the violent Will to Power incarnate. The dignity and rigor of moral law cannot completely extinguish man's self-love; to be sure, self-love can deepen into the "radical evil" of which Kant speaks. The sanctity of divine law cannot keep rein on the obstinate appetites of man. Man will turn his back on God and follow the seductions Satan offers him. The citizen who represented the family at the neighborhood funeral may, upon completion of his duty, go direct-

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ly to a secret mistress. The son in the same circumstance may buy a ticket to the cinema with money pilfered from the cookie-jar. In short, in the individuals who are relativized by their representation of one or another form of the universal the equality is likewise imperfect. This is the second obscurity. All this means that there is no real encounter between man and man in an interhuman relation where the universal is included, and where freedom and equality are obliged to go hand in hand in their incompleteness. In the "natural state" of the wolfish man the original basis of man's encounter with man is of course hidden, but it is also hidden under the law of the state, moral law, and divine law as well.

When subordination to a universal cannot absorb completely the freedom of the individual's private self, the irritated universal may attempt to squeeze the breath from the individual freedom in order to realize equality. This tendency is manifested when socialism passes into totalitarianism. Yet a genuinely absolute equality cannot be realized in this way. For it to be realized the universal must be able to completely absorb the private self and its individual freedom, but at the same time — since were the individual to come completely to naught, there would be nothing to which the mutual sameness could relate itself, and the concept of sameness or equality would itself be rendered meaningless — it must somehow be able to completely expel and emancipate the individual and his personal freedom again.

It would have to be something in which the absolute negation of the individual and his freedom are simultaneously absolute affirmation, and also in which absolute affirmation is simultaneously absolute negation. It would have to be a case of equality, with the negation of the individual and his personal freedom becoming one with the absolute affirmation of the individual and his freedom. But is such a universal possible? It is not possible apart from absolute nothingness — non-being — absolute void in the Buddhist sense (*śūnyata*). A universal that would posit itself in a relation to the individual, and thus become a universal that is — be it as state, practical reason, God, etc. — would in any case mediate, each ac-

according to its own law, between individual and individual, and through this bring them to unity. Within this unity through law the universal manifests itself as *being*, as something with self-identity, as "substance." State, reason, and God are "beings," or "substance"; there the relation between man and man itself is substantial. The individual, therefore, loses half of itself in the relation. Here it cannot be an absolute individual completely absolved from all relations, simply standing independently as a whole. On the other side, the universal, to a certain extent, is inherent within individuals, and brings forth from within them their relation to each other. In its immanency it cannot completely transcend the individual and cannot, as it were, deprive him of his roots. Therefore, as the individual's freedom becomes more and more emphasized, the unity through law gradually becomes worm-eaten and in the end dissolves altogether. This tendency is manifested in the lapse from liberalism into anarchism. One could call anarchism a "natural state" elevated to a higher plane. But through it real freedom will never be achieved.

There is only one situation in which complete freedom can be attained without falling into anarchism. It must be one in which freedom and equality — essentially contradictory — can co-exist in a paradoxical way. Indeed this can only happen where the place of Void becomes the place of freedom; and the place of void is attained when equality, which tends to negate freedom, is traversed into the consequent end of absolute negation or nothingness. True freedom can only be consummated when its absolute negation is its absolute affirmation. Anything else would only mean a hither-thither wobbling between the poles of totalitarianism and anarchism. (Here of course totalitarianism and anarchism are not meant in a political sense alone, but in a sense extending to all categories of man's relation with man.) Totalitarianism includes the possibility of immediately changing into anarchism, and vice versa; between the two extremes the path to anarchism and the path to totalitarianism frequently interweave.

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### II

I have dwelled at some length upon a reality we experience every day of our lives, and the reader has perhaps wondered what connection all this has with the strange *Zen mondo* — one of those characteristically terse dialogues — a record of the exchange between two *Zen* monks in ancient China. The fact is that this *mondo* encompasses all of the matters we have dealt with. Therefore, let us return to the original problem, which is to achieve recognition, completely and without any half-way compromises, of the dual circumstance in which *I* and *Thou* are as subjects respective absolutes, and at the same time also absolutely relative. Unless we go back to this point we will be unable to attain a true freedom or equality, a true individual, or the true universal. But the fact that *I* and the *Thou* are each thoroughly absolute means that each of them is absolutely absolute. The fact that each of them is absolutely absolute means that both of them are absolutely relative. This is an outright contradiction — it sounds like pure nonsense. It would mean absolute hostility with one person the absolute enemy of the other, where, as an old Chinese saying says, one cannot live under the same sky with the other. Where they cannot share the same sky, one must kill the other. This is the relation, *homo homini lupus*, which leads to an eat or be eaten situation. In such a situation, however, all relatives would be entirely eliminated. That is, in maintaining a relative, respective absolutes are unallowable; moreover, no basis exists for accepting one and rejecting another. Both are entirely equal. For this reason, arch-enemies who are unable to live together under the same sky nevertheless coexist in a totally efficacious manner. If this becomes out of the question, then they must be content to reach a compromise by means of a universal and its law. Such a compromise will always be pregnant with contradictions; it breeds conflict, and is always exposed to danger of collapse. This is revealed in the historical events of each and

