

SEASCAPE

SHINKICHI TAKAHASHI
ADAM HALBUR

OTHER WORKS BY ADAM HALBUR

AS AUTHOR

Poor Manners (Ahadada 2009)

AS CONTRIBUTOR

Local Ground(s): Midwest Poetics (Cowfeather 2014)

Never Before: Poems about First Experiences (Four Way 2005)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The **cover photograph** was taken from the morning ferry from Beppu on the island of Kyushu to Yawatahama on Shikoku in March 2015. Shinkichi Takahashi (高橋新吉) attended secondary school in Yawatahama, which is not far from his home town of Ikata. “Can’t Be Helped” in *Seascape* is a poem set in the town of Kawanohama on the Sadamisaki Peninsula, along the same route.

The translation *Seascape* is of Takahashi’s book *Unabara* 「海原」 published by Seidosha (青土社) in Tokyo in 1984.

The translation “**Life Infinite**” of “Muyryoujyu (無量壽)” was originally presented in the lecture “Whatever Happens: Rilke and Takahashi” in July 2003 for the MFA Program in Writing at Warren Wilson, Asheville, NC.

The **photograph of Takahashi’s grave** in Uwajima, Ehime also was taken in March 2015. Uwajima is just south of Ikata and Yawatahama on Shikoku Island.

The **frontispiece** of Takahashi is from the original work, *Unabara* 「海原」, and first was taken for *Asahi Shimbun*.

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in memoriam
Jim Harrison, 1937-2016

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Introduction

I am not an authority on the Japanese language, art criticism, Zen, the poetry of Shinkichi Takahashi (高橋新吉), or Takahashi's generation. In fact, I cannot claim to be intensely interested in any of these. What I can say is this (ala Joseph Mitchell): My ears are bent. I have been listening to people since sitting at my grandfather's knee, listening to their stories, their manner of speaking, or what makes them tick as folks would have said. However, I cannot claim to hear beyond my own limitations and so would add a few lines from Takahashi's poem "Words" in qualification: "I listen / To what makes you talk -- / Whatever that is -- / And me listen" (*Triumph of the Sparrow* 1986: 61). This is how I approach Takahashi and translating his poetry.

Born in 1901 in Ikata, Ehime and having lived many years in Nakano Ward of Tokyo, Takahashi was long dead when I was first introduced to him through translator Lucien Stryk (1924-2013) and his *Triumph of the Sparrow* (Grove Press). From Stryk's work, one gets a sense of the irascible nature of the Zen poet, and yet he somewhat romanticizes Takahashi, greatly abbreviating his winded lines. For example, Stryk's "Life Infinite" is 8 lines while the original is 15. As can be seen by comparison in my narrow translation below, Takahashi is very plain spoken, often repeating words as simple as "life" and "body," and uses no punctuation:

Life Infinite

Beyond words, this no-thingness within,
Which I've become. So to remain

Only one thing's needed: Zen sitting.
I think, breathe with my whole body --

Marvelous. The joy's so pure,
I can see, live anywhere, everywhere.
I need nothing, not even life.

(*Triumph* 1986: 69, trans. Lucien Stryk)

Life Infinite

It's indescribable in words or anything else
I'm simply tasting this joy with my whole body
Nothingness is this body itself
The universe of nothingness and my body of nothingness have become one

In order to keep this joy
I don't need anything even my mind
There is only Zen sitting
I think and breathe with my whole body
It's a penetrating joy beyond love making
I'm here but can see anywhere
I can live in any time

I don't need anything else
Because I have gained life infinite

It's life infinite no matter when I die
It's life infinite whether I'm dead or alive

(Original from *Gendaishi Bunko* 1998: 79-80, trans. Adam Halbur)

Republished in 1998, "Life Infinite" is from an earlier work, while the poems of *Seascape*, published in 1984 three years before his death, are some of Takahashi's last while alive. There are also many poems from throughout his life (See the publication list at the end of the book), including four previously published in his 20s in the magazine *DORA* ("gong," in English), as well as two essays, "Self-Possession," which largely consists of lengthy quote from a Zen master, and "About Zen," which ends with Takahashi's humorous view on writing poetry not unlike his own: "Poems are like blowing into the wind. No matter how much you blow, it is nothing more than wind."

Takahashi is not an average poet nor average follower of Zen. He exhibits a spiritual disinterestedness, as in his short poem "When in the Eyes of Gods," which I translated as follows:

Nothing has changed
In all the years under the heavens nothing has changed at all

Not one blessed thing -- and nothing will down the road

It is with this irreverence that I most identify, as I suspect did fellow Midwesterner Jim Harrison, another admirer of Takahashi. After sending him my first collection of poems, *Poor Manners* (Ahadada 2009), in the course of our exchanges he wrote:

Dear Adam,

I was relieved to hear that your Japanese wife likes garlic. I always took literally pounds of garlic to my U.P. cabin, and when I would walk into the tavern after eating my rigatoni with 33 cloves the crowd would turn, astounded by my unique odor. In the old days in Michigan, moms would use a quarter teaspoon of garlic salt for 10 pounds of burger.

Say hello to Takahashi for me, but then he's probably dead.

Yrs., Jim

In March 2015, I tracked down the cemetery in Uwajima, Ehime where Takahashi's ashes are interred. Locals were out spring cleaning family plots, but no one knew the whereabouts of his grave. After inquiring at the shrine's office, a man the age and stature of Harrison, and just as disheveled, shuffled out in slippers into the light rain that was falling and led me to the hilltop where Takahashi and his ancestors look out to sea:



I scribbled as best I could with pencil and damp paper the last lines of my translation of "Resurgence" and left them under the incense bowl:

In due course it became but bone
the meat eaten by a man
Then one day the man died

The bream rotted from inside
Burned in the crematory to white bone
White bones thrown to the sea
The bream surged on through the waves presently

In Japanese, that would read as follows top to bottom, right to left:

やがて骨だけになって
身は人間に食われた
そして人間は或日死んだ
鯛は人間の腹の中で腐敗した
火葬場で焼かれて白骨となった
白骨は海に投げ棄てられた
まもなく鯛は蘇生して遊ぎだした

Even if one cannot read *kanji* or *kana*, one would notice that almost all the lines end with the simple past tense た or “ta”, a methodical declarative grammar forming a chant of sorts:

Yagate hone dake ni natte
mi wa ningen ni kuwareta
Soshite ningen wa aruhi shinda
Tai wa ningen no hara no naka de fuhai shita
Kasouba de yakarete hakkotsu to natta
Hakkotsu wa umi ni nagesuterareta
Mamonaku tai wa sosei shita oyogi dashita

Takahashi uses no punctuation; however, from the plain grammar, one gets a sense where each phrase begins, which I indicate in this transliteration and in my translations with capitalization. Even the interrogative, which relies merely on the article か or “ka,” I signify by capitalizing the question word, whether it be “Why,” “Is” or so on. The only punctuation I found necessary in *Seascape* is the dash, which signifies where Takahashi left a space for pause or change of direction. Finally, I should note that in some poems Takahashi puts select Japanese words in

katakana, a script usually reserved for foreign words, as a sort of italicization, but I was not always faithful to this stylization when it seemed heavy-handed.

I enjoy the pictographic nature and wordplay possible with Japanese script, which however, cannot be completely captured in translation. “Seascape,” or “unabara,” for example, is formed of the *kanji* “umi (海),” for “sea,” and “hara (原),” meaning “field” or “plain” or, when used as a prefix, “fundament” and “primitive.” “Hara” can also be found in “ama no hara (天の原),” “the heavens.” For the most part, I adhere to the literal translations provide by Keiko Matsuki and Don Kenny. Matsuki, an experienced translator, is a graduate of the English literature department at Sophia University, Tokyo. Kenny, also a graduate of Sophia, has lived and worked for over sixty years in Tokyo as a translator and actor of *kyōgen* (狂言, literally “crazy words”). He is largely responsible for the translations of Takahashi’s essays, which I altered little.

