

少林忌上堂

斷臂賊終不續父業，厥齒
明常忌觸爺名，歎賊影
秀貴印明，洒雪鮮血透微
九淵深源底，裂石毒焰換
却千佛雙眼睛，鬼怪瘦馬
骨，晚窺而暗室，賊獲倖龍
王，曉睡我空城，笑金袋小
擔麻束，輕所以，泗州大聖
昨跨疲牛背上，風遠揚州
市上，奪油糝店，東走三四
里西走，半月程，呵々々吐
々々紅淚，數行在客，夢寒
村，羞笛引哀情，

元文穿五庚申曆
現沙羅樹下

白隱

慧鶴州稿



COMPLETE
POISON
BLOSSOMS
from a
THICKET
OF THORN

The Zen Records of
HAKUIN
ZENJI

TRANSLATED BY
Norman Waddell

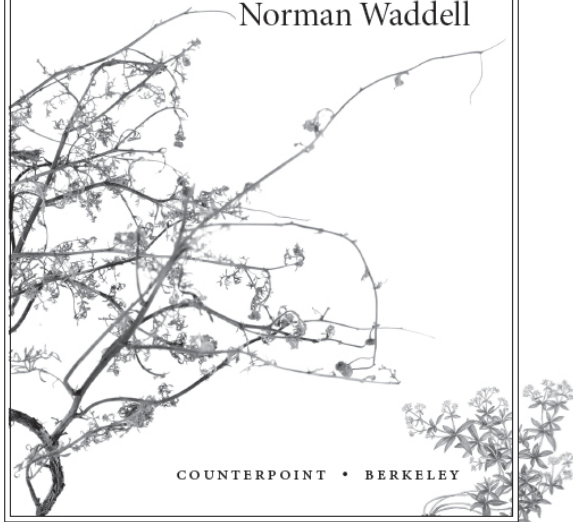


POISON BLOSSOMS FROM A THICKET OF THORN

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from a Thicket of Thorn
HAKUIN ZENJI

TRANSLATED BY

Norman Waddell



COUNTERPOINT • BERKELEY

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To the Memory of R. H. Blyth

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COMPLETE POISON BLOSSOMS FROM A
THICKET OF THORN

CHRONOLOGY OF HAKUIN'S LIFE

- 1685 Born to the Nagasawa family of Hara, a village in Suruga province that served as a post station on the Tokaido road linking Edo and Kyoto
- 1695–98 Performs austerities and sutra recitations to allay fears of hell
- 1699 Ordained by Tanrei Soden at the Rinzai temple Shoin-ji next to the family home, receiving the name “Ekaku,” “Wise Crane.” Becomes student of Sokudo Fueki at Daisho-ji in Numazu
- 1703–17 Extended Zen pilgrimage around the central and western Japanese provinces
- 1704 Studies literature with Bao Rojin in Mino province
- 1705 Resumes pilgrimage; visits temples in western Japan and Shikoku
- 1707 Returns to Mino to nurse Priest Bao, devoting nights to zazen. At Shoin-ji during catastrophic eruption of nearby Mount Fuji
- 1708–10 Enlightenment at Eigan-ji in Echigo province. Deepens attainment with eight months of study under Shoju Rojin in Shinano province. Resumes pilgrimage; feels “lack of freedom” in everyday life. “Zen sickness” appears; he overcomes it using a therapeutic meditation learned from the hermit Hakuyu

- 1712 Nurses Sokudo, devotes spare moments to zazen and study of Zen records
- 1713–14 Visits Obaku priest Egoku; enters training hall of Inryo-ji, Soto temple in Izumi province
- 1715–16 Solitary practice at Mount Iwataki (Mino); returns at ailing father's request to reside at Shoin-ji
- 1717 Installed as priest of Shoin-ji; continues post-satori training
- 1718 Adopts name "Hakuin." Begins to lecture on Zen texts
- 1726 Experiences decisive enlightenment while reading *Lotus Sutra*
- 1727–47 Instructs students at Shoin-ji
- 1740 First large lecture meeting — on the *Record of Hsu-t'ang* — attended by four hundred people; recognized as a leading Zen teacher
- 1743 First book, *Sokko-roku kaien-fusetsu*, is published
- 1747–ca. 1760 While teaching at Shoin-ji travels extensively to teach at other temples; publishes many works in Japanese and Chinese
- 1751 Lectures on *Blue Cliff Record* at Yogen-in subtemple of Myoshin-ji headquarters temple in Kyoto
- 1758 Publishes *Gudo's (Precious Mirror's) Lingering Radiance*. Purchases Ryutaku-ji site in Mishima
- 1759 *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* and *Supplement* published this year or next
- 1760 Appoints Torei abbot of newly built

Ryutaku-ji

- 1763 Physical debility increases
- 1764 Suio Genro installed as successor at Shoin-ji
- 1766 Announces will no longer receive students. Autobiographical *Wild Ivy* published
- 1767 Lectures on *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* at Ryutaku-ji
- 1768 Lectures on *Supplement to Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn*. Condition deteriorates; entrusts Suio with personal affairs; dies on eleventh day of the twelfth month

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS a complete annotated translation of *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* (Japanese title: *Keisō dokuzui*), a work in nine volumes that contains oral and written teachings that Zen master Hakuin (1685–1768) delivered or otherwise presented to his students. It comprises material spanning a period of roughly fifty years, the earliest pieces from Hakuin’s mid-twenties, when he was still engaged in his Zen pilgrimage, and the latest from his early seventies, when *Poison Blossoms* was compiled. Two supplements are also translated, *Supplement to Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* (*Keisō-dokuzui shūi*) and *Gudō’s Lingering Radiance* (*Hōkan Ishō*), both published at around the same time as the main collection.

Iida Tōin (1863–1937), one of the most highly respected Japanese Zen masters of the modern period, with strong roots in both Sōtō and Rinzai traditions, has this to say about *Poison Blossoms*:

Anyone who wants to understand Master Hakuin must read *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn*. Half-baked Zen teachers who disparage Hakuin without having read it are like blind men groping at an elephant. . . . Although as the title indicates it contains much material that is extremely difficult to grasp, how can anyone claiming to be a descendant of Hakuin really know him unless he has read this work? I have always kept my own copy close at hand. It gives me the feeling that I am living together with the old master (*Zen’yū ni ataeru no sho, A Book for My Zen Friends*, pp. 305–6).

In addition to being the longest of Hakuin’s many publications, *Poison Blossoms* is arguably his most important as well. Statements

Hakuin makes in his letters — “everyone is urging me to deliver lectures on my records in Kyoto [as soon as they are published]. . . . It will help to make them more widely known” — are an indication of the high expectations he and his followers had for the work. The great effort he took to get it into print may also be seen to reflect an awareness of its significance as a literary legacy: a sense that this might be the work by which later generations would judge him.

Like his contemporary Samuel Johnson, who opined that every man’s life can be best written by himself, Hakuin was apparently convinced that the surest way to guarantee that these important records of his teaching career were published in the right manner was to publish them himself. In contrast to most of Hakuin’s other writings, which were aimed primarily at his contemporaries, *Poison Blossoms* and the *Chronological Biography of Zen Master Hakuin*, both of which began being compiled in his seventies, can be said to have their sights on posterity.

Despite its importance *Poison Blossoms* has remained largely unread to this day, even by priests of Hakuin’s own Rinzai school. In contrast to such staples of Hakuin Zen as *Yasenkanna (Idle Talk on a Night Boat)* and *Oradegama*, which have appeared over the years in copiously annotated editions and attracted a wide variety of readers, *Poison Blossoms* is still virtually unknown. The reason for this disregard is undoubtedly the difficulty of much of the text, and yet it was, ironically enough, that very obstacle that has provided modern readers with the keys to unlock its secrets.

After *Poison Blossoms* was published in Hakuin’s mid-seventies, he was soon lecturing on it, giving his students Zen-type expositions of its contents. He was at the same time also explaining a great many of the difficult passages and allusions that fill the work. The *Chronological Biography* records lectures he made on *Poison Blossoms* in his eighty-third year, and on the *Supplement* the following year, and apparently there were other such occasions as well. Tōrei and other leading disciples brought their own copies of *Poison Blossoms* to these assemblies, and inscribed their teacher’s comments and explanations into them. The annotations and transcriptions they made, often quoting Hakuin’s words verbatim, even replicating sallies he delivered using the distinctive

colloquialisms of his Suruga dialect, give the reader the feeling that he is sitting in on one of the sessions.

These annotated copies of *Poison Blossoms*, especially those by Hakuin's leading disciples, are of the greatest value, for in inscribing their teacher's words for their own use, these young monks enabled future readers to grasp the true meaning of a great many passages that otherwise would remain perplexing, not to say incomprehensible, and keep the work from being read and understood as Hakuin meant it to be.

Poison Blossoms belongs to the *goroku* (Chinese, *yu-lu*; "recorded sayings") genre of Zen literature that has been used for over a thousand years in China, Korea, and Japan to preserve the words and deeds of eminent teachers for posterity.

Compilations of these records for prominent Zen teachers, published over the centuries, have accumulated into a repository of teachings, dialogues, anecdotes, and writings that constitute by far the largest body of material in the Zen school's enormous literary canon.

These Zen records first began to appear in China during the mid-T'ang dynasty. By the Sung dynasty, reflecting large institutional changes in Chinese Zen, a wider variety of material was sometimes included — genres such as religious verse, painting inscriptions, and letters. Introduced into Japan along with the Zen teachings in the Kamakura period, these records became models for similar collections that the Japanese soon began compiling for their own eminent priests. At their best, in the recorded sayings of such renowned figures as Lin-chi, Yun-men, and Hsu-t'ang, which are filled with inspiring Zen dialogue, vigorous encounters between master and disciple, and, in Hsu-t'ang's case, verse, they are among the most important works in the Zen literary tradition.

Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn, which appeared in the Edo period near the tail end of this tradition, adheres to the same general format. It contains talks and teachings in a wide variety of forms and styles: instructions delivered on various occasions; formal and informal talks; verse and prose comments on koans; cautions on training addressed to individual students; remarks uttered at

anniversaries, funeral services, and other temple observances; essays and explanations of terms from Buddhist scripture; letters, prefaces, and epilogues; painting inscriptions, a great many religious verses, and extended commentaries on the *Heart Sutra* and Tung-shan's Five Ranks.

Yet like other aspects of Hakuin's teaching style, *Poison Blossoms* breaks with tradition in many ways. For example, although normally a Zen teacher's records are collected by his disciples after his death, in Hakuin's case this was done not only during his lifetime, but on his own initiative as well. Hakuin provided the manuscripts and pushed the project forward in the face of serious setbacks. Although disciples such as Daishū had roles in editing the collection, we can safely assume that the master retained a fairly strong hand in helping select the pieces and perhaps in directing the editorial process as well.

The title itself — *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* — is unusual, since Zen records were invariably titled simply, "The Recorded Sayings of Priest So-and-so." And almost as soon as *Poison Blossoms* was published, Hakuin began lecturing on it, just as he would hold forth on the *Blue Cliff Record* or another classic Zen text. No one had ever done that before. No one, that is, except Hakuin. He had previously conducted lecture meetings on his *Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan* as well as other of his works.

Hakuin's original title for *Poison Blossoms* was *Sendai dokuzui shūi*, "A Collection of a Dharma Reprobate's Poison Flowers" ("Dharma Reprobate" is one of Hakuin's sobriquets). We know from references in Hakuin's letters that he changed this to *Yōen dokuzui*, "Poison Blossoms from a Garden of Demons," before finally settling, shortly before publication, on *Keisō dokuzui*, "Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn." The title was apparently suggested to him by his student Daishū, whom he had charged with editing the work.

The words *keisō dokuzui* are not found in Hakuin's own writings, though they do appear in the *Blue Cliff Record* and other classic works of Zen literature, where they are used to describe the venomous utterances — koans or words of a similar nature — that

Zen teachers employ to spur students forward in their struggle to reach enlightenment.

THE PRINTING OF *POISON BLOSSOMS*

Hakuin's first published work did not appear until his late fifties, but it was followed by more than thirty others over the remaining twenty-five years of his life. This ambitious publishing program was financed for the most part from donations offered by lay students and friends, and at times from funds he himself contributed. Hakuin's entreaties to potential donors are a recurring theme in his letters from this period. They reveal the various stratagems he used in his struggles to line up donations. They also show him hounding disciples and urging publishers to hurry up with the printing process, sometimes before he has come up with the necessary funds, and, in one or two instances, before he has even begun writing the manuscript.

The first mention of Hakuin's records is a not altogether accurate entry in the *Chronological Biography* (1756, age 72), in which Tōrei writes: "A manuscript compilation of the master's writings and sayings made by his attendant Daishū was obtained by a layman from Osaka named Kida Genshō. When Kida returned to Osaka he secretly took the manuscript with him and had it printed there" (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 223).

Layman Kida had come to Shōin-ji to continue his Zen study under Hakuin, and while he was there he was shown the manuscript of *Poison Blossoms*. After reading it he gave Hakuin his promise that he would underwrite the costs of having it published. A colophon bearing Kida's name that attached to the printed edition of *Poison Blossoms* gives what might be called the official account of the project:

On my way through Suruga to the northeastern provinces in the winter of the sixth year of the Hōreki era [1756], I stopped at Shōin-ji for an audience with Zen master Hakuin. As he was indisposed at the time, I was obliged to wait until his condition improved before I could enter his chambers. This gave me an opportunity to read through a manuscript of his Zen records that was kept in

the attendants' quarters. It had been compiled in nine fascicles by his student Daishū from Hōki province. In the pages of this work master Hakuin vigorously attacks the sham Zen teachings that have arisen around the country with words and phrases of great power and penetrating insight. It is like hearing the roars of the lion king, or the deep rolling of ground-shaking thunder. He points out errors in the *Blue Cliff Record*. He clarifies the meaning of Tung-shan's Five Ranks. Anyone who reads it is certain to cast false teachings aside and turn to the authentic path of Zen.

The guidance Hakuin gives in these pages to students negotiating the secret depths emerges with a strength and vigor that is totally beyond our ordinary, unenlightened understanding. If a work such as this did not exist, how could students become aware of the genuine path of Zen practice? To me it seemed that publishing this manuscript would help students to more readily penetrate the Zen source, so I mentioned the possibility to Hakuin Rōshi. "No, don't do that," he replied. "If notions I chanced to mumble off while I was asleep were to find their way into print, it would only steer future generations off course. Take the manuscript and consign it to the flames! I see no need to go out of my way to make a jackass of myself!" Despite my most earnest attempts to make him change his mind, he remained adamantly opposed to the idea.

So when it came time for me to leave Shōin-ji, I bundled the manuscript secretly in with my belongings and took it back to Osaka with me. I immediately began making arrangements for it to be published. There was no time for the manuscript to undergo proper editing, so it is possible some of the Chinese characters in the text are mistaken. For that I must beg the reader's indulgence. It is nonetheless my hope and prayer that once these records are published, they become a standard against

which future generations of Zen students will measure themselves.

As we shall see, Hakuin's letters tell the story quite differently, showing clearly that he himself did everything in his power to get the work into print, and was instrumental in keeping the project alive when circumstances arose that threatened to sideline it.

Moreover, the content and style in which Kida's colophon is written so closely resemble Hakuin's own writings that there seems little doubt it was heavily revised, or perhaps even written, by Hakuin. This colophon thus becomes another of the "poetic fictions" one encounters in Hakuin's writings, like the tale he tells in *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* of his visit to the hermit Hakuyū in his cave in Kyoto, a tale he tells in *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*.