every time. It is the boundless "Suffering" that the Buddha said forms the way of the World. The basis of this problem is found in the relation between one man and another, where the simple fact obtains that two men generally exist side by side, in the impossible fact that there are two, indeed, countless absolutes existing side by side. For a very long time this fact has been an everyday reality, a reality in which the impossible has indeed become the possible. But from it originates as well, at the same time, unending entanglement and boundless suffering. That being the case, how does Zen solve the reality of this situation? How does it attempt to prove possible the absurd notion that absolute enmity is at the same time absolute harmony?

Kyōzan asked Sanshō what his name was. Going back into the history of mankind far enough we find that the "name" had a very profound significance. It symbolized the bearer himself, it was a manifestation of him, and gradually came to be one with him. This played a great role in magic, religion, and other areas of social life. For example, for a woman to disclose her name to a man meant she was revealing herself before him and in the same breath signifying she had already given herself to him. Later on in history, we come to the expressions "Amida's Name" and "In Jesus Christ's Name" which imply that God and Buddha are proclaiming themselves, giving themselves, revealing themselves before mankind. Coming closer to the present, we find the name becoming more and more "simply a name." We reach the point where man begins to boast of his own awakening intellect, and the beginning of the modern scientific spirit and the establishment of nominalism and empiricism appears. But the question remains whether one can simply relegate the name seen as one with existence to being a manifestation of a mythological age prior to the emancipation of the intellect. Perhaps completely the opposite is true, that men in those days stood in contact with Reality in a very real way, indeed found themselves directly within Reality. Perhaps the name was *realiter* perceived because Reality was concretely lived, intimately felt and directly realized. Would not this indicate that the later



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interpretation of the name as "merely a name" is a matter of the intellect being isolated from Reality? Does it not conceal the "awakened intellect's" descent to a deeper blindness? It could well be that the pride of the so-called scientific age is an expression of folly still unaware of its deep blindness. Be all that as it may, Kyōzan and Sanshō are not men of a mythological age. Zen is such a wholly "demythologized" religion that it can admonish its followers to "Kill the Buddha and all the Patriarchs!" It seems safe to assume, therefore, that in this dialogue it is only the "mere name" that is being requested. But Sanshō has long been recognized as a great Zen master, and we certainly should not suppose that Kyōzan does not know his own name. Therefore it is clear that Kyōzan's question is not simply a request for Sanshō's name on an intellectual level. Rather the question means the beginning of a "Zen-occurrence" in the simple encounter between two men. At the same time it becomes the occasion to penetrate and explore thoroughly a happening that takes place every day between two ordinary men. I mentioned before about the two men whose natures made it impossible for them to live together under the same sky, and yet did, in fact, do just that. I said that this impossibility becomes a possibility in the reality of everyday life. Here is where the exploration of Reality within that reality begins.

Engo (Yüan-wu, 1062-1135) comments on the question "What is your name?" as follows: "He robs at one time the name and the being." To ask someone for his name is also to take his being to yourself as well. The 18th century Zen master Hakuin said of this question that "it is like a policeman interrogating some suspicious fellow he has found loitering about in the dark." That does not mean Kyōzan himself would place such a meaning on his question, but the question itself takes on such a color. When that which possesses the nature of the absolute operates in the relative world its operation comes of itself to shut out all relativity. Things that stand opposite the self as "others," will all be stopped short in their tracks, drawn across to the side of this self, and finally be annexed to it. Inasmuch as the self is its own complete master, and retains

its subjectivity — inasmuch as it is the “self” in its true sense — this will happen naturally. This means that Kyōzan is Kyōzan. Yet, from its own standpoint, inasmuch as the *Thou* is a subject, the same would hold true for it. The essence of this “I-Thou Relation” is characterized by none other than the problem of eat or be eaten.