The final wordings of the poems are mine. Though I attempt to maintain Takahashi’s mechanics and grammar as much as possible, I remove very specific references to Japanese culture and add the occasional crank expletive, such as in “Autumn Rain,” where “For sarashina soba from Nagasaka is / delicious” became “Buckwheat noodles are damned / good.” I also remove word repetition by substituting pronouns or synonyms. A word that may have one specific meaning in Japanese, such as “hana (花)” for “flower,” may have five viable English alternatives, including “blossom,” “bud,” “bloom,” “flore” and “petals,” which I employ for desired effect. A liberal example is when I change “one petal,” “*ippen no kaben* (一片の花弁),” to “singular leaves,” emphasizing not just a single petal but the singular nature of petals as colorful leaves evolved to last but briefly and then fade away, in the poem “Red Flower and White Flower.”

In my efforts to seek permission to publish this collection, I was able to communicate with Takahashi’s family, through an intermediary. Though quite elderly, Mrs. Takahashi was wonderfully roundabout, relating how she has been hounded by fans or fanatics who did not understand her husband, how she admired her husband’s work, how her husband noticed her and asked to marry her, how she had received my release form but did not know what to do with it, and how I should write the kind of poems I believed in. While I had her blessing, I wasn’t able to publish the poems “Resurgence” and “Four Trees Lion Blood Purple Demon,” which were initially accepted by *Hayden’s Ferry Review*. There are some other descent translations in the collection but others are only passable. Here then I offer up the entire collection for what it is worth and bid Takahashi adieu.

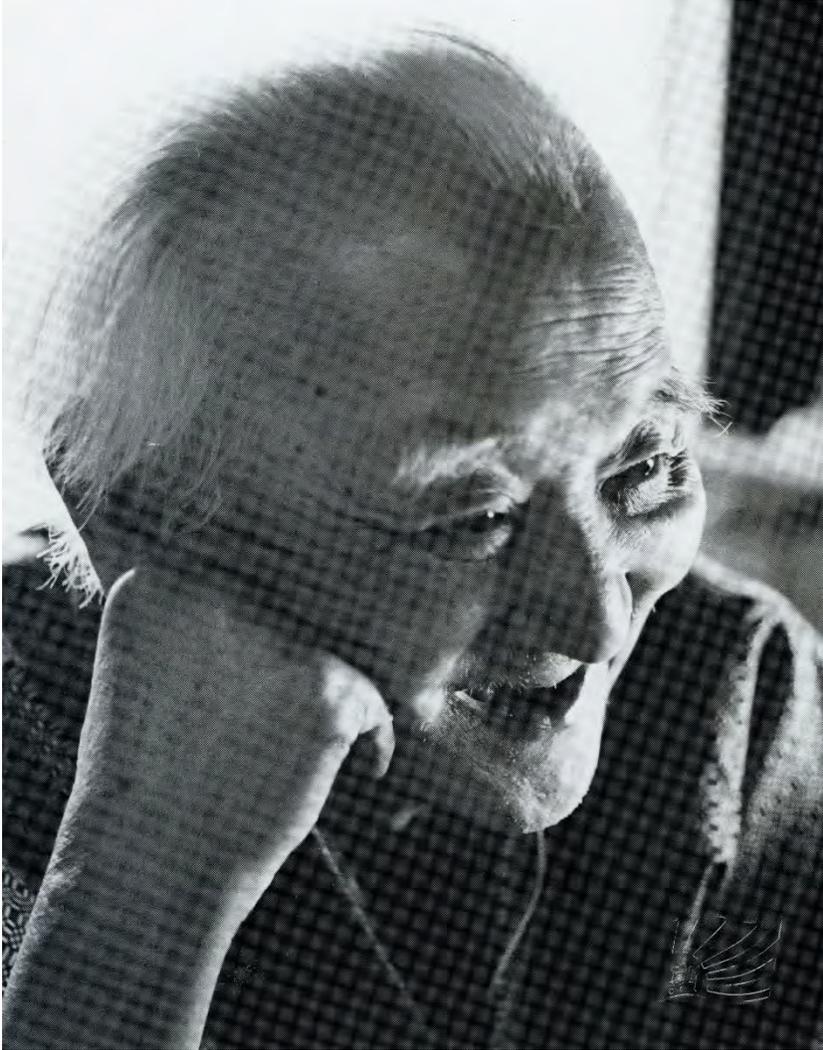
I also part with Jim Harrison, who I luckily ran into going out of the Wagon Wheel Saloon in Patagonia, Arizona in January 2015, a year before he passed away. The title of his last book of poems, *Dead Man’s Float*, I like to think he partly derived

from *Seascape*, the first half of which I had sent to him in an earlier manifestation. “Zona” from his collection feels very much like Takahashi:

My work piles up,
I falter with disease.
Time rushes toward me – it has no
brakes. Still,
the radishes are good this year.
Run them through butter,
and a little salt.

Harrison’s voice was in my mind when I was translating Takahashi, but I cannot pretend kinship with either one. When said and done, the work herein is for and of itself.

Adam Halbur
April 21, 2016



詩集
海
原

SEASCAPE

鯛の復活

言葉で表現されたものは真実とは遠いものである

物事は表現され得るものではないからだ

表現されたものは凡て真実ではない

何ものにも価値はない その一点に於て

その一瞬において 価値をあらしむるのだ

潮に浸入された部屋の中を鯛は暴れまわった

そして部屋の外へ飛び出した

空間には外も内も有り得ない

終りも始めも時間にはない

音もなく死の扉は開かれた

頭と頸を切断されて鯛はその生涯を腕の中で過した

鯛の眼は汚れた人間の手を見据えていた

キリストの復活を真似て鯛はついに蘇った

どこからともなく喜びの歌がきこえる

潮は天井まで満ち溢れ吸物椀も漂流する

鯛は悠々と尾鰭をうごかして泳いでいた

Resurrection Sea Bream

Things expressed in words are far from true
because things cannot be expressed
Nothing that is expressed is true
There is no value in any one thing -- at any one point
at any one moment -- value exists in and of itself

Inside a room inundated by the tide a bream thrashed and writhed
then jumped outside
Within space there can be no out no in
There is no end no beginning within time

Without a sound death's door opened
The severed head and gills spent inside a bowl
At the soiled human hand an eye was gazing
O second coming O final revival
Out of the void a jubilant psalm
The tide to the ceiling rising the soup bowl setting sail
The bream lazily fanning its tail going

海原うなばら

海原のようにひろい白雲の中を

飛んで行ったときもあった

病院のベットの上に呻吟するようになって

かれこれ三ヶ月たった

女の柔肌にふれたこの肌も皺だらけに

しぼんでいる

人間には生老病死苦のあることを忘れていた

七転八倒の苦しみをしている何千万の人々がいることであろう

男女の愛欲のスサマジサはよくわかってきた

抱きしめて天地も砕けよと興奮した事もあった

空しく消えた虹のようなものである

裸の女と寝ていたと思ったら

牛とねていたこともあった

牛の舌が全身を舐めたので目が覚めた

若き看護婦たちの躍動する肉体

彼女たちの献身には頭がさがる

日本女性の母性愛の美しさ やさしさ

隣の寝台に小児麻痺の青年がきた

この青年にはおなじ小児麻痺の妻がいた

そして美しい女の子が一人できていた

この夫婦の愛情の美しさは類稀たぐいまれなものである

娘は父親によく似たつき色んな世話をしていた

母親と毎日のように見舞にくる

母親は少し 憂いをふくんで

物悲しそうな表情をしているが

自分に与えられた運命を甘受して

一切をあきらめている態度である

青年は一日新聞をよんだり読書している

「殺人シリーズ」などという本を読んでいる

聡明な 人に好かれる心境を得ている

この夫婦に感動したのであったが

まもなく別の病室に青年は移った

(病室にて)