Poison Blossoms was printed in Kyoto, the center of Buddhist publishing at the time, Hakuin having sent his student Daishū Zenjo there to oversee the work and act as a go-between in negotiations with the bookseller who had been commissioned to do the printing. From the examples of books such as *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* and *Gudō's Lingered Radiance*, which appeared at about the same time as *Poison Blossoms*, we know that when the printer already had payment in hand he could produce a single volume — write a fair copy of the text, carve the blocks, and print and bind the pages — in under a month. Probably owing to the size of *Poison Blossoms* and the cost involved in producing it, the mere promise of payment was evidently not enough to induce the bookseller to set this process in motion. So when Kida failed to come up with the funds he had promised, work came to a standstill. Publication was delayed for well over a year.

A series of six letters Hakuin sent Daishū in Kyoto as these events were unfolding reveal that he tried to persuade Kida to honor his commitment, but then turned to other measures in attempting to cover the shortfall. As these letters have been translated in *Beating the Cloth Drum* (pp. 118–41), in recounting the story they contain here I will simply summarize their content.

The trouble that became the cause of the printing delays had its origin in a preface that Hakuin had asked the Confucian teacher Yanada Zeigan (1672–1757) to write for *Poison Blossoms*. Zeigan, in the employ of the Daimyō of Akashi, a port city on the Inland Sea just west of modern Kobe, was one of the foremost Confucian scholars of the Edo period. He was widely respected for his skill in composing Chinese poetry and prose. He also had a well-earned reputation for speaking his mind.

Hakuin first met Zeigan in 1750 when he was visiting Ryōkoku-ji in Akashi to conduct a large lecture meeting. In marked contrast to most Confucian teachers of the time, Zeigan had a genuine interest in Buddhism, especially Zen, and the two men seem to have quickly become good friends. Zeigan composed a verse praising Hakuin, thirteen years his junior, in glowing terms, calling him a great figure of modern Japanese Zen, and Hakuin responded in kind. Hakuin's verse has not survived, but we may assume that it was equally fair-spoken. In another verse, which is included in *Poison Blossoms*, Hakuin extolled Zeigan as a great teacher deeply versed in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism who advocated the cardinal human virtues, and a great citizen of Akashi who followed in the illustrious footsteps of the ancient poet Kakinomoto Hitomaro, who was worshipped as a poetic deity at the Hitomaro Shrine in the city.

That Zeigan's praise of Hakuin was not merely a matter of literary convention is clear from a letter he sent one of his students in reply to a question about the "the grievous state of contemporary Buddhism." Referring to his own interest in Zen as a young man, Zeigan states his agreement with the student's overall assessment, but he also points out a few exceptions: "The present generation of shavepates [Buddhist priests] is primarily concerned with fame and profit; they keep concubines, they eat fish, and are unscrupulous in hoodwinking lay people into respecting them. Although priests in the Sōtō and Ōbaku schools still strictly uphold the precepts against saké and tobacco, many of the Rinzai priests you see make no attempt whatever to observe them. Nonetheless, genuine Zen priests such as Daigu, Gudō, Bankei, Tenkei, Kogetsu, and Hakuin have appeared in the modern age. The teaching styles of these men differ, but I believe that all of them succeeded in attaining the

strength and capacity to transmit the genuine Zen Dharma” (*Yanada Zeigan Zenshū*, p. 242).

Hakuin was no doubt gratified that his new friend, a scholar whose erudition was at the time unmatched, had agreed to contribute a preface to a work on which he had pinned such large hopes. However, their friendship underwent an abrupt and irrevocable change when news reached Hakuin that Zeigan, after reading the manuscript of *Poison Blossoms*, had advised the deletion a long piece entitled “Reading *Jinja-kō Bengi*” (#393).

In this piece Hakuin harshly attacked the anti-Buddhist views of Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), founder of the Hayashi School of Japanese Neo-Confucianism and an advisor to the early Tokugawa shōguns, Razan was an iconic figure who had played a central role in establishing Neo-Confucianism as the orthodox creed of Tokugawa governance, and he was still a powerful symbol of that policy.

Zeigan’s advice was probably inspired by concerns that such an intemperate attack on Razan might attract the attention of government censors, and it may have been influenced by the knowledge that Hakuin’s work *Snake Strawberries* had several years earlier been put on the list of proscribed writings because he had broken the taboo of mentioning Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa shogun, by name.

Hakuin’s reaction to Zeigan’s no doubt well-intentioned words of caution is the focus of the first of this series of letters to Daishū, dated the fourth month of 1757. It is surprisingly harsh. He tells Daishū to “forget about Zeigan’s preface.” He no longer has any intention of using it, and asks Daishū to inform Layman Kida of this decision.

In a second letter a little less than three months later, Hakuin tells Daishū that he has sent him funds to hire a scribe to write out a fair copy of the *Poison Blossoms* text so it will be ready for the woodblock engravers. This tells us that the work had still not gone beyond the preliminary editing stage. Hakuin has also apparently given a bit more thought to Zeigan’s advice, since he informs Daishū that he has decided, “just in case,” to move the piece on Razan from the main work to the end of the one-volume *Supplement*, where it

would be easier to delete in the event trouble should arise. He also suggests issuing the book as a private, temple edition, a move which would offer protection to the publisher and donors.

This second letter also contains the first intimation that Layman Kida is having second thoughts about providing the funds to have the work printed. “Since Kida has still not made the donation,” Hakuin tells Daishū, “you should discuss the matter with him very, very carefully, exercising the greatest prudence. But you should make known to him that I have been telling people about ‘a praiseworthy layman’ who has volunteered to donate the funds for my Zen records.” Daishū is also to make it clear to Kida that any mistakes Zeigan may have pointed out — miswritten Chinese characters, stylistic errors, and the like — “are matters of no concern whatever in a book of Zen records.” Finally, he reminds Daishū that “it would be an utter disgrace if the project had to be abandoned at this point.”

But as we see in the next letter, Kida’s reason for dragging his feet on this matter apparently had less to do with this work’s literary merits than it did to his reaction, as a prudent Osaka merchant, to the knowledge that as chief donor he might have to share some of the blame if government censors decided to bring action against the Razan piece. This third letter, undated but obviously written a few weeks after the previous one, was sent from Kiso province, where Hakuin was traveling to conduct a round of lecture meetings (see *Beating the Cloth Drum*, pp. 127–30).

In it, Hakuin tells Daishū how pleased he is to receive copies of *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*, which had just been published in Kyoto under Daishū’s supervision. But he then notes with sadness the continued lack of progress on *Poison Blossoms*. His exasperation at learning that a fair copy has not even been completed leads him to deliver a further blast at Zeigan: “It was his advice [to scratch the Razan piece] that has caused Layman Kida to withhold the funds he had promised.” While Hakuin admits that these “unexpected setbacks” have taken him “totally by surprise and thoroughly disappointed him,” he can still refer to them as an “unavoidable set of circumstances that are due entirely to my own lack of virtue.” Although he sounds as though he has still not given up on Kida, one

now senses a confidence that even without Kida's help he will be able to pony up the necessary donations from the priests and laymen who have come to attend his meeting.

In his reply to Hakuin, Daishū seems to have referred once again to the errors Zeigan had pointed out in the work. "Those are the objections of a dull and ignorant scholar who lacks the eye of *kenshō*," barks back Hakuin. "A man with no understanding of Zen, who just bandies words about while feeding on the dregs of the ancients. Even were a million like him to appear voicing similar objections, they would all be equally worthless. Clear-eyed Zen masters who will emerge in the future from the ocean of the true Dharma, and truly superior students who have fought their way through the thicket of thorn and briar, will all admire and praise this work."

As fate would have it, however, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, only weeks after this letter was sent, the old scholar passed away at his home in Akashi at the age of eighty-five, perhaps not even having been apprised of Hakuin's displeasure.

There are no known letters after this until the fourth month of 1758, almost eleven months later. Hakuin was now at Rurikō-ji in Mino province conducting a lecture meeting to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Gudō Tōshoku's (1579–1661) death. Hakuin deeply revered this Myōshin-ji priest, regarding him as his great-grandfather in the Dharma, and proposed that an edition of Gudō's Zen records, which were still in manuscript, be published in his memory. He tried to enlist the help of the participants at the lecture meeting. He sent letters to leading priests in Gudō's teaching line, attempting to interest them in the project as well. Exasperated at the scant enthusiasm the priests displayed for the idea, Hakuin immediately set to work composing a work in praise of Gudō and his achievements. He points out the important role Gudō had played in keeping the traditions of koan Zen alive at a difficult point in its history, and does not omit to include some harsh criticism of his fellow priests for failing to understand the extent of their debt to Gudō. He states that he has composed the work in the space of six or seven days, as he was being jolted along in a palanquin between temples in Mino and Hida provinces, and that his real reason for

writing it was the sadness he felt on witnessing the decline of the Zen school and the degeneration of authentic koan practice.

At Sōyū-ji in Takayama, Hida province, the next stop on Hakuin's teaching tour, members of the lay community came forward and pledged donations to cover the cost of printing the newly completed work, which he had now titled *Gudō's Lingering Radiance* (translated in Book Eleven). Hakuin's original intention may have been to publish *Gudō's Lingering Radiance* as a supplement to the edition of Gudō's records he had proposed, but this plan had to be abandoned for financial reasons, and Gudō's records were not published until 1797, twenty-nine years after Hakuin's death.

Owing to the funds Hakuin had received from the Sōyū-ji donors, he was able to send *Gudō's Lingering Radiance* to Daishū in Kyoto, with directions that it be printed immediately as a single volume. It appeared as such only a few months later, with an inscription on its title page identifying it as a supplement to *Poison Blossoms*.

From the next letter, dated later the same month and written while Hakuin was still on the road, we know that work on *Poison Blossoms* remained at a standstill ("The lack of progress is very discouraging"), but that yet another one-volume supplement, containing additional material that had been omitted from the original compilation, was in the works. The funds to publish this volume, *Keisō-dokuzui shūi* (*Supplement to Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn*), were donated by Hakuin's longtime friend and lay student Shibata Gonzaemon. The *Supplement* probably appeared in 1759, at about the same time as *Poison Blossoms* itself (see *Beating the Cloth Drum*, p. 136).

The final letter in the series, posted three weeks later, contains nothing new on the publishing front, just Hakuin's continued expressions of disappointment at the lack of progress. However, not too long after this the logjam was somehow broken. There is nothing in the written record to explain how this happened. Layman Kida may have finally come through with his donation. Perhaps another of Hakuin's wealthy lay students stepped in to help. In any case, either at the end of 1758 or at some point in the following year, *Poison Blossoms* finally appeared, some months after *Gudō's Lingering*

Radiance and at about the same time as the one-volume *Supplement*.

THE BOOK

The texts used to compile the original edition of *Poison Blossoms* were taken from two manuscript collections, both titled *Sendai dokugo shū*, “A Collection of the Poison Words of a Dharma Reprobate.” One of these manuscripts, containing many passages in Hakuin’s handwriting, apparently served as the basic sourcebook for *Poison Blossoms*. The other is an edited version of the same text, presumably by Daishū, arranged under headings similar to those found in the final, printed version. It contains numerous corrections in various hands, including some by Hakuin. Both collections were preserved until well into the Meiji period at Jishō-ji, the temple in northern Kyushu where the editor Daishū had served as head priest.

Only one copy of the first printed edition of *Poison Blossoms* is known. On the final page, in place of the bookseller or publisher’s name and device, is found the imprint Ganshō-tei. This name does not appear elsewhere in Hakuin’s records, and may have been coined for the occasion, perhaps with the intent of showing the book to be a temple edition.

There is a preface by the Kyoto courtier Sugawara Tameshige (n.d., whose connections with Hakuin are unknown). Sugawara, who held the title of Chūnagon — counselor of the second rank at the Imperial palace in Kyoto — was Hakuin’s third choice to write the preface. He had originally asked Reizei Muneie (1701–69), another Kyoto courtier, but Muneie declined, and he had then gone to Yanada Zeigan. When Zeigan fell into disfavor, he turned to Sugawara. Here is Sugawara’s preface:

Majestic Mount Fuji soars ten thousand feet above the seaboard of Suruga province. It branches out like the eight petals of a flower, with its roots extending out into the three provinces of Suruga, Tōtōmi, and Kai. It is a sacred peak whose marvelous shape and atmosphere of absolute purity exist in ultimate perfection.

Master Hakuin, a distant heir of the Myōshin-ji Zen master Tokuhō Zenketsu, is a figure of extraordinary eminence, the kind of priest who appears only once in five hundred years. He achieved his decisive enlightenment under Shōju Rōjin, succeeding to a Dharma transmission that can be traced back to Zen master Daikyū Sōkyū.

In spreading the teaching style of National Master Daiō, who transmitted the Dharma lineage of Wu-tsu Fa-yen, master Hakuin has revived the moribund traditions of Rinzai's koan Zen throughout the country. He has taught countless monks who gathered to receive his guidance, and trained genuine successors who are fully qualified to maintain the Zen school far into the future. It can truly be said that the clouds Zen master Hsu-t'ang raised in the Sung dynasty fell as Dharma rain on Ryūtaku-ji, that the essence Bodhidharma disseminated at Shao-lin grew into a shade great tree at Shōin-ji that has brought great benefit to all sentient beings. The echoes of master Hakuin's virtue continue to ring full in our ears.

In honor of this virtue, master Hakuin is herewith awarded the Zen master title Jinki Dokumyō.

The transmission of the sages' teachings takes place naturally, and not necessarily by means of words and phrases. The ultimate truth cannot be expressed in words, and yet words and letters must unavoidably be used to express and transmit its meaning. Since the continuing transmission of the Dharma is made possible through words, it is inevitable that they be used.

Master Hakuin of Suruga has become known throughout the land as a remarkable Zen priest. Attendant Zenjo, one of his leading disciples, has gathered words his teacher spoke in his day-to-day Zen talks and lectures and compiled them into a work in nine fascicles entitled *Keisō dokuzui*. It has now been published thanks to Layman Kida Genshō.

While I had long heard of master Hakuin's greatness, in reading through his records I find that they are completely covered with sharp thorns and razor-like brambles, filled with words like poison flowers.

But if a student a thousand years from now, making his way through Zen's thicket of thorn, comes upon these poison blossoms, they will enable him to attain the perfect and unfettered freedom of true Zen activity and the strength to flourish and prosper free of all hindrances. It was no doubt for this reason that these records were compiled.

Autumn, the eighth month of the eighth year of Hōreki
[1758]

Chūnagon Sugawara Tameshige

It is unclear when the second edition of *Poison Blossoms* appeared, but it must have been during Hakuin's lifetime, for it was that edition in which Hakuin's disciples inscribed their annotations of Hakuin's talks. This second edition bears the joint imprint of booksellers Ogawa Gembei of Kyoto and Funatsu Shinuemon of Osaka. They evidently added their devices after it became clear that no action would be taken against the book. Imprints of this edition — the *rufu-bon* or popular, standard edition — are usually encountered as a uniform set, made up of ten "books" (*kan*), including the *Supplement*, in six volumes. The title on the inside front cover of the first volume, and the title strips on the covers of the individual volumes, are printed in facsimile of calligraphy by the well-known Nanga painter Ike Taiga, who was a lay student of Hakuin.

ANNOTATIONS

The annotations mentioned above, inscribed by students who attended Hakuin's talks on *Poison Blossoms* in their copies of the book, have preserved Hakuin's explanations of his own words as well as additional remarks by close disciples such as Tōrei. They give us valuable insights into the passage in question, often making

it possible to read passages that would otherwise be extremely difficult to understand.