Engo added a *jakugo* (literally, “comment under-written”) to this dialogue, which goes as follows: “He (Kyōzan) trapped him. He thought he had him, but to his astonishment it was a thief he had caught. The thief turned the tables and robbed him of everything he owned.”

When asked his name, Sanshō answered “Ejaku,” but Ejaku was the name of the questioner, Kyōzan. In his answer Sanshō in effect takes Kyōzan's absolute nature — Kyōzan, who is Kyōzan himself, and who will not allow any *Thou* to stand opposite him; Kyōzan, who would take all others to himself — as it is, for his own. He simultaneously seizes all Kyōzan's actions and true existence from behind, going around hostile defenses and running up the banner of his own self in the rear. In so doing he pulls the floor from under Kyōzan's feet.

What is more, this is all done in accordance with Sanshō's genuine self. Engo comments that with his answer Sanshō cuts Kyōzan's tongue off. “He snatches flag and drum away from him.” As he cuts off Kyōzan's tongue — and with it the contest and Kyōzan's self that dared to question him — he snatches away the signs of victory, and the nature whereof Sanshō is Sanshō appears.

If we look back to that aspect of Kyōzan's self that originally asked the question, we can see that it arises upon the same elemental ground. Kyōzan robs Sanshō of his name and being, he steals Sanshō's self. Consequently, they remain in a relation of absolute enmity. But now the essential point is that the subjective relation between man and man is no longer the relation of *I* and *Thou* in the universal meaning. When Sanshō calls himself by Kyōzan's name (Ejaku) Sanshō is Kyōzan. The *I* is the *Thou*, the *Thou* is the *I*. It is the same from Kyōzan's standpoint. In short, the *I* is not merely an ordinary *I*; it is the *I* (Sanshō) that is at the same

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time *Thou* (Kyōzan). The *Thou* is no simple *Thou*; it is the *Thou* that is simultaneously *I*. Hence the *I* and the *Thou* blend completely into one another. Here one might think of absolute non-differentiation, absolute sameness, or absolute oneness. In western thought it has been expressed as Oneness (for example, by Plotinus), or as Absolute Identity (for example, by Schelling). Here no more relation exists, and there is nothing that can lead to one. There is neither self nor other, thus there is no person and no personal relation. This *mondo* might seem to indicate that the reality of the I-Thou relation is essentially simply a return to the problem of non-discrimination. Yet it is just the opposite. Although every simple non-discrimination is separated from reality, the problem surely is one actually involving the reality of the *I* and *Thou*, and actually including as well the reality of the encounter between man and man and the absolute opposition that incurs therein. Only this *I* and this *Thou* are not a simple *I* and *Thou*. Since the *I* is the *Thou*, and the *Thou* is the *I*, both are absolutely non-differentiated. For the *I*, this absolute non-differentiation belongs to the *I* itself; it is correspondingly the same for the *Thou*. In this way the *I* is a true *I*, and the *Thou* is a true *Thou*. This is the genuine I-Thou relation. We might formulate this paradox in the manner of the *Diamond Sutra*: The I-Thou relation is an I-Thou relation because it is not an I-Thou relation. This reveals as well the necessity for an absolute opposition. The *I* and the *Thou* that contend with one another for the ground of absolute non-differentiation—each asserting it belongs to him (which it essentially does)—are thus really absolutely related to one another and therefore relative. They are an *I* and a *Thou* that as genuine subjects are absolutely different from each other. Here, there is no relation at all between *I* and *Thou*. Yet it is not non-relation as mere non-differentiation. It is non-relation as absolute opposition, and as a relative on the plane where all relations have been utterly transcended. In point of fact, the reality of the I-Thou encounter in everyday life is one in which just such an absolute relativity and just such an absolute opposition exist. On the ground of such an encounter lies unbounded horror.

But stated from the other side, this absolute nature in the absolute relativity comes from the fact that the absolute non-discrimination belongs to both I and Thou; and I can be I and Thou can be Thou as absolute individuals because each of them is grounded on the absolute identity in which I am Thou and Thou are I, and every form of relation and relativity is superseded. Here, I *am* with you being in no way discriminated from you, and you *are* with me equally undiscriminated from me.