Seascape

There was a time once I was flying
through white clouds as wide as the sea
Since coming to languish in this hospital bed
almost three months have passed
And this skin that once touched a woman's softness is full of wrinkles
shriveled
I have forgotten humans have to suffer through birth aging illness death
I suppose there are millions of people suffering the throes of pain
I have come to better understand the fierceness of a man and woman's lust
once so excited fucking *Heaven and Earth be damned*
like a rainbow wasting away
Once I thought I was lying with a naked woman
but I was sleeping with a cow
It ran its tongue the entire length of my body and I woke

The vibrant moving bodies of young nurses
I bow to their dedication
The love of a motherly woman so beautiful -- so tender

In the next bed a young man with polio appeared
He had a wife with polio just like him
And they had one beautiful girl
Such family affection is so uncommon
The daughter is so attached to her father doing anything everything
She comes with her mother to visit nearly every day
The mother is a little -- is carrying a great weight
her face so sad but
accepting the lot given her
an air of letting go of everything
The young man reads the newspaper all day always reading something
He is reading books murder mysteries among them
Knowledgeable -- of a mind admired by others
I was impressed by him and his family but unfortunately
he was just moved to another room

(In a hospital room)

蘇生

魚屋の包丁に切り落されて
刺身にされた己が身を憐れみ
鯛は無性に腹が立って
奮起したのだ
鯛は座敷の畳の上を
上下に浮上し
また沈下して
縦横無尽に進行し
また後退する

やがて骨だけになって
身は人間に食われた
そして人間は或日死んだ
鯛は人間の腹の中で腐敗した
火葬場で焼かれて白骨となった
白骨は海に投げ棄てられた
まもなく鯛は蘇生して遊ぎだした

Resurgence

Filleted into sashimi
by the fish shop knife the sea bream defiles
itself with electric rage and
has shot up
Rising and falling on the tatami floor the bream
surfaces and
again sinks
without limit advances and
again retreats

In due course it became but bone
the meat eaten by a man
Then one day the man died
The bream rotted from inside
Burned in the crematory to white bone
White bones thrown to the sea
The bream surged on through the waves presently

春になって

皿に盛った鯛の刺身が

跳ねてうごきた

ひとりで元の体になって

遊ぎだした

鯛の頭は吸物にすると

お椀の中に目玉が光っている

海には数多の魚貝類が生息する

鯛は共に生きていた頃をなつかしむ

海の水は程よい温度を保って流れている

鯛は鱗と鱗を擦り合せて

接触した鯛のことを戀しがる

Coming of Spring

The bream sashimi placed on a dish
jumped and began to move
It became by itself its whole body
and started to swim
The bream's head made soup and
inside the bowl its eyeball glaring
Untold creatures inhabit the sea
The bream remembers their time there
The waters are flowing steeping everything just so
For the others it pressed side to side
touched the sea bream aches

小鳥の影

朝小鳥の影を見るのはたのしい
花も咲いている

私は八十年あまり生きてきたが
生きることに飽きはしない

そんなゼイタクな考えは私にはない
そうかといって生きることを

それほどよろこんでもいない
ほんとうは生きている私など

というものはないからだ

仏の教える無生の法を尊ぶだけである

Shadows of Little Birds

In the morning watching the little birds' shadows is fun
The flowers are open too
I have lived a little over 80 and yet
I am not tired of living
I do not have the luxury of such thoughts
Because in truth there is no
such thing as me living
I can only respect Buddha's teaching
there is no death in life
no life in death

朝
靄

朝靄をついて船が行く

汽笛がカスンデきこえる

あなたのことが忘れられない

脳裏を離れない

耳を澄ましてなつかしい声を思い浮べる

これはかなしくもうれしいことだ

死は死を知るにはもつともよいだろう

あなたを知るにはどんな方法があるだろう

あなたにやさしくふれる以外に

つかみかたを私は知らない

あまりてなどか人の戀しき

Morning Mist

The boat merging with the morning mist goes
Through the haze I can hear its horn

I cannot forget one thing about you
I cannot part with my mind
I open my mind's ear recall a fond voice and let it drift
This is sad but joyous too

To know death death is best right
What ways are there of knowing you

Other than tenderly touching
I know no other way to grasp you

Why O why do I long for your person

ホロビッツ

ホロビッツのピアノをテレビできく

音のない世界

しずかな世界だ

何の音もしない

ピアノもなければ

奏者もない

十本の指が目まぐるしく

うごくだけだ

世紀のリサイタル

今世紀最高のピアニスト

だというホロビッツ

骨董品でヒビが入っていると

評した人もいたが

それにしても

二億円のギャラは悪くない

先日ピカソ展を見たが

日本人のバカサ加減を見るために

行ったようなものだ

子供にまであんなものを見せてどうなるのだ

ホロビッツは少くともピカソに比べると

優秀かもしれぬ

すぐれた作曲家の曲を弾くだけだと

彼は言ったが

この謙虚な言葉は快ろよい

額ひたいに汗は滲ませなかったが

七十八才の年齢で二時間の労働は

身体的にいつて限界だろう

私は音痴でベートーベンもモーツァルトもバッハも

退屈なだけだがホロビッツの脱音楽的な破調はよいと思った

私が死んだら山も川も静かになる

虫ケラも鳴かなくなる

ホロビッツは内心思っているかもしれぬ

音のない世界

対話のない国に

すでに彼は棲んでいるのだろう

Horowitz

I hear Horowitz on TV
A world without sound
It's a quiet world
Not a sound at all
Neither the piano
nor the performer exists
Merely ten fingers dizzily
dance
The recital of a century
and Horowitz hailed
the best pianist of this
A cracked antique
some have criticized
though even so
a 2-million-dollar-wage 's not bad
The other day I saw the Picasso exhibit and yet
it was as if I went
to see the extent of people's stupidity
What will come of showing that stuff even to their kids
Compared to Picasso Horowitz at least
might be better
He merely plays the songs of the great composers
he explained
his humble words ringing true
And though no sweat broke from his brow
at 78 years of age 2 hours' labor
must be his physical limit
For tone deaf me Beethoven and Mozart and Bach
are nothing but boring but in Horowitz's music-free meter I thought were decent

If I die the mountains and rivers will quiet
The insects will stop whining
Deep inside Horowitz must be thinking
A world without sound
In that country without conversation
he must be already residing

無空間

空間がないのだから
何ものも存在しない

自分もなければ
他人もない

空間がないのだから
見るものもない

眼前物なく
見る目もない

空間がないのだから
大地寸土なしと禅坊主は言っている

地球もなければ
太陽もないと
ウソブクのである

The Void

Since there is no space
nothing exists

If there is no self
there is no other

Since there is no space
there is nothing to see

There is nothing before your eyes and
there are no eyes to see with

Since there is no space
there is not one inch of land the Zen prelate prattles on