On a religious level, many of the annotations become what are in effect Hakuin's (or the annotator's) "capping words" (*jakugo*) on the text in question, pointers to their true significance for students engaged in Zen study. On a more mundane level, they provide nearly flawless glosses on difficult terms, phrases, and verbal allusions. They also identify people for whom Hakuin wrote many of the pieces, and tell us of the circumstances under which they were composed. The wealth of information not only adds considerably more interest to many of the pieces, it also brings us much closer to grasping Hakuin's utterances as he intended them to be understood.

Until recently, access to these annotated copies has been limited to the handful of Rinzai priests and laymen who owned them. Since over the past half-century most of these copies have found their way into Japanese library collections, future generations of scholars should be able to use them more readily. The first critical edition of *Poison Blossoms*, based largely on the information in these annotated copies and containing glosses on all the difficult passages and cruxes, will soon be published in Japanese.

Thus two hundred and fifty years after *Poison Blossoms* was published, the young student-annotators who transcribed their teacher's comments for their personal use have unwittingly made the contents of this vast storehouse of Hakuin Zen accessible to modern readers. One must use the word "accessible" advisedly, of course, since in the final and most important sense, the secrets of *Poison Blossoms* must always remain singularly difficult, and totally un glossable.

THE TRANSLATION

The nine books and two supplements (here titled Books Ten and Eleven) that make up the *Poison Blossoms* collection are composed in Chinese *kambun*. They consist of approximately four hundred and fifty items, ranging in length from four-line verses to essays and discourses, and include one commentary, on the *Heart Sutra*,

covering many pages of text. I have supplied titles, in brackets, to the untitled pieces.

The translation is based on the text found in volume two of the *Hakuin Oshō Zenshū (Complete Works of Priest Hakuin)*. I was fortunate in being able to incorporate material found in Yoshizawa Katsuhiro's critical edition of *Poison Blossoms*, which is also scheduled to appear in 2017 to coincide with observances in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Hakuin's death.

I have made extensive use of Yoshizawa's comments and glosses on the text, in particular those containing the annotations described above, and have incorporated many of them into my own notes. When citing these annotations in the notes to the individual pieces, I have set them in quotation marks, followed by (annotation), to distinguish them from my own remarks. The pieces have been numbered consecutively, following the listing given in Yoshizawa's edition. Background material, explanations of terms, and general information are contained in headnotes and afternotes to the individual pieces.

Dates and ages are given as they appear in the original text, the former according to the lunar calendar in use in Edo Japan, the latter according to the Japanese system of counting a person's age — one year old at birth, two years old after one year of life, and so on. Dates correspond en gros with their Western counterparts, but it means that Hakuin's birth, for example, is given as the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of 1685, not January 19, 1686, as it would be if converted to the Western calendar. It should be noted that the ages given in this edition are thus different from those found in my translations of the *Chronological Biography* and *The Tale of My Childhood*, which were published in *Precious Mirror Cave*, and in my translations of other of Hakuin's works, in which one year was subtracted from the ages given in the original texts in order to match the method of calculating age used in the West.

This complete translation of *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* follows on the heels of a partial translation that appeared in 2014. I have taken the opportunity to revise many of these earlier translations, correcting, clarifying, and, hopefully, improving them. I wish to thank readers who have called to my attention the mistakes,

inconsistencies, and infelicities which are perhaps inevitable in so large an undertaking.

I must acknowledge my deep gratitude to Yoshizawa Katsuhiro for generously allowing me to make use of the manuscript of his soon-to-be published critical Japanese edition of *Poison Blossoms*. I would also like express my thanks to Nelson Foster for reading drafts of many of the pieces and offering encouragement and valuable suggestions, and to Burton Watson for allowing me to quote from his fine translations of the *Analects* and the *Lotus* and *Vimalakirti* sutras. I am indebted to Anne Connolly, for editing the earlier, 2014 edition of the text; and to Ian Hamilton, whose tireless efforts in helping me prepare this seven hundred page behemoth of a book have been invaluable. Finally, I must thank my wife Yoshie for the many unselfish ways in which she helps to make these books possible.

BOOK ONE

Instructions to the Assembly (*Jishū*)

Book One consists of ninety Jishū, “Instructions to the Assembly,” which Hakuin gave on various occasions to monks and lay students. They appear here under four subheadings: Jōdō, formal talks delivered from the high seat in the Dharma Hall; Shōsan, informal talks; Nenkō, comments delivered on offering incense at death anniversaries and other commemorative events; and Ko, comments delivered while examining old koans. In Book One, as elsewhere, the editor Daishū seems to have attempted to arrange the pieces in chronological order.

CONTENTS OF BOOK ONE

1. Instructions to the Assembly from the High Seat at the Winter Solstice
2. Informal Talk (*Shōsan*) on New Year's Eve
3. Teaching to the Assembly on New Year's Day
4. Ascending the High Seat on the Third Day of the Third Month
5. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
6. Ascending the High Seat on the Fifth Day of the Fifth Month
7. Informal Talk on the Seventh Night of the Seventh Lunar Month
8. Ascending the Teaching Seat (*Jōdō*) on the Ninth Day [of the Ninth Month]
9. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
10. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
11. Instructions Delivered to the Assembly on Receiving the *Record of Bukkō*
12. Instructions to the Assembly at the Anniversary of Buddha's Death
13. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
14. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
15. Instructions from the High Seat Delivered at a Vegetarian Feast That Zen Man Myōseki Provided on Behalf of His Mother
16. Untitled [Examining a Koan]
17. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period

18. On Offering Incense at the Thirteenth Anniversary of Priest Tanrei's Death
19. Instructions to the Assembly at Services Commemorating the Buddha's Nirvana
20. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
21. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
22. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
23. On Offering Incense at the Seventeenth Anniversary of Tessen Oshō's Death
24. Instructions to the Assembly on the Day Commemorating the Buddha's Nirvana
25. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
26. On Offering Incense at Services Commemorating the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
27. Informal Talk on the Eve of the Winter Solstice
28. Untitled [Examining a Koan]
29. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
30. On Offering Incense at the Fiftieth Anniversary of Tenjun Oshō's Death and the Fifteenth Anniversary of Tanrei Oshō's Death
31. Instructions to the Assembly at Ceremonies for the Buddha's Nirvana
32. Instructions to the Assembly at the Start of a Lecture Meeting on the *Blue Cliff Record*
33. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
34. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death

35. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
36. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Record of Sokkō*
37. Instructions to the Assembly at Ceremonies Commemorating the Buddha's Nirvana
38. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
39. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Diamond Sutra*
40. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
41. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
42. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Blue Cliff Record*
43. Instructions to the Assembly at Ceremonies Commemorating Buddha's Nirvana
44. Instructions to the Assembly on the Day Commemorating Buddha's Birthday
45. On Offering Incense at Ceremonies Commemorating Shao-lin's [Bodhidharma's] Death
46. Untitled [Examining a Koan]
47. Instructions to the Assembly Thanking Mr. Noda for Donating a Wooden Fish
48. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
49. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Priest Dazan's Death
50. Ascending the High Seat at a Lecture Meeting on *Praise of the Five Houses* to Thank Mr. Noda for Donating a Meal of Noodles to the Brotherhood

51. Untitled [Examining a Koan]
52. Instructions to the Assembly at the Thirteenth Anniversary of Priest Chōmon's Death, When His Dharma Heir Jiku Jōza Donated a Meal to the Assembly
53. On Offering Incense at Ceremonies Commemorating the Thirty-Third Anniversary of Priest Tanrei's Death
54. Instructions to the Assembly at a Ceremony Commemorating Buddha's Nirvana
55. Instructions to the Assembly on the Buddha's Birthday
56. Instructions from the High Seat During a Visit from the Priest of Keirin-ji in Kai Province
57. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Shao-lin's Death
58. Informal Talk on a Winter Night
59. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
60. Instructions to the Assembly on New Year's Day
61. Instructions to the Assembly Following Lectures on the *Treatise in Defense of the Dharma*
62. Instructions to the Assembly at Services Commemorating Buddha's Nirvana
63. Instructions from the High Seat During the Summer Retreat at Ryōtan-ji
64. On Offering Incense at Services Commemorating Bodhidharma's Death
65. Instructions to the Assembly
66. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
67. Instructions to the Assembly at Services Commemorating Buddha's Nirvana

68. On Offering Incense at Services Commemorating the Third Anniversary of the Death of Priest Ranshitsu of Keirin-ji
69. On Offering Incense at Ceremonies Commemorating Shaolin's Death
70. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
71. Instructions from the Teaching Seat at a Vegetarian Feast That Senior Monk Yaku Held for His Deceased Father
72. Untitled [Examining a Koan]
73. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
74. Instructions to the Assembly at Ceremonies Commemorating Buddha's Nirvana
75. Instructions to the Assembly Opening a Lecture Meeting on the *Poems of Han-shan*
76. On Offering Incense at the Anniversary of Bodhidharma's Death
77. Instructions to the Assembly Following Lectures on the *Poems of Han-shan*
78. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Lotus Sutra*
79. Instructions to the Assembly During the *Rōhatsu* Training Period
80. Instructions from the High Seat at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Wisdom Sutra* at Seibon-ji
81. Untitled [Examining a Koan]
82. On Offering Incense at the Ceremony Commemorating the Thirty-fifth Day of Shintatsu-myōsō-shinnyo's Death
83. Addressing the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Poems of Han-shan*

84. On Offering Incense at Services Commemorating Shao-lin's Death

85. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Heroic March Sutra*

86. On Offering Incense at Services Commemorating Shao-lin's Death

87. On Offering Incense at Services Commemorating the Four Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of Priest Nanmei's Death

88. On Offering Incense at Shao-lin's Death Anniversary

89. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Record of Hsi-keng*

90. On Offering Incense at the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Death of the Founder of Ryōkoku-ji

1. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY FROM THE HIGH SEAT AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE

Annual ceremonies are held in Zen temples to observe the beginning and end of the summer retreat, the winter and summer solstices, and anniversaries of prominent figures such as the Buddha and Bodhidharma. These first items, probably written in Hakuin's mid-thirties, give us glimpses of his teaching at a time when he was still engaged in post-satori training as head priest of Shōin-ji, his final decisive enlightenment still some years in the future.

“**IN THE TENTH** month, *yin* energy having reached its farthest point, *yang* energy begins again.” Doesn't this express the propitious circumstances of Zen practitioner who experiences the great death and is then born again? A shame that everywhere you go today you find people who have once experienced the bean bursting suddenly in the cold ashes, but who are now turning into gimp-legged turtles. They work themselves farther and farther into a glass jar until they are unable to move. Unless they encounter the claws and fangs of the Dharma cave [koans], they will never gain their freedom until the day they die. Why is this? When Liu Pang entered Han-chung, he signaled to his counselor Chang Liang to burn the plank road. How do you clarify this? The Chun hexagram, Nine at the Beginning.

.....

“In the tenth month . . . begins again.” The opening quotation is based on comments on the Fu (“Return”) hexagram in the *Book of Changes*. The tenth month of the lunar calendar corresponds approximately to December in the Western calendar.

The *bean bursting suddenly* (*reihai ichibaku*) is descriptive of the sudden and unexpected way in which satori occurs.

When Liu Pang entered . . . burn the plank road. The statesman Chang Liang (262–189 B.C.) dedicated his life to overthrowing the Ch'in state that had annexed his country through war. Liu Pang, general of one of the rebel armies attempting to regain the lost territory, took Chang Liang into his service. One of Chang Liang's counsels, after Liu Pang succeeded in capturing Han-chung in the Ch'in heartland, was to burn the plank road they had used to reach Han-chung. This was a road constructed along a river gorge by setting wooden beams into holes cut in the cliff side. Burning this bridge, said Chang Liang, would show Liu Pang's superior, who feared him as a rival, that he had no intention of returning and was therefore not dangerous. Using this and other strategies suggested by Chang Liang, Liu Pang went on to establish himself as the first emperor of the Han dynasty.

Hakuin uses this saying to indicate the wisdom of not becoming attached to a minor satori that has been attained, so that one may go on to achieve the final objective of great satori.

The Chun hexagram. In the *Book of Changes*, the Chun ("Difficulty at the Beginning") hexagram indicates the difficulties that arise when heaven and earth first meet and all things are brought forth: "In the configuration Nine at the Beginning, hesitation and hindrance still prevail, but it will benefit you to remain loyal and constant, it will benefit you to give support to your lord." An ancient commentary on this says: "Although experiencing hesitation and hindrance, your aspiration is still to do what is right. When an eminent man subordinates himself to those below him, he gains the hearts of all people" (*The I Ching*, Cary Baynes, 2, p. 35).

Nine at the Beginning. Hakuin uses these words as a koan: "This phrase is a divine amulet that transforms your very bones. No indolent person could ever understand it" (annotation).

2. INFORMAL TALK (SHŌSAN) ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

This is another early Informal Talk, probably delivered prior to Hakuin's thirty-sixth year. In contrast to Jōdō, which are formally delivered from the high seat in the Dharma Hall, Shōsan are not limited to a specific time or occasion. It should be noted, however, such classifications are more appropriate in the setting of a large monastery training hall. Teaching in a tiny country temple, Hakuin is known on occasion to have delivered even the formal Jōdō lectures in a quite informal manner, at times wearing ordinary work attire, and does not seem to have scrupled over such fine distinctions.

Hakuin's comments below on the New Year's preparations at Shōin-ji may be compared with a more detailed description he gives in a verse comment attached to the word Emptiness in his commentary on the Heart Sutra (see #391, "Therefore, In Emptiness," p. 606).

TONIGHT THE OLD year ends. Tomorrow the new one begins. People in homes throughout the land will put on their best clothes to welcome it in. Pine saplings with roots are placed over every door, and oranges with green leaves are set out. Even at such a time, however, isn't there a place of vital importance that is completely untouched by either new or old? *What is it?*

The air clears, wind combs through the young willow's hair.

The ice melts, ripples wash through wiry old beards of moss.

Where do you find proof of this vital place? Tapping the floor with my staff, I say: Confucius prayed for a very long time.

.....

A place of vital importance. "Our Zen school isn't ruled by 'new' or by 'old.' Didn't Yun-men and Lin-chi create their own springtime and

make myriad flowers blossom?” (annotation).

The air clears . . . beards of moss. This comment consists of well-known lines of verse by the Heian scholar Miyako no Yoshika (824–59). They are quoted in early collections such as the *Wakan-rōei-shū* and in later Noh and Kyōgen plays, usually accompanied by an account of their provenance — e.g., a man recites the lines on a moonlit night while walking past Rashōmon Gate in Kyoto. Hearing them, a demon inhabiting the gate is so moved by their beauty that he blurts out words of praise (*Wakan-rōei-shū*). In some versions the man recites the first line and the demon supplies the second.

Confucius prayed for a very long time. Confucius said that because he always used the greatest prudence in conducting his affairs, for him everyday life had become a kind of prayer. There was thus no need for him to pray to the gods at special occasions. In describing this final comment, an annotation observes, “He [Hakuin] has loosed a poison arrow.”

3. TEACHING TO THE ASSEMBLY ON NEW YEAR’S DAY

Jishū shōtan, Teachings to the Assembly on New Year’s Day, are one of four annual Jishū delivered in Zen temples in each of the four seasons. In one of Poison Blossoms’ manuscript sources this piece is dated the seventh year of Kyōhō (1723), Hakuin’s thirty-ninth year, five years after he was installed as head priest of Shōin-ji.

Your purity of mind at this time would shame the whitest
snow,
Send withering trees water, laden their branches with new
buds.
Soon springtime will fade from the trees (no one can
change that),

You will enter the vast ocean and begin stirring up white billows.

Why is that?

“The sovereign of springtime is T’ai hao. The presiding deity is Kou man.”