The act of Sanshō calling himself by Kyōzan's name means then that he is making himself empty and putting Kyōzan in his place. Where the other is at the center of the individual and where the existence of each one is "other-centric," absolute harmony reigns. This might be called "Love," in the religious sense. I say in a religious sense because it is a case of "void" or "*muga*" (non-self) that has severed absolutely the self and other from the self and other in the relative sense. Thus, absolute opposition is at the same time absolute harmony. Both are the same. There, absolute opposition is, as it is, a sport, and absolute harmony is not simply non-differentiation. Self and other are not one, and not two. Not one and not two means that each self retains its absoluteness while still being relative, and in this relativity they are never for a moment separated. While the I acknowledges the Thou, in relation to the Thou's own absolute non-differentiation, to be the I, and thus permits itself to become absolutely the Thou, at the same time it takes the Thou to itself. Situated within this absolute non-differentiation which opens in the I, the I is the I itself — I am I. Even if we call the harmony of this absolute non-relation love, it is still different from love in the sense of *eros*, or in the sense of *agape*.

In any case, when Sanshō said he was Ejaku, Kyōzan answered, "Ejaku, that's me!" whereupon Sanshō gave his own name, Enen. Of this answer Hakuin remarked, "He has changed himself from head to foot. The old fox, with advanced age grown more and more cunning, has various tricks of transformation up his sleeve." Engo said, "They both are back to holding their original positions. After several changes of form each has returned to his home ground."

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This happening is no other than the above-mentioned harmony and concord—a harmony possessed of infinite beauty. Hakuin compares this encounter to a fight between a dragon and an elephant, “treading on and kicking each other,” and says that “this is no place for lame horses and blind asses.” Yet on the other hand he adds, “Their joint singing and hand-clapping, drumming and dancing—it is as if the spring blossoms let their reds and purples compete against one another in the new warmth.” Here each self returns to its original position where each is itself. Although each of us ought to find in the midst of his everyday encounters the place where he, in spite of himself, maintains his original position, we do not in fact thoroughly explore and realize such a place. The sole way this can be done is to pierce through to the ground of the encounter. There, it goes right through the situation of eat or be eaten to that of at once eat *and* be eaten, until the small I of each one dissolves, to the place where self and other are not two different things, to the place where strife is transformed into sport. Then it will be like flowers competing with their reds and purples in the spring warmth. Unless the relations between individual and individual, between nation and nation, between all factions and all groups, returns to this, there remains but the struggle of the wild wolves.

### III

In light of what has been said, let us now return to the poem by the Japanese Zen master Daitō Kokushi (1282–1337), written as a commentary on the previous *mondō*. It is included together with the *mondō* in the *Kwaiankoku-go*, a work in which Hakuin (1685–1768) comments upon Daitō’s sayings and poems.

Of the first two lines Hakuin says: “If you trample on and kick over the dark valley of the eighth consciousness, the sun of the Great Mirror Wisdom will suddenly flash and immediately dissolve the piled-up snow-drifts of the abiding aspect of all phenomena.” and “He breaks away the solid-frozen all-sameness of the *Tathata*, he

melts away the ice of the one Dharma-Nature.”

We might simply call it the transcendence of attachment, self-attachment and attachment to the Dharma as well. The standpoint of the “wolfish man,” as well as the source of the conflict that halves mankind, will be found to have their roots in self-attachment which puts “one’s self” in the center and thus discriminates between “self” and “other.”

Ultimately, however, this self-attachment itself is rooted in so-called Ignorance (*mumyo*), that is, in the eighth or “store” consciousness (*alayavijñāna*), the foundation on which human consciousness is based. I was indicating this Ignorance when I stated previously that there is a layer of profound blindness at the very root of the human intellect. Both Illusion and Suffering have their sources there. To subdue these two, various theories and ideologies are contrived, and manifold “laws” — civil, moral and divine laws for example — are established. But such laws are incapable of cutting the powerful root of self-attachment, and self-attachment appears under the cover of the laws. One falls into pride in one’s country, moral pride, pride in one’s gods or buddhas. If we call such things law-attachment, then law-attachment is self-attachment on a higher plane. The same holds true for the different ideologies as well.

Law is not bad. What is bad is man’s way of fixing himself upon some universal as “being,” his mode of becoming attached to law — in heteronomous, autonomous or “theonomous” form. The mode of all such law-attachments is precisely the aforementioned “abiding aspect of all phenomena.” The various laws included in these attachments are the snowpile that covers this mode of attachment. Transcend the plane of the universal, as the non-duality of self and other, the Void, or *muga* (non-self), then for the first time the light of the sun of the Great Mirror Wisdom will shine on and break up Ignorance. This light is the Light of Great Wisdom, the Light of *Mahaprajñā*. But if this non-duality of self and other were taken simply as non-discrimination, it would become the concept of non-discrimination, which is just another law-attachment. “Solid frozen all-sameness of the *Tathata*,” “ice of the one Dharma-

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Nature," an ice-covered absolute One or Absolute Identity, etc. indicate the higher law- and self-attachments which lie hidden at a place beyond ordinary law-attachments and self-attachments. When this place is also broken through, then for the first time the true Reality is attained, in which a contest of "fragrant freshness" goes on, between the self as the self, the other as the other and the law as the law. Then the everyday encounters between all men are of an infinite freshness and pervaded with infinite fragrance.