And if there is no Earth
there is no Sun
the bird chatters on and on and on and

紫鬼獅子血木四個

私の腕は挫かれ痺れた

血が噴き出た

私は何ものをも恐れてはゐない

権力も私の此の奔出する生命力ほど強力なものは

一つとしてない

私は破壊された

私の頭脳は天より屋根へ落ちた瓦の如く

壊れてゐる

私は何事も思考してはゐないのだ

弱小な人間共の慣習に従って

餘りに私は鋭敏なる私の脳髓の壁を振動させ過ぎた

月のある夜に泣くと云ふ

鳥もあるのよ

泣く鳥も

ツキノアルヨニナクトイフ

トリモアルノヨ

ナクトリモ

此れは何の独唱だ此んな日本語があつて好いか

私は怒号した

私は絶叫した

私の情熱は日本の国を全世界を口の中に頬張つて

猶も足りないで松板の壁を掻き裂き噛みくだき

嚥下した

私の胃袋は灼熱した鉄でも消化する力があつた

私は人間などではなかつた有り得なかつた

私は紫の鬼であつた獅子であつた

私は目からと口からも血を吐き出した

私の心臓は乾物のやうにカラカラに乾き

肺は充血して破れ

私は其の私の体内にあつた血液の塊りが

壁に飛び散り黒く血塗られた様を頬笑んで見た

私の笑ひは松の木のやうな笑であつたろう

松の葉が赤くなり枯れるやうに

私は痩せ衰へ一枚のはがきの如くに薄くなつた

私は単なる物体に過ぎなかつたのだ

それは四個から出来上つてゐた

私は転がつてゐた

Four Trees Lion Blood Purple Demon

Crushed my arm went numb
Blood spurted out
I am not afraid of anything
There is not one authority
as powerful as this life force I spout
I already have been wrecked
Like a roof struck by a tile from the heavens my head
is overcome
I am not thinking a thing
While the pusillanimous masses continue as convention dictates
I pounded the walls of my exquisite cerebrum to the end
*On moonlit nights there are birds
that cry they say
even birds cry*
On moonlit nights there are birds
that CRY they say
even birds CRY
You think this is verse you think this is good
I cursed
I screamed
In my rage I jammed my nation the entire world between my jaws
yet unsated scratched tore gnawed ingested
the walls
I had the stomach to smelt iron
I was not man could not have been
I was purple demon I was lion
I spit blood from mouth and eyes
My heart like racked fish bone-dry and
my lungs bloated rags
I smiled at the way a clot from my corpse
sprayed blackened painted the wall
My laugh was a pine's
And as pine needles rust
I wasted away thin as paper card
I was mere object nothing more
four limbs
laid low

私に觸れるものは忽ちにして腐敗し壞体する

私自身が腐敗してゐた私は腐敗其のものであった

其の臭氣は堪え難きものであつたらう

私は憤懣を私と同じ二つの目を持った動物に

のみ浴せてゐるのではない

Things that touch me straightway ruin and rot
I myself was rotten I was rot itself
The foulness must have been insufferable
This animal with my two eyes
is not all on which my wrath falls

秋雨

あきさめよ
いつまでふるか
ふるあめに
きけばとて
こたえはあらず
をやみなく
ふりつづく

あきさめよ
ものいはず
ひねもすを
まごにより
あめのおとをききて
すごさんとせしかども
やぶれしかさをもち
さかをくだれば
あきさめはあなどりて
わがこうべをうつ
ふとげたのすべりて
あふむけにのけぞりたほれぬ
ふるかあめよ
したたかにひぢをすりむぎ

あしのこうよりはけむりのごとく
ち、ふきいづ
かえらなん
しきはなしたるふとんのうつりかの
まさにきえなんとす
あきさめよ
きゆるいのちはをしからねど
うえたるはらをいかにせん
いざあゆまなん
ながさかのさらしなの
そばはうまければ あほうおとこは
けうもまたさかをくだれり
あめよふるか
ふたたびはころばじ
あきさめはさげすみて

Autumn Rain

O autumn rain
till when wilt thou fall
Though even if I
entreat you you
reply not
without pause
keep falling
O autumn rain
without a word
I would spend
all the day
at the window
listening to you and yet
as I descend the hill
clinging to ruined umbrella
you mockingly
strike my head
And without warning my sandal slips
Flung backward face to the sky fallen
Damn you pouring rain
Elbow badly scraped and
from the top of my foot blood -- puffs
out like smoke
I guess I'll go home now
The stink of the futon I left spread
should nearly be gone
O autumn rain
to this departing life I cling not and yet
what shall I do with this burning hole in my gut
I'll turn around that's what
Buckwheat noodles are damned
good -- and this stupid man
once more is descending the hill
Keep it up rain with all your might
Shower me with contempt
Fog my glasses

わがめがねをくもらす

かくてさらしなのそばくいにけり

Come hell or high water
I am going to eat

秋の散索

秋晴れの一日

田の畔^{ほとり}を歩いてきみを訪ねた

草の実がズボンに一杯ついた

きみの顔がぼくの顔そっくりだということは大變なことだ

大工が板をケズッている

どれもこれも鉋屑のちがいである

どの腕もどの足もどの電信柱も

雀はゴミのように飛んで行った

電話線の上を

地熱があるので秋の虫ケラどもも生きておれるのだ

バスの車掌は居眠りしていた

あのバスは可笑しいほど尾部を

ヒネリまわして走った

Autumn Walk

One clear autumn day
walking the banks of the rice paddies I visited you
So many burs clung to my pants
The fact that your face is so similar to mine is something of a quandary
A carpenter is planing a board
Each and every shaving is different
Any arm any leg any utility pole
the sparrows like litter flew away
above the power lines

Since there's still ground heat the autumn bugs can go on living
The bus conductor was dozing off
The bus advanced albeit the rear odd-balled back and forth

秋の日

何とあたたかいことであらう

秋の日ざしの何とあついことであらう

生きてゐることの何とさびしいことよ

あたたかいとかあついか

生きてゐるとかいふことが みんなうそっぱちな出鱈目な感覚に

根ざしたことだといふのに

何と冬の日のつめたさが思はれるあつさであらう

春の日を思はすあたくかさであらう

Autumn Day

How warm it is

How hot the autumn Sun

How lonely it is living

Warm hot

all things living considered -- everything in a deceitful false sense
rooted and yet

how the heat makes me miss the cold of winter days

It is a warmth that reminds me of spring

ジャコメッティ

——池袋西武美術館でジャコメッティを見る

彼は妻の浮気を責めることも

男の欲望を制することもできぬのだ

ひたすら描きつづけるだけである

憤懣と汚辱にさいなまれた作業であり

無惨な世界である

死に到る疲労があるだけだ

神も顔を背けるだろう

ジャコメッティの苦悩は

彼が妻を寝盗られたことに起因するようだ

彼の執拗な鋭いまなざしに

その男はさらされる

人妻との歓喜と罪悪感に脅えながらも

モデルの座から逃れられない一羽の鴉

ジャコメッティは嫉妬と怨恨にふるえながら

描くことをやめない

ジャコメッティのデッサンはすぐれている

彫刻はいずれも裸の鉄線で奇形である

Giacometti

----Upon seeing the Giacometti exhibit at Ikebukuro-West Art Museum

Giacometti's anguish
feeds on his wife having fucked
this man now under his
piercing gaze
this siskin trembling with thrill and guilt
unable to escape the model's seat
while Giacometti with envy and enmity shaking
does not stop working
his line rougher and tougher
his form leaner and meaner

This is not to damn his wife
This is not to snuff the man
He does nothing but continue
the work tormented by displeasure and disgrace
a forbidding world
where there is only weariness unto death
and no God to greet your face