.....

“When spring comes, everything past is forgotten and all is bright and clear. The minds of the men in Zen training engaged in the assembly rejoice, the purity of their minds surpassing that of newly fallen snow” (annotation).

“Snow falling over the branches of the withered winter trees gives them the appearance of the celebrated Yoshino cherry trees in full bloom. In the same way, when spring comes all worldly concerns in the minds of the young monks are forgotten in their singleminded striving to produce a single blossom. This may strike you as amusing, but in fact it requires that you force yourself to die. Eventually the demon of death will surely come, so you must not neglect your quest!” (annotation).

“The cherry flowers of Yoshino are the snows of Mount Fuji. The snows of Mount Fuji are the flowers of Yoshino” (annotation).

Soon springtime will . . . white billows. “Why is this? The withered snow-clad trees are a magnificent sight, like cherry trees in bloom, but as your practice goes forward, the snow will vanish and the tree will wither away. Just so is the world we live in, never remaining as it is for long. The vast ocean transforms into groves of mulberries; mulberry groves transform into the vast ocean” (annotation).

“The sovereign of springtime . . . Kou man.” Hakuin quotes from the *Book of Rites (Li Chi IV.1), Regulations for Each of the Months of the Year*: “In the first month of spring . . . the sovereign [who presides over the operations of nature] is T’ai hao; the tutelary genius is Kou man.”

“What do these words mean? Do they only express the auspicious nature of the first month? When you’ve succeeded in penetrating this phrase, the world itself becomes a pure land of

perpetual, tranquil radiance [jakkō-do], everyday life becomes eternal spring” (annotation).

4. ASCENDING THE HIGH SEAT ON THE THIRD DAY OF THE THIRD MONTH

TODAY, THE THIRD of the third month, both old and young proceed to the river to make their ablutions in the flowing waters. But there is one matter, a great affliction, so immensely difficult that it cannot be cleansed, even were you to douse yourself with all the water in the four oceans. It is the great portent of birth and death. If you would cleanse yourself of the calamity and suffering of birth and death, you must arouse a strong faith that is fierce and courageous in the extreme, and you must achieve a kenshō so clear that you can see it in the palm of your hand. What is this kenshō?

While crows are building their roosts atop of Mount Ku-su,
Emperor Wu is in his palace, besotted with Lady Hsi-shih.

Why?

Heaven sees more than people see;
Heaven hears more than people hear.

What does this all boil down to?

The hen-pheasant, fluttering in the spring field,
At this season! How timely! How appropriate!

.....

While crows are building their roosts . . . Lady Hsi-shih is an allusion to the plan devised by the minister of the state of Chao to overthrow Emperor Wu. He sent the beauty Hsi-shih as a gift to the Emperor, who soon became totally infatuated with her. He built a tower atop

Mount Ku-su for their use and totally neglected the affairs of state, resulting in his downfall.

The hen-pheasant . . . How appropriate! “Confucius said, ‘There is the hen-pheasant on the hill bridge. At this season! How timely! How appropriate!’ His follower Tzu-lu tried to feed the pheasant, but after smelling the offering three times, the bird flew off” (*Analects* 10.18). “The pheasant regards the man, then soars up into the air to seek a place where pheasants can gather in safety. Hasn’t that hen-pheasant by the mountain bridge found a timely place?” (annotation).

5. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY

One of five annual assemblies conducted in Zen temples. The head priest delivers teachings from the high seat on the Buddha’s Birthday, the eighth day of the fourth month. From its place in the Poison Blossoms collection, this is apparently an early piece.

When this prince was born he took seven steps and declared:

My melodies will extend to the depths of the Dharma source.

You might discover a clay swallow that understands this truth,

But don’t be putting a snail to work plowing your vegetable garden.

.....

When this prince was born. . . . A number of accounts of the birth of the Buddha (Prince Shakamuni) are found in the Buddhist canon. The one that follows is from the *T’ai-tzu jui-ying pen-ch’i ching* (T.185). “On the night of the eighth day of the fourth month, as the

morning star appeared in the sky, the Buddha [Prince Shakamuni] appeared. He came to earth from the left side of his mother's body, took seven steps, raised up his left hand, and said, 'In heaven above, on earth below, I alone am the honored one'" (annotation).

You might discover . . . vegetable garden. "Why is this so? By means of these two lines, a Buddha was born" (annotation). Similar lines appear in the poems of Han-shan: "A clay buffalo plows a rocky field; it has never yielded even a stalk of rice." Hakuin discusses the lines in *Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan*: "A buffalo is by nature a slow and ponderous beast, not to speak of a clay buffalo. It is this roly-poly recalcitrance you must understand. The rocky field is covered with rocks and sand on all sides, a place unfavored with even a single grain of good soil. [You can] whip this clay buffalo forward and make it till the rocky field, but even if you persist until the year of the donkey [forever], you will never see even a single weed, not to mention a fine autumn harvest" (annotation).

6. ASCENDING THE HIGH SEAT ON THE FIFTH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH

Ch'u Yuan's (343–278 B.C.) famous poem "Li Sao" ("Departing in Sorrow"), from the Warring States period of ancient China, appears in the Ch'u Tz'u (Songs of the South) collection. Despairing that slanders by evil courtiers have caused him to be rejected by his lord, Ch'u Yuan recounts a series of spirit journeys to various mythological realms during which he engages or attempts to engage with a variety of divine and spiritual beings. On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, Ch'u Yuan finally committed suicide by tying himself to a large rock and throwing himself into the river. In China, the Dragon Boat Festival commemorates the event.

This piece apparently dates from Hakuin's early years at Shōin-ji.

ON THE FIFTH day of the fifth month, a boat race is held in remembrance of the poet Ch'u Yuan's death. Ch'u Yuan once said, "All the whole world is befuddled, I alone am lucid. All the whole world is drunk, I alone am sober."

[Ch'u Yuan's "Li Sao" records a dialogue he had with the Lord of the Fish. Were I (Hakuin) speaking in Ch'u Yuan's place, the dialogue would go like this:]

Lord of the Fish: "If, as you say, your mind alone is lucid, how could despair and resentment drive you to jump to your death in the river? Isn't that a case of creating waves where there is no wind?"

Ch'u Yuan: "Ah! Draw close and listen to me. The skies and oceans are a bright jewel free of all defilement. Man's worries and sadness, conversing and laughter, all appear within the tranquility of the great samadhi of the Buddhas as the subtle and incomprehensible Dharma. Unfortunately, since you have not yet heard the wondrous sound of the one hand, [you are unable to understand this]."

"What is the wondrous sound of one hand?" asked the Lord of the Fish.

"Arriving at the river that borders the land of Yueh, the mountains of Chao surge endlessly on the yonder shore."

The Lord of the Sea may be aware that this wondrous sound is valuable, but he cannot know its true worth. Why is that? "Many women in the past have mistakenly married merchants. Valuing profit, merchants are constantly on the road. One was off in Chiang-ling last year, selling tea."

In the end, what does all this boil down to?

Boring through it in a quiet place.

.....

"There is no way Ch'u Yuan could know about this treasure [of the one hand]. . . . [Living before Buddhism entered China,] he was not even aware that the Buddha Way existed, so he had no way of knowing how to achieve it" (annotation).

Ch'u Yuan: "Ahh! . . . listen to me." "There is a hidden meaning here that you monks don't know about. Now I'm going to teach it to you"

(annotation).

The skies and . . . defilement. “To the enlightened eye, the human world all exists within this Dharma jewel, which is bright and clear through and through. The Buddha-nature is that priceless Dharma jewel. Why is that? The hills and streams become my hills and streams, heaven and earth become my heaven and earth, so that there is nothing whatever lacking! This priceless jewel saves sentient beings from suffering in hell, and hungry ghosts as well” (annotation).

Unfortunately, since you . . . [you are unable to understand this.] Hakuin addresses these words to the Lord of the Fish, but an annotation adds: “It is because of [not having heard the sound of one hand] that I myself [Ch’u Yuan] erred and killed myself. The regret and anger I feel still remains.”

“Arriving at the river . . . on the yonder shore.” Similar lines appear in a verse by the priest Shih Ch’u-mo, included in both the *San-t’i-shih* (*Poetry in Three Styles*) and the *T’ang-shih Hsuan* (*Tōshi-sen* in Japanese) collections of T’ang poetry, both of which were highly popular in Japan.

“Many women in the past . . . on the road.” “I shouldn’t have become a merchant’s wife. Merchants always put profit foremost and are always on the road, paying little heed to their wives. He left home last year to sell tea in Chiang-ling. I haven’t heard from him since” (annotation). “These words allude to the sadness of someone who is estranged from her husband [i.e. from the Way]” (annotation).

“It is very difficult for people to grasp Ch’u Yuan’s true intent” (annotation).

Boring through it in a quiet place (jōsho sowaka). “Brother Yuan went to master Yun-men and asked about his meaning. Yun-men said, ‘Seven times nine is sixty-three.’ Yuan drew close to the master and said, ‘I’ll be leaving Heng-chou soon.’ Giving a shout Yun-men said, ‘I’ll pay for your straw sandals.’ ‘Take care of yourself,’ said the monk. Giving another shout Yun-men said, ‘Bore through it in a quiet place!’” (*Comprehensive Records of Yun-men*, ch. 1). The word *sowaka* transcribes Sanskrit words signifying completion or consummation. “The vital Zen function is at work in these words.

They are truly terrifying. When you are hauled before the Lord of Hell after you die, this single phrase will gain you absolution! It penetrates down through the floors of the deepest hells” (annotation).

7. INFORMAL TALK ON THE SEVENTH NIGHT OF THE SEVENTH LUNAR MONTH

The Tanabata or Star Festival, the Japanese version of the Chinese Ch'i-hsi Festival, is based on the legend of two lovers, a weaver maid and a cowherd. Sometimes called the Double Seven Festival, it celebrates the annual meeting of the Cowherd and Weaver Maiden constellations, which falls on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar.

AGES AGO THE constellations Cowherd and the Weaver Maiden incurred the Lord of Heaven's wrath and were banished to the opposite ends of the Milky Way. It is just like humans who commit evil acts being condemned to suffer the eternal torments of the samsaric ocean. Although the two constellations are allowed to meet once each year, human beings who have been condemned to fall into the bitter karmic seas and undergo the torments of the Shrieking, Red Lotus, Black Cord, and other horrendous hells are never able to free themselves from their suffering or repent their transgressions.

However, in the heart of each one of us is our own Amida Buddha who is never apart from us even for a second. If we are able to see this original Buddha-nature that is intrinsic within us, then all the terrible tools of torture brandished by the inmates of hell to torment sinners transform immediately into the adornments of Amida's Pure Land. Emma, the King of the Land of Death, and all his demons of hell transform into Bodhisattvas. All the sentient beings undergoing horrendous punishments for their karmic misdeeds become Tathagatas of immaculate purity. And all the evil places found in the various hells change into the Pure Land of the Mind. The realm

described in the *Amida Sutra* in which “rivers and hills, birds and trees all recite the Nembutsu” is seen and heard with utmost clarity.

How does one meet up with the Amida of one’s own mind? There is a way. Seek singlemindedly throughout the twenty-four hours of the day, both waking and sleeping, the answer to the questions: “If this body of mine is the Pure Land of one’s own mind, what ornaments does this Pure Land have? If the Amida of one’s own mind is found within oneself, what Dharma does it preach?”

I myself answer: “In speaking with great persons one should be respectful, and affable in speaking with lesser persons.” Did not Confucius always comport himself instinctively in keeping with this innate rule?

[Using other words:] “The spring showers fall equally on villages north and south. A young wife brings food to her mother-in-law, grandpa dandles an infant on his knee.”

In short: Chang Liao is coming! Chang Liao is coming!

.....

Pure Land of the Mind. Hakuin’s use of this phrase, and the questions about meeting the Amida of one’s own mind and so on in the following paragraph, appear in greater detail in the Preface to *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 92).

In speaking with great persons . . . with lesser persons. “At the morning audience, Confucius talked with the lesser officials in a relaxed and affable way, and talked with the higher officials in a respectful manner” (*The Analects of Confucius*, p. 66).

“*The spring showers fall . . . on his knee*” are lines from a poem by the Sung poet and Zen layman Huang T’ing-chien (1045–1105) that Hakuin used frequently as a capping phrase; see *Poison Words for the Heart*.

Chang Liao is coming! Chang Liao is coming! (*Ryōrai ryōrai*). Ryō (Chinese Liao) refers to the hero Chang Liao (165?–222). The warning “Chang Liao is coming! Chang Liao is coming!” was used in China and Japan to quiet unruly children. “A phrase of the Yun-men school, and an excellent one. What a wonderful thing that Yun-men had a knack for coining such words” (annotation).

8. ASCENDING THE TEACHING SEAT (JŌDŌ) ON THE NINTH DAY [OF THE NINTH MONTH]

WANG WEI WROTE in a poem, “I know my brothers far away will be climbing the heights, dogwood sprays in their jackets, with one person missing.” Although Wang is expressing his feelings as he recalls his distant homeland, the lines also express quite well the words priests use when they speak of the great matter of Zen. How sad that among the groves of Zen today so many people lack this One Person. If you can encounter this One Person, at that instant you ascend into marvelous awakening. Lacking this encounter, you remain forever among the ignorant and ordinary.

After doing zazen for six years in the Snowy Mountains, Shakamuni suddenly encountered this Person and abruptly achieved supreme right awakening. Hsiang-yen, seeing this Person in the sound of a pebble striking a bamboo, ascended the heights of the Zen patriarchs. T'ai-yuan heard the sound of a hornpipe. Ling-yun saw peach flowers in bloom. All the wise Zen sages throughout the past, had they not encountered this Person, would have remained ordinary, unenlightened men. No matter how splendid the robes they may have worn, they would be no different from those disembodied ghosts and goblins who cling to the trees and grasses, destined ultimately to fall into hell. Hence it was said, “If you manage to run into this fellow, he will be a far greater treasure than any you have known, more precious than even the most fabulous sword. When you encounter him, heaven and earth lose all their color, the brightness of the sun and moon are swallowed up.”

Just who is this “Person”?

His head is three feet long, his legs ten inches. His pillow rests on Mount T'ien-t'ai, his feet are planted on Mount Nan-yueh.

Where is he now?

Well, last night he lodged in the eye of a mite. This morning he's drinking tea inside a fly's nose.

How to find such an elusive creature?

To find him you must probe and investigate with questions like this: Is the Person a man or a woman? Is he blue or yellow or red or white? Is he inside or outside? Or is he in between? If you do not encounter him face to face, you must arouse a spirit of fierce, burning determination and bore continuously in throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. Bore in no matter what you are doing, bore deeper and deeper until you completely exhaust all your resources and run completely out of words. When you have exhausted all your resources and are at a total and utter loss, the fellow will unexpectedly appear. When you run into him without warning, and only then, you will experience a joy of unprecedented depth and intensity. You will soar like the phoenix when it breaks free of the golden net, like the crane that is liberated from its pen.

Why is that?

Tears trickle in two streams down a lady's fine pillow,
Because she adores him, and because she resents him.

.....

Wang Wei wrote in a poem. . . . The full text of "Thinking of My Brothers in Shantung on the Ninth Day of the Ninth Month" by the T'ang poet Wang Wei (699–759) is:

I know my brothers far away
Will ascend to a high place with dogwood sprays in their hats;
One person is missing.
Alone in a foreign land, I feel myself a stranger.
Today, on this splendid festival day,
I pine for them all the more.

It was a custom on the ninth day of the ninth month to ascend to a high place and view the moon.