In the third line we meet the words "poetry" and "spiritual divertissement." Here, needless to say, the very meeting of man with man, just as the fine scenery with its plums and willows, becomes an occasion for poetry. This "poetry" is not based on images that have been imagined within the human consciousness, nor is it composition involving man's language. Here a poem takes as its images actual things themselves, and is composed of words which all things themselves recite.

The "spiritual divertissement" spoken of is not spiritual divertissement that occurs in the human consciousness, but something that arises from the depths of the very being of man and all things. This poem is not grounded in a heightened romanticism, rather in thorough-going realism. Through thorough penetration into Reality as it actually is, Reality comes to be imbued with the character of poetry. It is the same as when the struggles in the ultimate ground of hostility become play. The "poetry" that appears in the place that transcends what is ordinarily referred to as the domain of poetry — the poetry that is not created by man, but the poetry in which man comes to participate and which takes part in man himself as well — what domain would that be? Now when man casts off his small self and piously enters Reality, Great Wisdom (*prajñā*) opens up as the native place of all things, as the place where they emerge and realize themselves as they are — the place of Reality itself. This opening up is, directly, none other than man realizing Reality in its suchness. The light of Wisdom, in which Reality shines and is seen in its suchness, is Reality's own light. The light of this "Sun of Wisdom" as it is, is also the insight in which man sees his

“primary and original face.” And the poetry that comes to appear of itself from that *prajñā* is the poetry we here speak of. In that *prajñā* the reality of any actual thing whatsoever becomes, as it is, the “occasion for poetry and spiritual divertissement,” which contains “boundless meaning.”

Hakuin gives the following well-known passage from the *Analects* as a *jakugo* for the third line : —

“At the end of spring, when the making of the Spring Clothes has been completed, I would go with five or six newly-capped youths and six or seven uncapped boys, perform the lustration in the River I, take the air at the Rain Dance altars, and then go home singing.”

(after Waley)

It might be said of the aforementioned *prajñā* that it is the place where not only poetry but also religion, philosophy and morality originate — the place where all of them are perhaps united in such a way as makes it difficult to separate them, it being prior to them all. If that is so, the poetry I refer to here can be said to be the domain whence man-made poetry originates and whither it returns, as to its own native place which is prior to it. But one cannot easily talk about such a secret area of human existence. Here we must limit ourselves simply to raising the questions.

The tale of this encounter, which comes to a close with Kyōzan giving his name and Sanshō giving his, ends with Kyōzan's roaring laughter. The sound of the laughter is the essence of the whole tale. It is here the struggle — which is really a “sportive *samādhi*” — it is here the joint singing and clapping, drumming and dancing, all come to an end. This was a battleground, a place where man sang in unison, now it is altogether different. It has turned back to the place of origin. It is like the ancient battlefield spoken of by the haiku poet Bashō :



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Ah ! Summer grasses !  
All that remains  
Of the warriors' dreams.

(translation Blyth)

The men who fought here, which is to say the men who sang together here, those who stood face to face, are now long vanished. Kyōzan and Sanshō are now gone. Only Kyōzan's roaring laughter still resounds through the air. Daitō Kokushi 'caps' this with "Whither does this go?" Of course he is not merely after information, he is pointing to the place where Kyōzan hides in laughter. In this "place of laughter" the reality of the encounter between one man and another may be transformed *as it is* into super-reality. It is not of course the reality of surrealism. Here, it could be said, reality manifests itself in its original aspect of super-reality. Such is the implication of the words "the occasion for poetry and spiritual divertissement holds boundless meaning" — but we can speak of it no further. To understand the boundless meaning held here is permitted only to "the man who wanders in the fields and arduously composes poetry." The figure of the poet struggling to make poetry in order to transmit this meaning — which he has understood — to others, may be said to suggest the agreement of *Mahāprajñā* and *Mahākaruṇā* that are contained in Kyōzan's great laughter. This third line, together with the *jakugo* "Whither does this go?" may be said to be the *ecce homo* of Daitō Kokushi himself.

(Translated by N. A. Waddell.)