これがわが人生

母の腹の中で父と対決した
腹を飛び出してから父を殺した

いくたびとなく社会と対決した

頭は割れ

心臓は破れた

赤い血を全身に浴びた

それから女と対決した

女の腹は黒かった

子供がそこから出てきた

爾來子供と対決した

やがて子供達も知るだろう

あやまり多き人生であった

いくたびとなく神と対決した

神とはかひ黷であった

思弁の粕にすぎなかった

痛恨深きものがあった

お父さん お母さん

お墓のそばへ

入ることをおゆるし下さい

かくてわが人生は終る

This Is My Life

Inside Mom's belly I faced off with Dad
And I popped out and killed him

I faced off with society countless times
Head split
heart torn
I showered my entire body in red blood

And then I faced off with woman
Her belly was black with deception
From there a child came

As the story goes I faced off with the child
But of course children soon understand

Life was full of mistakes
Countless times I faced off with God
To me God was mold
was nothing but scum's conception

There was deep remorse
Father -- Mother
please pardon my entrance
into the family grave

My life ends in this way

赤い帽子

彼女は赤い帽子を頭にのせることに 積極的な意欲を持っていたの
ではない

夕暮の雑踏する舗道を歩くとき ただ何となく赤い帽子が目立つた
ろうと思ったのだ

蟹が燦でられて赤くなつたよう で 自分に似合わないことは知って
いるのだ

でも未婚の安サラリーマンの彼女にも 愛情を感じる青年が一人ぐ
らいはあつてもいいと彼女は思っていた

その青年が彼女を抱擁して 帽子が邪魔になるといったら 直ぐに
脱ぎ棄てればいい

何でも暫定的なんだから と思つていたので

車道を横断るとき 危うい足どりで 体を斜めにしていた
黒い影を踏んだ途端に

暴走した車と衝突して 彼女は横匍いになった

頭蓋骨が 三ヶ月形に割れて バラバラに骨折した
救急車が 赤い帽子をのせて 運んで行った

Red Hat

It's not that she had some ill intention -- putting that red hat on
It's just in the sunset on the bustling pavement when she walks -- for no reason
 she thought it would stand out
Like a crab being boiled turned scarlet -- she knows she doesn't look good
But for a poorly paid working woman -- she was thinking there must be at least
 one man with a heart
That young beau is holding her -- the hat -- if it gets in the way -- can easily
 be tossed aside
Everything is uncertain -- she was thinking
Crossing the street -- perilous steps -- her body was leaning
As soon as she stepped into the shadows
she met with a quick-moving car -- was razed
Skull -- into a crescent-shaped moon fractured -- shattered to pieces
The ambulance -- took on the red hat -- took it away

バカ

私は今夜眠ると死ぬような気がする

私は無理な生活をつづけて来てゐる

一日中坐って少しも歩かないのだ

このやうなバカな生活を何故私はつづけるのであろうか

これは私の欲望がなせるわざである

私の心臓は衰へてゐる　もうこの上鼓動を打つことはいやだと言ふ

がごとくである

私の脳髓は疲労に疲労を重ねてゐる

もう何も考へる能力は無くなつてゐる

私の肺はむしばまれ　空気を吸ふ力もはやあまり無いのだ

それにもかかはらず

私はこの生活を止めようとは思はない

あと三日すれば

私が今なしつつあることが一段落するのだ

私の生命があと三日持ちつづけるであらうか

そしたら私は　自分の生命を長びかすことに努めようと思ふが

今は生命のことをかまっては居れないのだ

なしつつあることをなしつつける以外になそうと思ふことはない

もし私が死んだら

私はバカであつたから死んだといふことになる

私はもはや死ぬかもしれぬ

舌がしびれてきたやうに思ふ

Stupid

I feel if I sleep tonight I will die
I have continued in this unlikely life
sitting the live-long day not walking one bit
Why do I keep on in this idiotic fashion
Is this what desire is worth
My heart is withering away -- as if each beat declares it does not want to beat
 anymore
My cerebrum is heaping burden upon burden
No ability to think anymore
My lungs have been eaten away -- no power to suck air anymore
Nonetheless
I will not let myself think of ending this life
In three days
what I am now in the middle of will wind down
I wonder if in three days I'll still be
and then -- I think I can but drag on my existence
in fact minding a life I can no longer mind
And I do not want to work on anything I am not
If I should die
it means I died because I was stupid
I might die tonight
My tongue is growing numb I think

茶

茶の花が白く咲いている

私の腕に

娘が笑っている

肱^{ひじ}の皺^{しわ}のところに

短い冬の日脚を

障子がふさいでいる

一碗の茶に

人の世の憂患を泡立たせて

仄かな香りを呑みほす

Tea

Tea flowers open white

In my arms

my daughter smiles

In the wrinkles of my elbow

the setting rays of the short winter sun

the paper doors suppress

In one cup of tea

frothed with all the world's sorrows

a lingering fragrance I devour

巖

都會の激動の中に

動かざるものあり

微弱なれども

崩れざるものあり

眼を一閃すれば

万物屏息し

言を発すれば

天地破る

猛り狂ふ怒濤の中に

動かざる巖のごとく

巍然たる意志ありて

見えざれども

強く白き歯を持ち

觸るゝものを

悉く切断し吞下す

Rock

Amidst the city's unrest
there are things immovable
But shakable too
There are things brought down
If an eye glances
all creation bates breath
If a word flies
Heaven and Earth rend

Amidst the fierce savage surge of waves
like an immovable rock
is a monstrous will
Though unseen
strong white teeth are drawn
Things they lay hold of
are slashed to pieces and shoveled down

飛行

風を切って進もう

風が飛んでゐるのではない

心が飛んでゐるのだ

心とは 雲のことである

輝く雲よ

汝が飛び行くところ

山岳は縮み失せ

市街は萌黄色に散る

大いなる焔の天を焦がし

胎児の如き時間を死滅せしめ

汝の眼を宇宙一ぱいにひろげろ

エンジンの轟きは蠅の羽音に異ならずとも

爆破すべきものなき涯に

大海を燃そう

大空に

太陽と星を再建しよう

汝風雲に乗り

無限の彼方に

突き進め

Flight

Let us on through the wind cut
It is not the wind taking wing
It is the heart
What is heart is cloud
O glinting cloud
the place thou are off to
mountain peaks sink out of sight

Towns pass into yellow-green
scorched by the vast flare of the heavens
Like a fetus conceiving time's demise
to the Universe open thy eyes wide

Though the engine's roar is not unlike the fly's buzz
the sea cliffs not a thing to blast
let us the great oceans burn

In the great sky
let us the Sun and stars remake

O cloud and wind ride
into the limitless distance
thrusting on all the way through

神の目から見れば

何も変わったことはない

五百億年前から依然として變ってるない

何一つ變ったことは 將來も起ることはないのだ

When in the Eyes of Gods

Nothing has changed

In all the years under the heavens nothing has changed at all

Not one blessed thing -- and nothing will down the road

心

心は虚空よりもやはらかい

何もないのが心だから 心は通ぜぬところがない

心はあまることも足らぬこともない

もっとも穢い心は別だ

心はキレイなものだけれど 色々なものに依ってよごれる

この心は破れることもなく 金剛よりもかたい

万事終ったところに発生する

假にこれを心といふのだ

Heart

Heart is rarer than the faintest air
Since nothingness is heart -- there is no place heart speaks from
Heart is neither in dearth nor in surfeit
At most a soiled heart is apart
Heart is immaculate -- but depends upon what may come to foul it
This heart never breaks -- is more steadfast than iron staff
is born of a place where ten thousand things end
This for now is all we have for heart

死

死に交って生がある

死の裏側に生があるのだ

生は死と同一の時間の中を流れている

いつでも死んでいるのだ

いつでも生きているのではない

死が表面に出て 生は死の影に過ぎないから

死が無くなれば 影は従って消える

Death

Life is crossed with death
In death's lining there is life
Together with time life and death run
All is always dying
All is not always living
Death bleeds through -- for life is nothing less than death's stain
If death goes -- its mark cannot be made