His head is three feet . . . ten inches. Physiognomy found in superior Zen adepts, impossible to qualify or categorize. "You won't find this guy falling into any feet and inch categories!" (annotation).

Like the phoenix when it breaks free . . . from its pen. “The pen and the golden net signify attachment to the words of the Buddha-patriarchs” (annotation).

Tears trickle in two streams . . . because she resents him. The lines are from a poem by T’ang poet Li Shen (780–846) (the poem is also attributed to other T’ang writers). “Once when Ta-hui Tsung-kao’s Dharma heir Wan-an Tao-yen [1094–1164] entered Ta-hui’s chambers, Ta-hui asked him about the koan ‘Nan-ch’uan Lives in a Hermitage’. Wan-an replied:

Two streams of tears run down a lady’s jeweled pillow,
Partly because she loves him, partly because she resents
him.

“Ta-hui summoned his attendant and told him to remove Wan-an’s name from the duty roster. ‘With just this single turning word,’ he said, ‘you have succeeded in repaying in full your debt to the Buddhas’” (*Praise of the Five Houses of the True School*, section on Zen master Wan-an Tao-yen).

The koan “Nan-ch’uan Lives in a Hermitage” is found in *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 8: “When Nan-ch’uan was living in a hermitage he would go up into the hills to gather firewood with the monks. On one of these occasions he said to a monk he encountered, ‘I am going to gather fuel in the hills. When you cook rice for lunch, finish your own and then bring mine up to me.’ After eating his rice, the monk smashed the pots and dishes and lay down on a sleeping mat. When the monk failed to appear, Nan-ch’uan went down to the hermitage. Seeing the monk lying on the mat, he lay down beside him. The monk thereupon got up and left. Later Nan-ch’uan said, ‘When I was living in that hermitage, I met a monk of great ability. I haven’t seen him around since.’”

9. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA’S

DEATH

The anniversary commemorating Bodhidharma's death is held annually on the fifth day of the tenth month. Hakuin addressed his verse to Emperor Wu of Liang, whose encounter with Bodhidharma in his palace at Chin-ling is the subject of Case 1 in the Blue Cliff Record.

Before Daruma arrived in your realm you were like a widow lady,
Perched on a green rug, all made up, awaiting her spouse's return.
Yet when he visited Chin-ling palace you didn't understand at all.
A young crow, missing its mother, whimpers sadly in the frigid mist.

The Emperor asked, "What is the first principle of the sacred truth?" Bodhidharma replied, "Vast emptiness, nothing sacred at all." "Then who stands before me here?" he asked. "I don't know," said Bodhidharma. The emperor, unable to understand, gave Bodhidharma leave to depart for the kingdom of Wei. Later the Emperor discussed the matter with Duke Chih, who told him that his visitor was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Kannon who transmitted the mind-seal of the Buddha himself. The Emperor, deeply lamenting his mistake, resolved to send an emissary to invite Bodhidharma back. Duke Chih stopped him, saying, "Even if everyone in the country went after him, he would never return."

.....

Before Daruma arrived . . . her spouse's return. One annotation comments that Emperor Wu cleverly gussied himself up, making himself charming by penciling in his eyebrows and reddening his lips like a widow, then awaited Bodhidharma's arrival seated on luxurious silken cushions. Another says simply, "How innocent he was, as tactless and heedless as a little boy."

A young crow . . . the frigid mist. Young crow or *tz'u-wu*, literally “compassionate bird,” is the name given to a certain species of crow that is said to return to feed its mother after it has left the nest. “A young crow that wanted to repay its great debt to its mother now perches in the evening twilight cheeping plaintive cries of regret” (annotation). Hakuin may have been thinking of Po Chu-i’s poem, “The Compassionate Bird Crying in the Night”: “This compassionate crow misses his mother, / Crying out in a plaintive voice. / . . . Its cries seem to confess that it has not yet repaid the mother who raised him.”

“When Bodhidharma departed for Wei, the Emperor of Liang lost a person who could have fulfilled all his needs. Now he can only sit and regret the lost opportunity” (annotation).

10. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE RŌHATSU TRAINING PERIOD

The great Way is absolutely empty and utterly inviolable,
What did the copper-faced old crock think he’d attained?
Frigid snow-filled clouds burden the deepening twilight.
Plum flowers, the pure night air, under a mountain moon.

.....

Frigid snow-filled . . . a mountain moon. Hakuin inscribed the final two lines of this undated verse on several of his paintings of *Shakamuni Leaving the Mountain* (HZB, pp. 145–52).

11. INSTRUCTIONS DELIVERED TO THE ASSEMBLY ON RECEIVING THE *Record of Bukkō*

These instructions were inspired by the arrival at Shōin-ji of a newly printed copy of the Record of Bukkō. One of Hakuin's surviving letters shows him ordering the work from the Edo temple that had printed it: "May I trouble you to send me two or three copies of Bukkō's records as quickly as possible? I will put them to use as medicine for opening students' eyes in these days of the degenerate Dharma." This edition was published in 1726, placing this piece in Hakuin's forty-second year — the same year he achieved his final, decisive enlightenment.

Bukkō is the honorific Kokushi or "National Master" title of the Chinese priest Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan (1226–86; Japanese, Mugaku Sogen), who played an important role in the transmission of Chinese Zen to Japan. These records were published in Japan, hence the use of the Japanese title.

Some of the references in the following piece are based on a passage in the Record of Bukkō: "When I [Wu-hsueh] was living in the land of great Sung China, before I came to this country, a divine being appeared to me while I was sitting in samadhi. . . . He approached and said, 'In your compassion for the suffering of sentient beings, I ask you to visit my country,' . . . The dream recurred several times, preceded each time by a golden dragon that came and entered my sleeve, and by the appearance of flocks of pigeons. Blue pigeons and white pigeons would fly about, pecking the ground, hopping onto my knees. At the time I didn't know what to make of it. However, not long afterwards a Japanese gentleman came and told me that the Japanese Shōgun wished to invite me to his country. . . . In Kamakura, when I visited the [Tsurugaoka Hachiman] Shrine to offer incense to the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman [a Shintō deity, god of archery and war, enshrined at the Hachiman Shrine; also known in his Buddhist manifestation as 'Dai-Bosatsu'], I noticed several wooden carvings of pigeons in the rafters

above. I asked about them . . . and was told, 'They are messengers of the deity.' I knew then that Hachiman was the Bodhisattva who had visited me in China. I have heretofore been reluctant to speak about this matter. . . . Should you, my disciples, decide to make a Zen portrait (chinsō) of me, you should have the artist depict a golden dragon and a pair of pigeons standing on the edge of my robe to record this experience of my former days."

As a young monk, National Master Bukkō plumbed the depths of Wu-chun's Dragon Pool, licked up large dollops of his virulent slobber, then clambered his way to the top of Hsu-t'ang's Eagle Peak, where the resting bull gave him a series of stiff kicks. A tall bamboo at the gate, reeking with stinking fumes, scared the demons off quicker than a peachwood charm.

As Bukkō was sitting on his zazen cushion, a flock of celestial pigeons and a divine dragon sent by the great deity of the Hachiman Shrine found their way into his slumbering brain. As he was meditating on his bamboo chair, this golden dragon disturbed dreams that Bukkō had still not achieved. As for those dreams, even old Elephant Bone wouldn't have known what to make of them.

When Bukkō was conducting ceremonies to open Engaku-ji, a group of white deer raced through the temple, disrupting the event. *Too bad he didn't take an arrow and plug them all!*

Once when he was giving *sanzen*, a black viper made its way into his chambers, causing great confusion. What a hateful old bonze, his life taken up with things like that, causing terminal torment in a great many wise people.

His Zen records — vines and creepers whose snarls spread over the earth and curled up even into the heavens — have been out of print, so when I heard that the priest of Gekkei-ji had reissued them, I immediately wrote him a letter and ordered some copies. I burdened the priest at Funi-an with the onerous task of carrying my missive over the treacherous Hakone Pass to deliver to Gekkei-ji in Edo.

When the books arrived at Shōin-ji, I took one out and looked at it. Even before I opened the cover, I could sense the National Master's poisonous milk welling up beneath my eyes. At the same

time, I also sensed the presence of his Dharma heir National Master Bukkoku, founder of Ungan-ji. I want *Bukkō's Record* to remain here in my temple, protecting it long into the future.

.....

Wu-hsueh achieved an initial enlightenment while practicing under Wu-chun Shih-fan (1178–1249). After Wu-chun's death, he studied with other teachers, including Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu. In 1279, at the invitation of Regent Hōjō Tokimune (1125–84), de facto ruler of Japan, Wu-hsueh came to Japan and was appointed abbot at Kenchō-ji in Kamakura. Three years later he was installed as abbot and founder of Engaku-ji, a temple adjacent to Kenchō-ji that Tokimune, who had become his student, built for him.

As a young monk, National Master Bukkō . . . a peachwood charm. In the initial paragraph Hakuin plays on names associated with these Chinese teachers. *Dragon Pool (Lung-yen)* is the name of Wu-chun's chambers at the Hsing-sheng Wan-shou-ssu monastery on Mount Ching. [*Fox*] *slobber*, a virulent poison, is used here as a metaphor for Wu-chun's Zen teaching. *Eagle Peak (Chiu-ling)* is another name for Lung-yin-ssu, the temple where Wu-hsueh studied with Hsu-t'ang. *Resting bull* alludes to Hsu-t'ang's sobriquet Hsi-keng (Jap. Sokkō), literally "to rest from tilling the land," and *tall bamboo* refers to some well-known lines in one of Hsu-t'ang's verses: "A tall bamboo stands by the gate as we go to part; its leaves stir a pure breeze to bid you farewell." In China, a *peachwood charm* was engraved or inscribed with images and inscriptions and hung over gateways and doors to ward off evil spirits. Hsu-t'ang's utterances, Hakuin infers, have a similar power to keep evil demons at bay.

Old Elephant Bone is the T'ang priest Hsueh-feng I-ts'un, though it is not clear why Hakuin mentions Hsueh-feng as a diviner of dreams. An annotation on this sentence cites the koan "Hsueh-feng Sees a Snake", which begins, "There's a turtle-nosed snake in the mountains south of here" (*Book of Equanimity*, Case 24), and makes the comment: "Hsueh-feng made a koan out of seeing a turtle-nosed snake, but even he couldn't have divined [the meaning of] these

golden dragons.” Perhaps Hakuin cites Hsueh-feng as someone possessed of especially keen discernment.

Too bad he didn't take an arrow and plug them all. In the *Record of Bukkō* there is mention of a herd of deer appearing at the opening of Engaku-ji to hear Wu-hsueh deliver his teaching. Hakuin's comment alludes to a well-known dialogue between T'ang master Ma-tsu and a hunter named Shih-kung, which resulted in the latter's becoming a Buddhist priest. As Shih-kung was out hunting he happened upon Ma-tsu's hermitage. “Who are you?” asked Ma-tsu. “A hunter,” he said. “Do you know how to shoot?” asked Ma-tsu. “Of course,” replied Shih-kung. “How many deer can you shoot with a single arrow?” “One arrow, one deer,” replied Shih-kung. “Then you don't know how to shoot,” said Ma-tsu. “Do you?” asked Shih-kung. “Of course.” “How many can you get with one arrow?” “The entire herd,” replied the master. (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 6).

Once when he was giving sanzen, a black viper. . . . Evidently Wu-hsueh confronted students during *sanzen* interviews with a koan, or koans, in which a dead viper appears. These koans do not seem to have been committed to paper. The dead snake image appears in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 66, where a student playing with a dead snake returns it to life and is bitten and slain, and is then reborn thanks to its deadly venom. In *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams*, Hakuin uses the image twice in capping words, e.g., he comments in reference to a student's exchange with Zen master Daitō that “The man was a dead snake, but Daitō's words brought him back to life” (*kan* 4, 396b).

Funi-an was a hermitage in a small village near Numazu. The priest mentioned here is not identified, though the head priest at Funi-an at the time was Tetsuzui Genshō (1640–1744), who would have been eighty-six at the time.

National Master Bukkoku. Honorific title of Kōhō Kennichi (1241–1316), one of Wu-hsueh's most important Dharma heirs. Kōhō, the son of a Japanese emperor, founded Ungan-ji in Nasu (present Tochigi prefecture).

12. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BUDDHA'S DEATH

This verse instruction was delivered at a Nehan-e, an assembly held to commemorate the Buddha's death on the fifteenth day of the second month.

Two thousand years ago the Golden Sage gave up the ghost,
Leaving a rotten carcass that has stunk things up ever since.
Now his descendants' foreheads are drenched thick in sweat.
After the rain, pink peach blossoms are fringed in white mist.

.....

Line 1: The "Golden Sage" is Shakamuni.

Line 3: Based on a passage in *Mencius* (III.2.4): "In ancient times, instead of burying their parents, people sometimes took their bodies and threw them into ditches or gullies. When they later saw that they had been eaten by foxes and sucked on by flies, sweat broke out on the foreheads of those unable to bear the sight. The sweat flowed from their inmost hearts; it was not something they wanted others to see."

Line 4: "The [true] whereabouts of the Buddha's golden body" (annotation).

13. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

Knocked for a loop! Thunderstruck! Iron boat smashed!
Around my place that is what Buddha's birthday means
For four or five of my monks, perhaps even six or more.
At daybreak pelting rain drenches the bright green
leaves.

.....

Knocked for a loop! . . . smashed! Phrases associated with the breakthrough satori experience. For example: "Not a particle of sky exists above his head, not a speck of earth exists beneath his feet, the great void is destroyed, the iron boat smashed, no heaven or earth to give shelter, no sun or moon to provide relief" (*Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan*).

For four or five . . . or more. "Five or six members of the brotherhood were on hand to celebrate this birthday" (annotation).

At daybreak pelting rain . . . leaves. "At dawn, rain began falling heavily, soaking the garden and trees" (annotation).

14. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA'S DEATH

Poison milk spurting from dugs on Great Teat Mountain
Has discombobulated hundreds of thousands of
Buddhas.

It had proved fatal long before to the old Indian himself.
An inept father myself now, my boys stalwartly lap it up.

.....

Great Teat Mountain. Bodhidharma resided beneath Wu-ju feng (Five-Teat Pinnacle) on Mount Sung.

The old Indian is Bodhidharma; the *father* is Hakuin himself.

15. INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGH SEAT DELIVERED AT A VEGETARIAN FEAST THAT ZEN MAN MYŌSEKI PROVIDED ON BEHALF OF HIS MOTHER

Myōseki was a Zen priest from northern Honshu. Beyond the fact that he studied at Shōin-ji, nothing is known of him.

LONG AGO, AS Ananda was sitting tranquilly in meditation, a hungry ghost with fire blazing from its mouth appeared to him. “You have only seven days to live,” the hungry ghost declared. Ananda conferred with the Buddha, who gave him a *dharani* to recite and instructed him to hold a memorial service for beings trapped in the cycle of rebirth.

The Buddha’s disciple Maudgalyayana went to the Buddha after seeing his mother undergoing torments in hell and asked his help in saving her. The Buddha taught him the Urabon ceremony for the repose of the dead.

Now, Zen man Myōseki from Echigo, having received the news that his mother had passed away, has emulated Ch’en Mu-chou and asked that a *suiriku* ceremony be conducted to provide sustenance for the brotherhood and requite his debt to his mother. After the sutras and *dharani* were recited, he asked me to deliver some Dharma teachings. I have composed a verse:

Maudgalyayana performed the very first Urabon
ceremony,
Mu-chou wove straw sandals and left them by the
roadside,
Eighty-year-old Ananda recited a *dharani* of divine
potency,

All to assure rebirth for their mothers in the heavenly realms.