石

私は石を屋根の上へ投げようとした
すると太陽が照っていた

私は目をつぶって石をかみくだいた

その石が鶏の尻から出た

鶏は太陽を恨んでいる

太陽はゲラゲラ笑っている

私は又一つ石を拾った

すると音がした

私は石を下駄の上へ落したのであった

Stones

I tried tossing a pebble up onto the roof
Whereupon the Sun was blazing
I clamped my eyes my teeth and ground
that stone shat by a chicken
that glares with rancor at the Sun
that raises a brazen cackle
I reached for one more rock
Thereupon the sound it made
Off my clog the stone I dropped knocked

破けた幻想ゆきぐつ

白い犬を首にまいて歩いていたら
女がふりかえった

雪国の娘はまるい目をしている

兎のような目である

それでぼくは女を抱いた

北国の娘の血は鱒のように冷めたい

トラックの車体のようであった

喜びも悲しみも共にしたいと女が言った

痛ましいことだ

ではどこかへ載せて行ってくれ

敦賀つるがの鯛ますずしは不味まずかった

交叉点で犬が轢ひかれた

Frustrated Fancy

As I was walking my dog on a leash
a woman turned and looked
Girls from the north have eyes round
as the eyes of rabbits
And so I seized her
blood cold as a mackerel's
as the body of a truck
I wish to be rapt in both despair and delight she said
How heartbreaking
Well then take me away from here
the sea bream sushi of this town was depressing
But alas at the corner my dog was hit and run over

雀と台風

雀は渦を巻いて飛んでいる
百億年を一瞬で飛んでいる

それは飛んでいないのだ
「時」は無いからである
いつでもおなじ夕暮れである

あやふやな人間が空を飛んでいる
飛行機は少しも飛ばない
いつでもおなじ場所に停止している
空間は無いからである
どこでもおなじ位置である

どこにいようが
太陽と雀とはおなじ間隔を持っているのだ
ジェット機も地球も
人間の夢想の世界にのみ浮んでいる

かくて何事もなかったように
一呑みに宇宙を噛み砕けば
一切はわが有なりである

雀は死に雀は生れている
そしてそれがそのまま空白な時間に吸いこまれていく

Sparrows and Storm

Sparrows are circling whirling
ten billion years by in a flash

It is not that they are flying
Time is not time as such
and dusk is always dusk

Only seemingly people are taking to the skies
Their planes not moving a trace
are always in the same place hanging
There is no distance
everywhere always the same instance

No matter where
Sun and sparrow are fetching the same stretch
And jet and Earth
are but drifting the span of their passengers' dreams

In this way as if nothing ever was
as if the universe in one chomp might be mashed
one and all things are one's each and every breath

Sparrows are dying and sparrows are being born
and just as they are they are being drawn into time's vacant eye

出来

お前が思うて 如何なることが出来しゅったいしようとも
それはお前が思うたことであり
如何なる變化の世界が来ようとも
それはお前が思うところから離れて有りはしない

Occurrence

No matter what you might think -- and even if by chance comes to pass
is merely what you thought
No matter what way a word may happen
without question it does not move while the place you think it is

父の足

父の怨みを今にして解くことが出来る

父よよろこべ

父の足は 私の足だもの

Father's Feet

Father's rancor can now be razed

Father be pleased

Father's feet are -- really mine

わが身

わが身をつまんで

火鉢にくべて焼いた

Myself

Pinching off pieces of myself

I tossed them over coals to roast

赤い花と白い花

赤い花と白い花が咲いている

貧弱なわが家の庭に

赤い花は花魁草おいらんそう

白い花は木槿の花

土中に根を潜めて

咲き出づる赤白の花

どんな秘密な技術が営まれて

それらは咲き出づるのであろうか

梅樹の傍に花魁草は

口紅のような花弁を散らせている

木槿は片隅に高く伸びて白い紙のような花を

次々に咲かせている

これらは大地の精とも言えるだろう

赤白の花となって開く神秘なるもの

宇宙の生氣が凝って一片の花弁となり

目に見えぬ不思議な力で散ってゆく

美しき夢よ

Red Flower and White Flower

Red flowers and white flowers are blooming
in the garden of my miserable home
The phlox are called Courtesans
and the hollyhocks Ephemeral Splendor
While they secret their roots in the earth
and unwrap buds of red and white
what enigmatic art is at work
to make them beguile
Beneath the plum the phlox
are laying on petals like lipstick
And in the cranny the hollyhocks are reaching high
unfurling paper-light florescences one after another
Couldn't these groundlings also be called sprites
posers putting on red and white
condensing the life force of the universe into singular leaves
that then by imperceptible wonder are dispatched and scattered
in an exquisite dream

しょうがねえ

冬の夜更に又しても私の心臓は

川之浜を彷徨^{うろつ}き出した

瀬戸物の火鉢にキセルを

叩く音が何処かでした

此の儘^ま私は冷くなつて了ふであらうか

さればさ

トロトロと

彼女の股倉に焚火をくすべよう

(銅鑼五号より)

Can't Be Helped

Again once more into the winter night my heart
set out roaming this seaside town
A pipe on an earthenware oven
somewhere rapped
Shall I go as cold as I am
So be it
shilly-shally
I shall build a fire in the hearth between her thighs

(Published in the fifth issue of *DORA* [trans. GONG], October 27, 1925)

女と二人

女は少しでも自分を軽蔑する男でないと

戀しないと

みんな本に書いてあったんだよ

で僕はその通りやったんだよ

ところが女も本をよんであるんだ

だから困ったよ

女は少しでも前に経験した事は厭がるものでね

女は新奇を追ふものなんだよ

•
•
•

二人は泣いた別々に

一人は火燧にあたってゐた

一人は蜜柑を食べてゐた

二人は泣いた別々に

(銅籙7号より)

Alone with a Woman

A woman whom a man does not despise in the least
does not fall for him
This was in a book all written down
So I followed it to a tee
But of course the woman had read the book
And of course it ended in catastrophe
Anything a woman's met with in the least she loathes
It's the newfangled she's after I now know

. . .

One here one there two sobbed
one sitting beside the fire
one peeling a tangerine
One here one there two sulked

(Published in the seventh issue of *DORA* [trans. GONG], September 1926)

詩一
つ

死ぬるのが厭だなんて
贅ぜい沢たくな事を言ふな
死ぬるのが厭で
何うして生きて居れるんだ

(銅籙10号より)

One Poem

To proclaim you do not want to die
is an extravagance you should not take
If you do not want to die
how is it you get along in life

(Published in the tenth issue of *DORA* [trans. GONG], February 21, 1927)

詩二篇

壊れた時計と壊れない時計と

そんなものに大した差異を認めない

死んだ人間と生きた人間と

そんなものにも私は大した差異を認めない

私はもう長い事生きてゐるやうな気がする

青葉が夜になると黒く見えるやうに私はもう長い事自分が生きてゐるやうな気がする

(銅籬12号より)

Two Poems

Between a clock broken and a clock unbreakable
I don't see much difference
Between a person living and a person dead even
I find no disparity

.

I feel like I will go on living for a long time
Like summer leaves that seem black when night falls I feel in this life I must
flourish for quite some time

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短歌十首

烈しくも狂いしわれの青春を

思えば何も言うことはなし

ひとつ部屋に妹としおればしかすがに

相寄り添いて手をにぎり合う

三度目の入院で

救急車の中で涙がこぼれた

妻と娘が付き添っていた

感謝の涙であった

生は静かに生くべかりけり

と思った

父母ちちははの恩を思えばわが涙

とどまらずして夜もすがら泣く

足のいたみ堪えがたけれど父母に

与えし罪のつぐないなれば

ひとりして暮らしたりけり五十年

妻なきひとりのくらしなりしを

Ten Brief Poems

When for the third time I was hospitalized
tears spilled in the ambulance along the way
My wife and my daughter were accompanying me
And my tears were in thanks
 Life should be lived quietly
I thought

When I think on the tempestuousness and madness of my green years
there is nothing left to say

When I think on the large-heartedness of my mother and my father my tears
fall without end through the night

For Mother and Father who had to bear excruciating leg pain
as if God-sent in atonement for some sin

Fifty years of having lived alone
making a life without my wife

Alone together in one room my dear and I
cuddle and hold hands

吾^わ妹^{ぎも}子^こがやさしき瞳近づけて

物言えばかなしなやましきかな

死んだ方がましだと思うほどいたし

足のいたみはたえられぬなり

六十数年前に亡くなった弟のことが思い出される

暴君的なわれなりしかな

色は如何なるものにも固有の色はない

時によつて黒にも赤にも見えるのだ

Gentle eyes my darling wife draws along side
A word uttered would but sadden and unsettle

Much better to die I think than hurting so
I can withstand this pain in my legs no more

I bring my little brother who died sixty years ago back to mind
I was the one who was tyrant wasn't I

The color of any one thing is not set in stone
Things look black from time to time and at others red

平常心

平常心とは、どんな心をいうのであろうか。

「思惟に涉れば人に笑わる」と詩に書いている禅僧もいる。

「平常心是道」といったのは、中国の禅僧馬祖道一禅師である。

馬祖は、唐の景龍三年に四川省で生まれた。南嶽懷讓禅師の法を嗣いだ。

馬祖は、江西の馬祖山に、法幢を樹てたので馬祖というのである。

中国では、唐の時代が、禪がもつとも盛んであったが、中でも馬祖の門風が盛大であったといわれている。達磨以来の第一人者で、傑出した禪僧である。入室の弟子が、百三十九人あったという。

牛の如くに歩み、虎の如くに見るといわれていた。自分の舌で、自分の鼻を舐めることができた。

馬祖は、或時、衆に示して言った。

「道は修を用いず。但だ汚染すること莫れ。何をか汚染と為す、但だ生死の心あって、造作趨向す、皆是れ汚染なり。若し直に其の道を会せんと欲せば、平常心是れ道。何をか平常心という、造作なく、是非なく、取捨なく、断常なく、凡なく聖なし。経に云く、凡夫の行に非ず、聖賢の行に非ざるは是れ菩薩の行なりと。只だ如今行住坐臥、応機接物、尽く是れ道、道は即ち是れ法界。乃至河沙の妙用も法界を出でず、若し然らずんば、云何が心地の法門といい、如何が無尽燈といわん。一切の法は皆是れ心法、一切の名は皆是れ

心名なり。万法は皆心より生ず、心を万法の根本となす。經に云く、『識心本源に達するが故に、号して沙門と為す。』名も等しく、義も等しく、一切の法皆等しゅうして、純一無雜なり。若し真如を立すれば、ことごと尽く是れ真如。若し理を立すれば、一切の法尽く是れ理。若し事を立すれば、一切の法尽く是れ事。一を挙すれば千従う、理事無別にして、尽く是れ妙用なり、更に別の理なし、皆心の回え転えに由る。譬たとえば月影の若干の真月有るが如し。若干の諸源水、若干の水性有ること無ければ、若干の森羅万象、若干の虚空有ること無し。若干の道理を説くこと無ければ、若干の無礙の慧有り、若干無ければ種種の成立皆一心に由れり。——後略」

これをよめば、馬祖の「平常心是道」の意味が、ホボ理解できるだろうと思う。

「平常心是れ道」といったのは、馬祖ばかりでなく、馬祖の法を嗣ついだ南泉普願禪師もいつている。

南泉は、猫を斬り殺したことで知られているが、「時の人この牡丹の花を見ること夢の如くに相似たり」と、いったのも南泉である。

或日、趙州和尚が、南泉に問うた。「如何なるか是れ道」、「平常心是れ道」と、南泉は答えた。「還って趣向すべきや否や」と趙州が問うと、「向わんと擬すれば即ち乖く」と南泉はいった。「道は知にも属せず、不知にも属せず、知は是れ妄覚。不知は是れ無記。若し真に不疑の道に達せば、猶ほ太虚の廓然として洞豁なるが如し、豈強いて是非すべけんや」と、南泉普願禪師はいった。

趙州は言下に頓悟した。と、無門和尚は書いている。
だが、読むだけで、禅は悟れるものではない。

Self-Possession

What sort of mindset is indicated by the term self-possession, *heijoshin*?

There was once a Zen priest who wrote a poem that goes, “If you go about lost in thought, with people’s laughter you will be fraught.”

But it was the Chinese Zen Master Mazu (709-788, Japanese reading: Baso) who declared that “self-possession constitutes the true Way.”

Mazu was born in China’s Sichuan Province in 709AD. He was a disciple of Zen Master Nanyue Huairang and carried on his teachings. Master Mazo established a monastery at Mount Mazo in Nankang, and it is for this reason that he is known as Master Mazo.

Zen flourished most during China’s Tang Dynasty, and it is said that Master Mazo’s teachings were the major impetus behind this phenomenon. He was the most influential Zen master since Dharma, and most preminent of his day. It is said that a total of 159 disciples gathered at his monastery.

It is said that he strode about like a bull and had the appearance of a tiger, and that when he stretched out his tongue, it reached up over his nose.

Upon one occasion Master Mazo spoke to his people, with the following words.

“The Way does not utilize ascetic practices. Simply avoid contamination. What constitutes contamination? It is simply having life and death in mind and heart, and taking action in accordance with that mindset. All such action is contamination. If you desire to directly come into contact with the Way, know that self-possession is the Way. What constitutes self-possession? It is lack of action, lack of right or wrong, lack of choice, lack of judgment, lack of common or sacred. The sutra states that avoidance of common men’s ascetic practices, avoidance of ascetic practices of wise and holy men, constitute the ascetic practices of the Bodhisattvas. To simply, here and now, walk, stand, sit and lie down, to respond and come into contact with things -- thoroughgoing adherence to these matters constitutes the Way, and the Way, in other words, constitutes the manifestation of true justness. Also, avoidance of departure from the mysterious influence of rivers and river stones is also the manifestation of true justness, but if it is impossible to avoid these, how can one achieve what is known as the mindset of a Buddhist monk or how can one become an un-extinguishable light? All laws constitute the law of the heart, and all

names constitute the name of the heart. All laws are born from the heart, and the heart forms the basis of all laws. The sutra states, 'It is by attaining the basic source of a knowing heart that one gains the title of Buddhist monk.' The name is the same, the duties are the same, and all of the laws are equally the same. This becomes absolute and thoroughgoing purity, and when this eternal truth is established, everything becomes eternal truth. And if these things are established, this constitutes total reason for obtaining all laws. There is no differentiation between all rational levels, and thoroughgoing grasping constitutes the mysterious effect, and this leads to another level of reason, all of which depends on the turning of the heart. For example, in the same manner that the shadow of the Moon is a small part of the true Moon, if there is not a small amount of water, there is lacking even a small part of all things in the universe, and it is also lacking in empty space. If a small part of logic is left unexplained, unless there is small part of enlightenment that brings freedom from all obstacles, unless there is even a small part of this, establishment of all types of things depends entirely on the single-minded concentration of the heart. . . . [the rest omitted]."

I think that if you read this, you will come to understand almost entirely the significance of Master Mazu's "self-possession."