.....

Long ago, as Ananda. . . . The story is based on the *Sutra of the Dharani for Delivering the Hungry Ghost Flaming Mouth* (Jap. *Kubatsu Enku Gaki Darani-kyō*, T.1313.21). The offerings Ananda made at this time are said to be the origin of the *segaki* ceremony, at which services are held and oblations of food and drink made to beings in the hungry ghost existence and in the other realms of samsaric rebirth.

The Buddha's disciple Maudgalyayana. . . . In the *Ullambana Sutra* (T.685) Maudgalyayana's offerings to the assembly of monks to deliver his mother from the torments of the realm of hungry ghosts are said to be the origin of the annual Urabon observances performed for repose of the dead. The *suiriku* ceremony originated in early Chinese Buddhism as a form of the *segaki* ceremony.

Ch'en Mu-chou (780–877?) supported his mother on donations he received from travelers, who left money in return for straw sandals he had woven and left by the roadside.

16. UNTITLED [EXAMINING A KOAN]

We know from an annotation that Hakuin made these comments when he offered incense at the memorial service for the mother of the monk Myōseki (see previous piece).

Cheng-weng Ju-ching (1163–1228), under whom Eihei Dōgen, founder of the Japanese Sōtō sect, achieved enlightenment, and Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu (1185–1269), the revered Japanese Rinzai Zen teacher of Daiō Kokushi and founder of the lineage to which Hakuin belonged, were contemporaries, *Ju-ching* being senior by some twenty years.

I PUT THIS before you:

When Zen master Hsu-t'ang met Head Priest Ju-ching of Ch'ing-tz'u temple, Ju-ching said, "Your parents' bodies are rotting away in a thicket of razor-sharp thorns. Did you know that?"

"It is wonderful," replied Hsu-t'ang, "but it's not something to act rashly about."

The master [Hakuin] said: The means employed by these two old veterans are exceedingly subtle and mysterious. Scrutinize them carefully and you will find that Ju-ching's question is as awesome as the great serpent that devours elephants whole and excretes their dry bones three years later. Hsu-t'ang's reply has the vehement purpose of the evil *P'o-ching* bird, which seeks to devour its mother as soon as it is born.

.....

This dialogue between Hsu-t'ang and Ju-ching occurs in the sketch of Hsu-t'ang's life that is appended to his Zen records. It took place at Ch'ing-tz'u monastery, where both Ju-ching and Hsu-t'ang served terms as head abbot. Hakuin omits the final exchange: "Ju-ching gave Hsu-t'ang a slap. Hsu-t'ang extended his arms, saying, 'Let's take it slow and easy.'"

Hsu-t'ang and Ju-ching seem to have been friends. After Ju-ching's death, Hsu-t'ang wrote a colophon (dated 1265) for an edition of Dōgen's Zen records at the request of a Japanese priest who brought a manuscript of the work to him in China.

The great serpent . . . three years later. In the *Shan-hai ching* (*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*), an early work on Chinese geography, a huge serpent is described that "devours elephants and excretes their bones three years later. If a superior man partakes of its flesh, he will be protected from any illness." Hakuin may be comparing Ju-ching to the creature merely to stress his exceptional capacity, though this same serpent sometimes appears in Zen literature indicating someone with great ability who tries to consume something too large for him to digest, which may be the sense intended here.

P'o-ching (“mirror-breaker”) bird is mentioned in the *Heroic March Sutra* as an evil bird (perhaps an owl) that devours its own mother, the most heinous of all unfilial acts. Muchaku Dōchū, in explaining a reference to “a bird with a compelling passion to eat its mother” in *Praise of the Five Houses of the True School*, writes: “Its poisonous heart is truly fearsome. When the time comes, it will not spare even its own teacher.” In Zen texts the stress is generally on the bird’s innate propensity to devour those it is closest and most indebted to, suggesting great capacity in a student that will enable him to surpass his teacher.

17. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

A note inserted in one of the manuscript sources for Poison Blossoms tells us that this verse was written on the eighth day of the twelfth month, at the end of the rōhatsu training session, the day according to Zen tradition that the Buddha attained enlightenment.

Snowy mountains on the tips of a hundred million lion
hairs,
Each of them piercing straight through to the Dharma
source.
The most difficult task for the guest-master is taking a
basket
Into the garden and scrabbling for greens under the hard
frost.

.....

Snowy mountains . . . lion hairs. “Hua-yen texts say that each hair of the Buddha’s golden body manifests an infinite number of golden

lions. In this way the action of a single person such as the Buddha eventually extends to the farthest reaches of the universe” (annotation). The golden lion symbolizes Shakamuni Buddha, from whose satori hundreds of millions of similar satoris will appear.

“From head to foot, you have a hundred million follicles of hair. If you become one with the Snowy Mountains, each of those hairs penetrates along with the frigid cold to the Dharma source of right awakening” (annotation).

18. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIEST TANREI’S DEATH

A wind gusting from India eastward to China and Japan
Has filled our branches with fine blossoms of every kind.
In each of their marvelous springtime shapes and colors
I clearly see the features of my late teacher’s ugly face.

.....

According to the *Chronological Biography*, Hakuin wrote this verse during the New Year period of 1713, his twenty-ninth year, at memorial services commemorating the death of Tanrei Soden, the priest at Shōin-ji in Hara who in 1699 had ordained him into the priesthood (*Precious Mirror Cave*, age 29, p. 183).

As explained in the Introduction, chronological ages are given throughout *Poison Blossoms* as they appear in the original text, in accordance with the Japanese system of counting a person’s age — one year old at birth, two years old after one year of life, and so on. This, it must be noted, is different from the method I used in my previous translations of Hakuin’s works — most importantly in the *Chronological Biography* and *The Tale of My Childhood*, both published in *Precious Mirror Cave* — in which one year was

subtracted from the ages as published to match the Western-style counting of age.

19. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING THE BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

No way Cunda could offer anyone a meal around here;
No place for a *yaksha* to enter and snatch an iron tooth.
A dust mote is my coffin, the universe is my coffin shell,
Throw my bloated green carcass to the mountain crows.

.....

No way . . . around here. As the Buddha approached Nirvana he refused all offerings except at the very end, when he accepted a meal offered by the blacksmith Cunda (*Nirvana Sutra*).

No place . . . iron tooth. The *Nirvana Sutra* describes a fleet-footed *yaksha* (a species of demon) stealing one of the Buddha's teeth after his cremation. The story is told in "Record of the Relics at Muryōjuzen-ji" in #176 in Book Five (see p. 292).

Sharira, the teeth and other relics of the Buddha, are said to be indestructibly hard, hence "iron tooth."

A dust mote is my coffin, the universe is my coffin shell is an allusion to Chinese burial customs described in the *Chuang Tzu*. "When Chuang Tzu was about to die, his disciples expressed a desire to give him a sumptuous burial. Chuang Tzu said, 'I will have heaven and earth for my coffin and coffin shell, the sun and moon for my pair of jade discs, the stars and constellations for my pearls and beads, and the ten thousand things for my parting gifts. The furnishings for my funeral are already prepared — what is there to add?' 'But Master, we're afraid the crows and kites will eat your corpse!' said

his disciples. 'Above ground I'll be eaten by crows and kites,' said Chuang Tzu. 'Below ground, I'll be eaten by mole crickets and ants. Wouldn't it be rather bigoted to deprive one group in order to supply the other?'" (*The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 361).

Hakuin's "a dust mote is my coffin, the universe my coffin shell" adapts Chuang Tzu's words, underscoring the Hua-yen theme of the mutual unhindered interpenetration of all things, down to the smallest particle of dust. "Given the Buddha-mind's incalculable immensity, it would take worlds as numerous as the grains of sand along the Ganges to make a coffin, and the universe in all the six directions to make its outer shell. When the carcass rots, feed it to the crows. The true form of Nirvana will always remain safe and unharmed" (annotation).

Throw my . . . mountain crows. "The bloated green carcasses of the dead are all the Tathagata's true Dharma-body" (annotation).

20. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

Services in observance of the Buddha's birthday are held on the eighth day of the fourth month.

A birth unknown to either his father or his mother,
A birth even sage Ashita could not have foreseen.
Pines and cedars hang heavy with last night's rain,
The spating waters flow golden with their pollen.

.....

Ashita was a celebrated seer who foretold Shakamuni's future greatness when he was born.

Pines and cedars . . . with their pollen. "Last night's heavy rain has scattered all the pine and cedar flowers and everywhere is a bright

golden color” (annotation). “Golden water — the Buddha’s marvelously golden body — flows everywhere throughout the universe” (annotation).

21. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA’S DEATH

An annotation attached to this verse quotes Hakuin’s own words that he spoke on the occasion: “In years past I wrote a verse for Bodhidharma’s Death Anniversary [that went]:

How sad that many fine monks in this day of the latter
Dharma
Are taking up farming and trade, healing and divination.
Don’t say no traces remained when the old Indian
departed.
After a rainfall in the mountain peaks, tear marks are
often seen.
Bore your way forward hand-in-hand with these lines.”

Emperor Wu, stop lamenting that Daruma left you in the lurch;
Fortunately, Heaven does not allow the ultimate truth to
perish.
The figure I drew last night is poking through the temple
garden,
His single sandal is that white cloud drifting across the
dawn sky.

.....

Emperor Wu . . . in the lurch. In Emperor Wu’s interview with Bodhidharma, he failed to understand Bodhidharma’s meaning;

Bodhidharma left and never returned (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 1). See #9 above, first note on p. 32.

Heaven . . . perish. Quotation from the Confucian *Analects*, IX.5.

The figure I drew . . . the sky. “The picture of Daruma I drew last night became a breeze that ambled through the vegetable gardens. This morning, Daruma’s single sandal sails through the cold skies like a cloud” (annotation). For the story of Bodhidharma’s sandal, see the first note to #77, p. 96.

22. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE RŌHATSU TRAINING PERIOD

An annotation states that this verse was written on the eighth day of the twelfth month, the end of a rōhatsu training session and the day the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment. Other annotations suggest an early date, a surmise confirmed by the reference in the opening line to “our tenth year,” which probably refers to the tenth rōhatsu training session at Shōin-ji. This would place these instructions around 1727, which is in keeping with the description of old temple walls with cracks in them. When Hakuin first went to reside at Shōin-ji as head priest at the age of thirty-two, the buildings were “in an almost indescribable state of disrepair. At night the stars shone through the roofs. The tokonoma was sodden with rain and dew. It was necessary for him to wear a sedge hat as he moved about the temple attending to his duties. He had to wear wooden sandals in the main hall when he was conducting memorial ceremonies” (Chronological Biography, age 33; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 192).

Lighting lamps for the tenth time in the gleam of ocean waves,

We scrape off fistfuls of frost clinging fast to the burning stove.

Goading the great White Ox that refuses to budge a single inch,

Old walls moan in the wind, cold light glints from open cracks.

.....

Lighting lamps . . . burning stove. Moonlight gleaming on the ocean waves is a metaphor for the Zen mind. Hakuin expands on this phrase in his commentary on the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 24: “The moon glitters on the ocean waves. You may say this exists, yet it doesn’t. You may say it doesn’t exist, and yet there it is, clear and unmistakable. This is something you can never be sure of” (*Hekiganshū Hishō*). “Shōin-ji is located near the seashore. . . . Frost forms inside the furnace on especially cold nights, so when you go to stoke it with firewood, you must first break off clinging bits of frost” (annotation).

Goading the great White Ox. As a metaphor for the awakened Buddha-mind (“the great white ox inherent in each and every person” per an annotation), the white ox appears in the *Lotus Sutra* in the parable of the great white ox cart. Hakuin uses this same phrase in #193 in Book Six, p. 353: “But given the whip, he won’t budge. Call out to him, his head won’t turn. . . . As a splendid example of the Zen groves, he could have no equal.”

Old walls . . . open cracks. “As the buildings at Shōin-ji are old and ramshackle, you can see the stars and moon from inside the temple [through the cracks in the roof]. These are the circumstances that enable people to attain the Way, but no one understands that” (annotation).

23. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF TESSEN

OSHŌ'S DEATH

Probably written around 1732, Hakuin's forty-eighth year. Tessen Genteki (d. 1716), the head priest of Yōmei-ji in Numazu, was the teacher of Hakuin's great friend Unzan Sotai (1685–1747).

Kanzan Kokushi didn't find a Dharma heir until he was seventy,
Confucius was past fifty when appointed to be Minister of State.
Unzan's music, as harmonious as Old Shun's — how to describe it?
His sleeves billowing like a Steel Boat's sails in the dawn wind.

.....

Kanzan Kokushi is National Master Kanzan (Kanzan Egen), whose Dharma heir Jū'ō Sohitsu (1296–1380) succeeded him and became the second abbot of Myōshin-ji.

Unzan's music . . . how to describe it? “Unzan is always producing the music of perfect harmony that underlies the great Way, but there is no one around who understands it” (annotation, paraphrased).

Shun was a legendary emperor associated with China's Golden Age. He produced with his musical director Kui the elegant music known as *Ta-shao*, played on eight different instruments whose sounds blended so wonderfully that it brought all who heard it into perfect harmony.

Steel Boat translates the name Tessen.

24. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE DAY COMMEMORATING THE

BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

Devils wail pitifully inside White Crane forest, even gods
lament,
In broad daylight its deadly leaves and flowers remain in
shadow.
Luckily, there's a phrase to usher you into the springtime
beyond.
It has a flawless pitch that old Chou Yu confirmed just
yesterday.

.....

White Crane forest (haku-kakurin). The Buddha is said to have entered Nirvana under a grove of Sala trees, whose flowers immediately turned “white as white cranes.” Hakuin used Shōin-ji’s “mountain name” *Kokurin*, White Crane, as well as *Shara jūge Kokurin*, White Crane Beneath the Sala Tree, as sobriquets. “Nirvana is a terrifying thing in Kokurin’s training hall. The fields and the hills from top to bottom are all Nirvana” (annotation).

In broad daylight . . . in shadow. These flowers and foliage are descriptive of Hakuin’s merciless teaching methods. “[In places, they grow so dark and shadowy that] even the Buddhas and patriarchs are unable to get a good look at them” (annotation).

Luckily, there’s a phrase . . . the springtime beyond means that there is a turning phrase (*shusshin on ku*) that will enable you enter the brightness of self-awakening beyond the darkness of limited attainment.

It has a flawless pitch . . . just yesterday. Chou Yu (174–218), a general celebrated for defeating the forces of Ts’ao Ts’ao at the Battle of the Red Cliffs, is also said to have possessed such an exquisite ear for music that if anyone played or sang a false note, he would immediately look up even when in his cups. “A popular saying of the time advised, ‘If you think there’s a flaw in a tune or melody, have it examined by Chou Yu’” (annotation).

25. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

This lad was born at the same instant as the great Void,
His father is Mr. Chaos, and he is nicknamed *Nameless*.
The nostrils on his lower back are totally vast and empty,
His eyebrows a few straggly hairs hanging from his jaw.

.....

This lad was born . . . the great Void. “That being the case, he and the Void were born as one” (annotation). From *Old Granny's Tea-Grinding Songs*, a text that Hakuin published in his seventy-sixth year: “Old Granny Mind Master [the Buddha-nature], how old are you now?’ ‘Me? I’ve lived just as long as the empty Void” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 122).

His father is Mr. Chaos. “Chaos is the divine pattern that exists before the division into heaven and earth” (annotation). “He’s also called the Person of the Original Face (*honrai-menboku-bo*)” (annotation). Mr. Chaos (*konton*), representing the primordial state prior to the creation of the universe, is described in the *Chuang Tzu* as having no organs of perception (see “Was Practicing” in #391 in Book Ten, pp. 599–600, for the story).