It was not only Master Mazu who spoke about the "Way of Self-Possession," for there was also the Zen priest Nanquan Puyuan (Japanese reading: Nansen Fugan) who followed in the footsteps of Master Mazu.

Nanquan is known for having killed a cat, but it is also Nanquan himself who said that this legend is similar to a dream of the gazing upon of a camellia blossom by the people of his day.

One day, Zen Grand Master Dzoushu (Japanese reading: Joshu) asked Nanquan, "What path is the Way to self-possession?" And Dzoushu answered, "All ways are the Way to self-possession." Dzoushu then asked, "Should one go back and reflect?" in response to which Nanquan answered, "If you have any doubts about facing something, then you should avoid it." And Nanquan went on to explain, "The Way is not related to knowledge, nor is it related to lack of knowledge, for knowledge consists of false perception. Lack of knowledge constitutes lack of sign. If you should truly achieve the Way of doubt, it would be like further sudden entry into the state of emptiness of the great void, like becoming an abyss, to one's overwhelming surprise."

This is what Nanquan said. Dzoushu was suddenly enlightened by these words, according to the writings of Zen Master Wuwen (Japanese reading: Mumon).

But one cannot obtain enlightenment by simply reading these words.

禅について

「無念の念を念として、謠も舞ふも法の声」白隠は言った。念ずれば、法の声ではなくなる。

仏教の基本的真理は、無我だが、「我」がないというのだが、これがほんとうにわかってる人は少ない。

小我を捨てて、大我につくとか、我を少なくすればいいのだと言った具合に考える人もいる。これが大いなるあやまりである。我はどこをさがしても無いということを、徹底して知ることが第一の条

件である。

この無我ということは、修業して無我になるとか、本を読んで無我になるとか、話を聞いて無我になるとかいうことではない。生まれた時から、また生まれる先から、我は無いのである。

夏目漱石は、「則天去私」を言ったそうだが、私を去って、天につくという意味だが、禅のように徹底してないのである。私を去ると言っているが、去るも去らぬも、私など、はじめから無いのである。

高村光太郎は、禾山和尚の提唱を聞いたようだが、つまりらぬ短歌を七首作っている。歌としてもよくないが、その内容がつまりらぬのである。

言葉は実質のないものである。何ものも、表現するものではない。言葉は風の吹いているようなものだ。どんな言葉も、風に舞う木の葉ほどの意味も持っていない。

ある言葉に意味を持たせて、文章を構築する人間の行為は、人間だけに限られたもので、人間以外のどの動物もしないことである。これに何か重大な意味ありげに説く詩人や哲学者もいるが、愚劣な考えである。

「はじめに言葉ありき」と聖書には書いてあるとかいうことだが、これがそもそもあやまりである。はじめも、終わりも、ありはしないからだ。いわんや、言葉などというものは、どこにもなかったものである。今もどこにもない。将来も、言葉はどこにも存在しないものである。

禅では、存在するものは、一つもないというのである。

この真理を体得する方法が座禅である。

座禅することによって、自分の体の、どこにもないことを知り、宇宙も万物も、有るものではないことに気づくのである。

禅の正しい伝統をつかんでいる人が、ほとんどいないようであ

る。ほんとうの人間の価値は、どこにあるかを知らないから、バカゲタ事が行われている。

明治の初年ごろまでは、日本の仏教も余喘よぜんを保っていたので、禅宗以外の僧侶にも、尊敬すべき人はいたが、最近は大粒になり、ニセモノがハビコッテ、珍重すべき人物は、一人もいないありさまである。

法華経を信仰するのもよいが、お経には、法華経ばかりでなく、涅槃ねはん経も華嚴経も大日経も、その他たくさんのお経があることを、知らねばならぬ。

法然は、大藏経を、五へんよんだと伝えられている。そして南無阿弥陀仏を選択した。このような努力も必要である。

禅はお経にはよらない。いかなる言葉も不要である。言葉の正体を見とどけているからである。

ユンクなどを、受け売りしている日本人もいるが、禅の不立文字

に及ぶものは一つもない。このことを深く探求して、決然たる態度を言葉に対してとってもらいたいのだ。

ほんとうのことがわかれば、詩など書く必要はないのだ。詩は、風の中に風を吹きこむようなものだ。いくら風を吹きこんでも、風以外のものにはならぬ。

心々物に触れず

歩々処所無し

更に何を喚よんでか

生死となさん

中国のある禅者は言っている。

About Zen

Hakuin said, “Take feelings of failure as feelings, and singing and dancing will be Buddha’s delight.” If you feel, then it won’t be Buddha’s.

The fundamental truth of Buddhism is *muga*, selflessness; however, there are few people who truly understand the meaning of coming to have no “self.”

Some think that it means overcoming *shoga* (self trapped in a small/individual world), reaching *daiga* (self detached from narrow perception in a state of *satori*), or diminishing the self. These are all largely misconceptions. First of all, you need to fully comprehend that you cannot find the self anywhere.

This thing called *muga* is nothing you can reach by training, reading, or listening. From the moment one is born, or even prior to birth, there is no self.

Soseki Natsume is said to have advocated *sokuten kyoshi*, which in his words means leaving self and following heaven’s law, or “selfless devotion to justice.” This is not as thorough as Zen. He can advocate leaving the self, but no matter whether I leave or not, there is no “me” to leave in the first place.

It seems that Kotaro Takamura was familiar with monk Kasan Nishiyawa’s doctrine. He wrote seven boring *tanka*. Not only are they not good as verse, but the contents are boring.

Words have no substance. They are not for expressing anything. Words are like the wind blowing. No word has any meaning, not even as much as a leaf blown away by the wind.

The act of giving meaning to words and composing sentences is unique to human beings, and no other animals do it -- there are poets and philosophers who preach about this indicating there is some serious meaning to it; however, it’s a stupid idea.

In the Bible, it says that “In the beginning was the Word,” but this is a misconception from the start, because there is neither beginning nor end to anything. To put it another way, there was never such a thing as a word, nor is there now, nor will there be in the future. Words do not exist anywhere at all.

In Zen, there is nothing anywhere that exists.

And *zazen* is the sole method for acquiring this truth. Through the practice of *zazen*, one obtains the knowledge that one’s own body does not exist anywhere, and comes to the realization that there is neither a universe nor any of the myriad things in it that exist.

It is as though there is practically no one at all who grasps the correct traditions of Zen. They do not learn that human predilections are found anywhere and everywhere, so they engage in idiotic activities.

Up until the early part of the Meiji Period, Japanese Buddhism maintained a meager existence, so there were people who received deserved respect, even among those other than Zen priests, but in recent times, Buddhism has diminished to a tiny seed, with fakes becoming rampant, until at present, there is not a single person who deserves special praise.

It is quite alright to believe in the Lotus Sutra, but you must be aware that the Lotus Sutra is not the only sutra, for there are the numerous others, including the Nirvana Sutra, the Avatamsaka Sutra, and the Mahavairocana Sutra.

There is a tradition that states that Hozen read all five books of the Tripitaka Sutra. And he chose the phrase “All praise to the Amida Buddha” (Namu Amida Butsu). Here this sort of effort is necessary.

Zen does not depend upon the sutras. All words are unnecessary -- because the true nature of words come into sight.

There are Japanese people who accept the second-hand interpretations of Jung, but there is not a single element there that goes beyond unsubstantiated literature. I want everyone to pursue this concept and take a resolute attitude toward words.

If the truth of this is comprehended, there will be no necessity to write such things as poems. Poems are like blowing wind into the wind. No matter how much you blow, it is nothing more than wind.

Unless you touch the heart of things,
No matter where you walk,
And, what’s more, no matter what you shout,
All constitutes life and death.

This is what a certain Chinese Zen master said.

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