He is nicknamed Nameless (bōmei). See the *Chuang Tzu*, ch. 7 (*The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, pp. 93–4).

The nostrils . . . from his jaw. “His eyes on his back, his nose on his waist — what a clever fellow! For eyebrows, he’s got two or three strands of hair under his chin. That’s why the unenlightened are never able to locate them” (annotation).

26. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF

BODHIDHARMA'S DEATH

The Chronological Biography and other records stress how rundown and ramshackle Shōin-ji's buildings were in the early days of Hakuin's incumbency. This verse, although undated, apparently belongs to the late 1740s, when Shōin-ji was undergoing some sorely needed repairs.

Breaking up walls, repairing and restoring rickety
buildings,
Amid all this noise and confusion, I offer a stick of
incense.
Workmen, should I offer some sticks on your behalf as
well?
Those dry leaves that stoke the fire are the coin of our
realm.

.....

Breaking up walls . . . a stick of incense. “Services were being held on this day in observance of Bodhidharma’s Death Anniversary, but everybody was extremely busy. I went with muddy hands and muddied feet into the Dharma hall and offered incense to the patriarch” (annotation).

Workmen . . . the coin of our realm. Hakuin alludes to the koan “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower”: “A monk went to master Su-shan Kuang-jen to inform him that the building of his memorial stupa had been completed. ‘How much will you pay the workmen?’ asked Su-shan. ‘I think you should decide that yourself, master,’ replied the monk. ‘Should we give them three cash, or two, or one? Your answer to that question would be a memorial stupa even finer than the one you’ve just built,’ said Su-shan. The monk didn’t know what to reply. Later, a monk visited master Ta-ling and told him of Su-shan’s words. ‘Was anyone able to answer the question?’ asked Ta-ling. ‘No one,’ the monk replied. ‘Go back to Su-shan,’ said Ta-ling. ‘Tell him: “If you give the workmen three cash, you’ll never have a memorial stupa

during your lifetime; if you give the workmen two cash, you'll be in cahoots with them; if you give them one cash, you'll damage them so gravely that they'll lose their eyebrows." The monk went and reported this to Su-shan. Su-shan sat up straight, faced the direction of Ta-ling's temple, and with great solemnity made a deep bow. 'I didn't think there was a single person anywhere in the land,' he said with a sigh. 'But the old Buddha Ta-ling's radiant light has reached me from his temple far away. Yet he is like a lotus flower blossoming in the dead of winter [a very rare occurrence].' Later, hearing of Su-shan's words, Ta-ling remarked, 'While I did say those things, the hairs on the tortoise are already three feet longer now'" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 13).

27. INFORMAL TALK ON THE EVE OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE

YIN ENERGY THAT began strengthening in the fifth month has now reached its farthest point. There is nothing either up or down or in the four directions, and there is not the slightest sign of any warmth. When things advance to their farthest point, the change begins and *yang* energy starts to return. In the *Book of Changes* this is represented by a hexagram of six broken lines. It has long been the custom to put rush ashes into a bamboo pitch-pipe when the *yang* principle starts to return and observe the manner in which they float through the air as they emerge from the pipe. Here at Shōin-ji, I would take those ashes and use them to roast up the iron bull of Shan-fu. I'd grab the bamboo pitch-pipe and blow down Kashapa's flagpole.

How to describe life at Shōin-ji as we reach the winter solstice?

Poverty so dire even heroes Meng Pen and Hsia Yu could do nothing to alleviate it. If it were possible for me to describe actual conditions around here, I'm sure people would find them more ludicrous than the cack-handed bumbings of Cudapanthaka. The old

woman who comes round to lend a hand was incensed when she saw my lice-ridden robes. She immediately tossed them into a cauldron of water to boil the vermin out. My trusted servant has just returned from the fields covered with dirt to announce that we can expect a fine crop of large daikon radishes this year. Brother Sa has set a trap for the tomcat who keeps sneaking in to harass my pet three-colored [*mikei*] cat. In the kitchen Brother Gaku is rapping on the kettle as he boils up a batch of rice gruel that will be so thin we'll see our faces reflected in it.

None of the monks who have come here — men with eyes as rapacious as a crocodile's, sporting barbs sharper than hedgehog quills — has the slightest concern for the descendants of Vulture Peak. With hawk-like claws and owl-like beaks, they have zero interest in temple rules or regulations like those established by Po-chang. Sleeping in derelict shrines and deserted, broken-down halls they have chanced upon, they make their way here to study with me with their bodies wrapped in paper robes to ward off the cold, sipping water to relieve their hunger pangs.

When I teach them and talk to them about Zen, I sometimes employ snatches of country songs or some popular street jingles in the local Suruga dialect. Their only ration besides that is my harsh scolding outbursts and steady rain of abuse. Meals follow the tradition of P'u-hua — greens and more greens. As for supporting the fifty monks who've gathered here, I don't care a hoot in hell about that.

Long ago, master Tung-shan delivered an Informal Talk to his monks as they were enjoying some seasonal fruit on the eve of the winter solstice. Recalling that, I wanted to buy my monks some tangerines at the local market, but I couldn't come up with the money. Still, don't be comparing my informal talk with Tung-shan's and concluding that mine has no redeeming merit. Tomorrow morning I'm going serve up a batch of fox slobber I've prepared especially for you.

.....

It has long been the custom . . . emerge from the pipe. There was a custom in ancient China of placing rush ashes in a bamboo pitch-pipe (a cylindrical tube used in woodwind musical instruments) at the winter solstice and observing them as they emerged from the pipe. If they floated in the air, it signified that the *yin* phase had ended and the *yang* phase was beginning.

The iron bull of Shan-fu. When the people of Shan-fu put up a bridge they propitiated the water gods by casting in iron the figure of an ox and launching it into the river. Hakuin uses these phrases twice in *Horse Thistles*: “A wren pecks the great Buddha of Chia-chou to smithereens, a mosquito jabs the iron bull of Shan-fu to pieces”; “Riding the iron bull of Shan-fu, chasing off the great Buddha of Chia-chou.” The great Buddha of Chia-chou is a large stone Buddha still extant in Szechuan province.

Blow down Kashapa’s flagpole. “Ananda said to Kashapa, ‘The World-Honored One passed on the brocade robe to you. What else did he transmit?’ Kashapa called out, ‘Ananda!’ Ananda replied, ‘Yes,’ Kashapa said, ‘Take down the flagpole at the gate’ (*Gateless Barrier*, Case 22).

Meng Pen and Hsia Yu are Chinese heroes of Herculean strength; the former could rip the horns from a living ox, while the latter could rip off its tail.

Cudapanthaka was an extremely dim-witted disciple of the Buddha. He was unable even to remember his own name and was always performing strange, inexplicable acts, yet he succeeded in attaining enlightenment.

Rice gruel. “Eyeball gruel” (*medama-gayu*; also “ceiling gruel”) was so thin that it was said one’s eyes (or the ceiling) could be seen reflected in it.

Po-chang was a T’ang priest credited with formulating the first set of rules and regulations for Zen training halls.

P’u-hua was an eccentric T’ang monk who lived without any fixed abode; he appears in the *Record of Lin-chi*.

Master Tung-shan is Tung-shan Liang-chieh: “On the eve of the winter solstice, as the monks in his assembly were enjoying some

fruit, Tung-shan said to Head Monk Tai, ‘There is something as black as lacquer that supports the heavens above and the earth below. It is always active, yet activity cannot completely encompass its working. Tell me, where does it fall short?’ ‘It is in its activity that it falls short,’ answered the head monk. Tung-shan gave a loud shout and ordered the fruit taken away” (*Record of Tung-shan, Tung-shan yu-lu*). Hakuin alludes to this story again in another Informal Talk (#58 below).

Fox slobber is a deadly poison, used here as a metaphor for the utterances of a Zen teacher, which can bring instant death in a student (leading to rebirth).

28. UNTITLED [EXAMINING A KOAN]

I PUT THIS before you:

Priest Wu-tsu Fa-yen instructed the assembly, “Just eat the fruit, don’t worry about the twists and crooks in the tree.”

Raising this koan with his assembly, Hsi-keng Rōshi said, “The useless old geezer, still clinging to life. He didn’t even grasp what was going on. If I were in his place, I’d make everyone discover the worth of the fruit on their own. Is it rare and precious? Is it inferior and second rate?”

The master [Hakuin] said, “Those two cantankerous old coots. One is like Wu-tsu taking a turn around a broken millstone, but he’s different from Yen-t’ou whispering out the meaning. The other is like Chao-chou investigating the old woman, but he can’t match Hsueh-feng rolling out the wooden balls. Why is that? Close investigation shows they didn’t send offerings to the ministers of state.”

.....

The Zen scholar Muchaku Dōchū said of this koan: “This is master Ta-hui’s ‘Just strive to become a Buddha, don’t worry about trying to understand their words’” (*Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 102). The version of

Wu-tsu's instructions in *Records of the Old Worthies* (*Ku-tsun-su yu-lu*, ch. 20) has him go on to say: "[But] if you don't know the tree's crooks and twists, how will you know how to partake of the fruit? If you don't pass through the patriarchs' barriers, how can you expect to grapple effectively with birth and death? What are the patriarchs' barriers? Tip Big Table Mountain over on its back." This is the same emphasis we find throughout Hakuin's writings: don't concern yourself with the teachings or anything else, just bore through into *kenshō*. But once you achieve *kenshō*, you can't attain great enlightenment without becoming fully conversant with the teachings.

Hakuin mentions four other koans in his own comments:

1. *Wu-tsu taking a turn around a broken millstone*. "When Wu-tsu was in charge of the mill, a monk pointed at the swiftly turning millstone and asked, 'Is that moving by supernatural means, or is it spontaneous and natural?' Wu-tsu hitched up his robe and made a circumambulation of the millstone" (*Ch'an-lin seng-pao ch'uan*, appendix).
2. *Yen-t'ou whispering out the meaning*. "One day when Hsueh-feng was in charge of the kitchen at Te-shan's temple, the meal was late. Te-shan picked up his bowl and went into the Dharma Hall. When Hsueh-feng later asked him why he had left, Te-shan turned and went back to his chambers. On hearing about this, Yen-t'ou struck his fist in the palm of his hand and said, 'Just as I thought. Te-shan still hasn't grasped the final word.' When news of Yen-t'ou's comment reached Te-shan, he summoned Yen-t'ou to his chambers and said, 'So you won't affirm this old monk?' Yen-t'ou whispered out his meaning to Te-shan. When Te-shan ascended the high seat and delivered his formal sermon the next day, it was somehow different than before. Yen-t'ou went to the monks' hall, smacked his fist into his hand, and burst into laughter. 'How wonderful!' he said. 'The old head priest grasped the final word. From now on, no one will be able to touch him'" (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 16).
3. *Chao-chou investigating the old woman*. "One of Chao-chou's monks asked an old woman, 'Which is the way to Mount T'ai?' 'Go straight ahead!' she said. When the monk had taken a few

steps, she remarked, 'He looks like a proper monk, but he's just like all the rest.' Hearing about this encounter, Chao-chou told his monks that he himself would go and check the old woman out. The next day he went and asked her the same question. She gave him the same answer. When he returned to his temple, he announced to the monk, 'I've investigated the old woman for you'" (*Gateless Barrier*, Case 31).

4. *Hsueh-feng rolling out the wooden balls*. "In a formal talk from the high seat Hsueh-feng said, 'Everywhere on earth is a gateway to freedom. You take someone's hand, try to make him enter, but he won't venture to pass through.' A monk came forward. 'You can't blame me,' he said. Another monk said, 'Once he enters, what happens then?' The master struck him. Hsuan-sha said to the master, 'So-and-so employs his Zen activity with telling effect these days. How about you?' The master produced three wooden balls and rolled them out in front of Hsuan-sha" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7).

They didn't send offerings to the ministers of state is an allusion to an episode from Confucius's life included in the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shih-chi)*. A chief minister receiving a beautiful lady as tribute from a neighboring state became so taken with her that for three days he neglected his official duties, even forgetting to send his other ministers ritual food offerings for the sacred altars. An annotation ventures this comment: "Perhaps he means, 'I don't eat other people's leftovers and I don't feed others mine.'" In any case, Hakuin seems to indicate that the utterances given by Wu-tsu and Hsi-keng (Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu) both fail to pass muster.

29. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

This verse cannot be dated, but the descriptions of Shōin-ji in the accompanying annotations, made by people who seem to have taken part in this training session, suggest it was delivered when the temple was in “an advanced state of disrepair” — i.e., during the early years of Hakuin’s incumbency.

A north wind assaults our small village with violent force;
The old hall groans sullenly, threatening to shatter and fly.
The front well is buried in reeds shorn from the back
roofs,
Old Chō’s door is tearing apart the walls of Mr. Li’s house.

.....

Although Suruga province where Shōin-ji is located is known for its temperate climate, in winter freezing winds can blow down from the heights of Mount Fuji and neighboring mountains. “It was freezing cold, and it penetrated the marrow of your bones. Typhoon-force winds hammered the village, blowing things wildly about. The wind entered the hall through the broken ceiling and the cracks in the walls, throbbing and whirling around inside” (annotation). “It blew the woodshed and the privy askew, and buried the well and the manure tank in debris. It lifted Gombei’s house in front of the temple gate and threw it against Hachibei’s house, crushing its walls. It was like a powerful typhoon” (annotation).

Old Chō and *Mr. Li* are common Tom, Dick, and Harry-type names that appear frequently in Zen records. Here they stand for the Gombei and Hachibei mentioned in the above annotation, who were apparently neighbors of Shōin-ji.

30. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF TENJUN OSHŌ’S DEATH AND THE FIFTEENTH

ANNIVERSARY OF TANREI OSHŌ'S DEATH

A white-headed child and his black-headed father
Reflect each other in the dark like crystal mirrors.
Twenty springs gone by with remarkable swiftness,
Rubbing sleep from my eyes, I offer some incense.

.....

Tenrin Sōjun (d. 1674?), who for some reason Hakuin refers to in the title as Tenjun, was the teacher of Tanrei Soden (d. 1701), the Shōin-ji priest who ordained Hakuin. Tenrin was a Dharma heir of Daizui Sōiku, a great uncle of Hakuin who reestablished Shōin-ji in the 17th century. This verse was written in 1724, when Hakuin was forty years old.

A white-headed child . . . father. “The father is the child, the child the father” (annotation).

Reflect each other in the dark. “It was a night ceremony, at which the *chinsō* portraits of the two priests were hung in the temple” (annotation).

31. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT CEREMONIES FOR THE BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

Prattle about Buddha entering Nirvana is like a rabbit with
horns;
Talk about the two-legged sage is like a tortoise with a
hairy shell.

There's nothing strange about facing south to view the
North Star,
I bend my steps eastward to check the western vegetable
gardens.

.....

Prattle about Buddha . . . with a hairy shell. “Rabbits with horns and turtles with hairy backs may exist in words, but not in reality. The true form of Buddhas and Nirvana is formlessness” (annotation). “The two-legged sage is Shakamuni, his two legs said to stand for the two aspects of practice and attainment” (note by Yoshizawa Katsuhiro in his unpublished edition of *Poison Blossoms*).

There's nothing strange . . . vegetable gardens. “At this point matters like facing south and seeing the North Star are not difficult at all. Why? Just this morning I set out toward the east to check the temple's vegetable gardens to the west. How about that! Is it birth and death? Is it Nirvana?” (annotation). In his *Hekiganshū Hishō* (Case 26), Hakuin comments on the phrase “facing south to view the North Star”: “Once you have *kenshō*, you do such things freely and easily.”

32. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE START OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD*

This verse dates from the winter of 1737 when Hakuin, at fifty-three, was staying at the Rinzaï-ji in Kawazu village, southern Izu prefecture. “In spring, the master lectured on the Blue Cliff Record at the request of Rinzaï-ji in Izu. This marked the first time he responded to such an invitation from another temple. Over two hundred people attended. During the meeting, the master overheard monks Ryōsai and Ekyū discussing the lectures. They felt some of

the interpretations he had offered on the text were different from those he had given at previous lectures. He told them, 'The Dharma is like climbing a mountain or entering the sea; the higher and farther you go, the deeper you get. On some points I felt differently this time.' His words spurred the two monks to even greater effort” (Chronological Biography, age 53, 1737; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 204).

Over a hundred veteran monks, a thousand fingers
between them,
Are down in a dark den, mired in a hundred doses of fox
slobber.
At the Dharma summit, with not a single vegetable stalk
in sight,
I am busily extracting nails and wedges from their old
green rugs.

.....

A thousand fingers between them. One monk has ten fingers, so one hundred monks have one thousand fingers.

Mired in a hundred doses of fox slobber. Fox slobber (*koen*) is a virulent poison. “A hundred doses” alludes to the hundred koans of the *Blue Cliff Record*.

At the Dharma summit . . . stalk in sight. “This is a tiny mountaintop temple, where offerings for participating monks are unneeded. So I just give them old zazen cushions permeated with enlightenment and have them snatch the priceless gem within this old monk’s Dharma chambers — for each and every one of them, *that* is a genuine offering, and a true vegetarian feast” (annotation).

I am busily extracting . . . old green rugs. “Nails and wedges” are the attachments and impediments to full enlightenment that remain in students’ minds. Hakuin comments on this line in *Hekiganshū Hishō*: “Nails are the sutras and commentaries implanted by the Teaching Schools, wedges the satori implanted by Zen teachers. All must be extracted.”

“When Tung-shan first went to study with Yun-men, Yun-men asked, ‘Where have you come from?’ ‘Cha-t’u,’ he replied. ‘Where were you for the summer retreat?’ asked Yun-men. ‘Pao-tzu monastery in Hunan,’ he said. ‘When did you leave there?’ asked Yun-men. ‘On the twenty-fifth of the eighth month,’ he said. ‘You deserve sixty blows but I’ll let you off,’ said Yun-men. The next day Tung-shan came and requested an interview. ‘Yesterday you said I deserved sixty blows. I don’t know what I did wrong,’ said Tung-shan. ‘You useless rice-bag!’ shouted Yun-men. ‘You made the rounds of the Zen temples in Chiang-hsi and Ho-nan, and that’s all you have to show for it!’ At those words Tung-shan entered great enlightenment. Later Tung-shan said, ‘I’m going to find some place far from human habitation. I won’t lay up even a grain of rice or plant a single vegetable stalk. I’ll just attend to the needs of pilgrims who come there from the ten directions, pulling out the nails and knocking out the wedges in their minds . . .’” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 15).

Old green rugs are the precious heirlooms of their own houses, as well as a metaphor for one’s most treasured possession: the Buddha-mind. See #191, fourth note on p. 351.

33. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY

An annotation says that this was written at Rinzei-ji in Kawazu village, southern Izu prefecture, in the winter of 1737, during the same meeting at which he delivered the previous verse. Each year on the eighth day of the fourth month, a kanbutsu-e ceremony is held in Zen temples to celebrate the Buddha’s birthday. People take a long-handled ladle and sprinkle water or scented tea over a small statue of the Buddha that is set out and decorated with flowers for the occasion.

An old crow has alighted upon a phoenix branch to relax,
How will he insert his stinking beak into the Zen
teaching?

Inner peck, outer peck, a dipper of water on young
Shaka;

Kicking open the golden egg, the golden fowl darts away.

.....

An old crow . . . relax. “The old crow is Hakuin, the phoenix branch is Rinzai-ji” (annotation).

Inner peck, outer peck. This refers to the Zen term “simultaneous pecking” (*sottaku dōji*). When a mother hen senses that the chick inside the egg is about to begin pecking its way out, she pecks the outside of the shell at just the right time to help the chick free itself. See below, #118, pp. 152–54. “At the instant this ‘simultaneous pecking’ occurs, the Zen teacher plays his part as easily as he would ladle a dipper of water over the figure of the baby Buddha at the *kanbutsu-e* ceremony, and the student kicks his way free from the golden egg to emerge into full enlightenment. When the circumstances are ripe, a true golden fowl will emerge” (annotation).

34. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA’S DEATH

The verse is undated, but its place in Book One’s roughly chronological sequence suggests that it was composed in Hakuin’s mid-fifties.

At my place, we don’t hang the old Indian’s portrait on the
wall,

Partly because his Zen is so severe, partly because I'm just lazy.

Raindrops pattering over fallen autumn leaves, although sobering to the soul,

Can't compare to the intimacy of glorious sunset clouds over yellowing fields of grain.

.....

Lines 1–2: “Shōin-ji is so poor, if we hung his [Bodhidharma’s] image, we wouldn’t be able to place offerings before it” (annotation). “Not hanging his image makes us appear lax, but in fact it reveals the rigorous style of Bodhidharma’s Zen school, which advocates killing the Buddhas and killing the patriarchs” (annotation).

Lines 3–4: Favorite Hakuin capping words (*jakugo*). The first line evidently alludes to the initial breakthrough known as *kenshō*, the second to the further deepening and total fulfillment of that experience.

35. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

This verse also probably dates from Hakuin’s mid-fifties. The intensive rōhatsu training session is traditionally held at the beginning of the twelfth month in commemoration of the Buddha’s awakening. According to traditional Zen accounts, Shakamuni entered the Snowy Mountains (the Himalayas) and engaged in arduous practice for six years, attaining enlightenment on the eighth day of the twelfth month when he looked up and saw the morning star in the sky.

Once he entered the mountains he never once left them,

Didn't leave a single word behind for his fellow beings.
Yesterday was warm, I went out and gazed at the ocean,
Flying gulls, like striped tigers, filled the southern sky.

.....

Once he entered . . . left them. “People say the Buddha left the mountains — an incredible lie! Enter the mountains and see for yourself — is there any entering or leaving? This is a matter about which neither father nor son has the slightest clue. No one has ever seen the Buddha do any such thing!” (annotation).

I went out and gazed. . . . Shōin-ji is located in a very picturesque location near Suruga Bay, with Mount Fuji towering up to the north, and the inlet and beach of Tagonoura, much beloved of Japanese poets, visible to the south.

36. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *RECORD OF SOKKŌ*

What Hakuin calls the Record of Sokkō (Sokkō-roku; Hsi-keng lu) is more commonly known as the Record of Hsu-t'ang. It contains the Zen records of the northern Sung priest Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu, who used Hsi-keng (Japanese, Sokkō) as one of his sobriquets. Hakuin delivered the lectures referred to here in 1740, his fifty-sixth year, during the first large-scale lecture meeting he undertook at Shōin-ji. By Tōrei's account in the Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 205), it was this meeting that established Hakuin's reputation as one of the foremost Zen teachers in the country. Prior to these formal lectures Hakuin also delivered a series of extended talks that he later published under the title Sokkō-roku kaien-fusetsu.

To understand the virulent poison that leavens old
Sokkō's Zen,
You must first of all tackle the koan Su-shan's Memorial
Tower.
But Sokkō's ten records are regrettably like a broken coin
string,
One coin counting as two — like a coin string without its
full quota.

.....

To understand . . . Su-shan's Memorial Tower. “Each of the phrases found in Sokkō's record is mixed with virulent poison!” (annotation).

For the koan known as “Su-shan's Memorial Tower”, see the second note to #26 on pp. 45–6.

But Sokkō's ten records . . . full quota. The word coin is used here because coins figure prominently in “Su-shan's Memorial Tower” (#26, second note), the koan that brought Hsu-t'ang to enlightenment. In China and Japan coins cast with round holes in the center were strung together on a straw or hemp cord so as to be transported more easily.

The words translated *Sokkō's ten records* are “his teachings at the ten temples” in the original. When Hsu-t'ang's Zen records were divided into ten parts, one part devoted to the teachings he gave at each of the ten temples where he served. “The teachings Hsu-t'ang gave at the ten temples and a broken string are both utterly useless. Hakuin has spit out some virulent poison” (annotation).

One coin counting as two — like a coin string without its full quota. “One coin counting as two” means one coin has the same worth as two (cf. #89 on pp. 111,113). Muchaku Dōchū's gloss on a coin string “without its full quota,” i.e., one that does not have all the coins it purports to have (e.g., a common hundred-coin string made up of only eighty coins), explains it as referring to the inadequacy of words and letters in teaching Zen (*Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 84). Dōchū's gloss on the phrase *broken coin string* is: “The breaking of the string that holds the coins together means that the string has failed to do its

job and is useless; this stresses the need for dealing directly with the situation at hand” (op. cit.)

In another piece (#89) Hakuin comments that a person with a narrow, unenlightened view can't for the life of him understand the principle of one coin being the same as two coins. This suggests that, as we might expect, Hakuin's words are disparaging and at the same time praising Hsu-t'ang's teaching.

37. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING THE BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

We learn from annotations that this verse describes circumstances at Shōin-ji during the large lecture meeting on the Record of Sokkō outlined in the previous piece (#36). As Shōin-ji had little room for visiting monks, those who came had to fend pretty much for themselves.

He possessed a great person's imposing features after
Nirvana,
But what was his physiognomy before he arrived at that
state?
Yesterday four hundred mendicants filed in an unending
stream
Along the Eastern Road between the Hara and Numazu
stations.

.....

He possessed . . . after Nirvana. “Since the features of a great person have nothing to do with his physical shape or form, they are said to be ‘after Nirvana’” (Muchaku Dōchū, *Goke-shōjūsan joketsu*).

“Kuei-shan Ling-yu asked Yun-yen, ‘I heard that you spent a long time at Yueh-shan’s temple. Is that right?’ ‘That’s right,’ replied Yun-yen. “What were the features of a great person [*dainin no sō*: the distinguishing features of a Buddha] like in Yueh-shan?’ asked Kuei-shan. ‘He possessed them after Nirvana,’ said Yun-yen. ‘What does it mean, possessing them after Nirvana?’ asked Kuei-shan. ‘You pour water on it, it doesn’t get wet,’ replied Yun-yen, who then asked Kuei-shan, ‘How about the features of a great man in Po-chang?’ ‘Towering, towering, bright and clear, prior to sound, no sound, after forms and shapes, no forms and shapes. You’re like a mosquito on an ox’s back, nowhere to insert your beak,’ said Kuei-shan” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 9).

A great person’s imposing features. “The hills and rivers, the great earth and universe are all just one single person” (annotation).

Yesterday . . . Numazu stations. “Are these features after entering Nirvana? Are they features prior to Nirvana?” (annotation). This lecture meeting was attended by over four hundred people, mostly monks, who lived in derelict or borrowed dwellings in the area around Hara. They obtained food by setting out in a long line on begging rounds to visit homes in the vicinity. In the outing described here, the line stretched for some six kilometers along the Tōkaidō road from the Hara to the Numazu post stations.

38. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY

Lady Yang Kuei-fei’s bewitching face emerging from a hot bath,

Isn’t the least bit different from your face, or his face, or my face.

Monks, take a good gander at the three Arhats seated in the hall,

They hornswoggle you into thinking a tortoise is a snapping turtle.

.....

Lady Yang Kuei-fei (d. 756) was the celebrated Chinese beauty and concubine of the T'ang emperor Hsuan Tsung. It is said he was first smitten on seeing her emerge from a warm bath. "The Buddha inherent in all people is a beautiful thing" (annotation).

Monks, take a good gander . . . a snapping turtle. Hakuin is presumably referring to statues of the Arhats that were enshrined in the temple. "Students in my assembly . . . must not practice Shravaka [Two Vehicle] Zen!" (annotation). Hakuin regarded Shravakas and Pratyeka-buddhas, representing the Two Vehicles, as practicing a half-baked form of Zen that stops before final enlightenment is achieved; Arhats are students who have attained the highest of the four stages of Shravakahood. Another annotation invokes a popular expression, "If three people insist that something is so, others may mistakenly come to regard it as true," as a comment on the final line of the verse.

39. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*

"In winter, on the way home from a visit to Jishō-ji in Kai province, Hakuin lectured at Rinsen-an in Shimizu on Ch'uan-lao's Comments on the Diamond Sutra. Since the hall at Rinsen-an was small, with room for only six students, it was impossible to accommodate a large number of people. During the meeting the master instructed students with a story of a starving man at a bun shop" (Chronological Biography, age 60; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 209). The story of the starving man at the bun shop is told in #179.

Rinsen-an, a small temple in eastern Suruga province near the city of Numazu, figures in a number of other pieces in Poison Blossoms. It had been built the previous century by the priest Echū, a student of the well-known samurai-turned-Zen teacher Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655) and housed a memorial stupa containing Shōsan’s remains. The temple priest at this time, Ekyū (n.d.), two generations after Echū, was apparently studying with Hakuin.

I’m spouting off on Ch’uan’s verses here in Suzuki Shōsan’s house,
Several tens of monks were expected, over a hundred showed up.
What beyond doubt is the true *prajna* the *Diamond Cutter* reveals?
Those rickety, jerry-built shacks, magnificent as soaring pavilions.

.....

I’m spouting off . . . Shōsan’s house. The text, *Ch’uan-lao’s Comments on the Diamond Sutra*, consisting of comments in verse and prose on the *Diamond Sutra* by the Sung priest Ch’uan-lao Chih-fu (n.d.), is said to have been written in response to a question Ch’uan-lao received from a monk. The work was evidently a favorite of Hakuin’s, judging from the number of times he lectured on it, and it may have influenced him to produce *Poison Words for the Heart (Dokugo Shingyō)*, his own Zen commentary on another Wisdom text.

What beyond doubt . . . reveals? “As far as the minute particulars of the *prajna* wisdom set forth in the *Diamond Sutra* are concerned, that isn’t something that can be explained” (annotation).

Those rickety . . . soaring pavilions. “We made temporary structures using bamboo and wood lashed together with rope to accommodate the one hundred students who had come” (annotation). “Our visitors’ quarters were so flimsy they’d fall to pieces if you even blew on them; they’d wash away in the first rainfall” (annotation). These temporary structures, put together to accommodate the over one

hundred people Hakuin says attended the meeting, are unmentioned in the *Chronological Biography* account.

40. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA'S DEATH

This verse appears in the Chronological Biography, age 52, entry for 1736, where it is said to have been occasioned by the completion of a new Monks' Hall at Shōin-ji (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 203). Its ultimate message seems to be that good monks are produced through arduous training, not by building monks' halls.

Lacking enough room for our monks, we built a new hall,
Like beggars setting up tables to throw a sumptuous
feast.

North of the river, six men became great Dharma vessels;
Five fords and five bridges appeared on Mount Shao-lin.

.....

Lacking . . . feast. “We built a new hall to house the monks, yet were no more able to provide for their needs than a beggar could” (annotation).

Six men. Master Fen-yang lived in a bitterly cold region of China “north of the river.” At the urging of an Indian priest he met, Fen-yang compelled his monks to practice more assiduously; before three years were out, six men in his assembly attained great enlightenment (*Precious Lessons of the Zen School*).

Five fords and five bridges are the five Chinese Zen schools, all of which stem from First Patriarch Bodhidharma, who taught at Mount

Shao-lin. Thanks to them, the essential work of ferrying students across to the “other shore” of enlightenment was possible.

41. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

Since grasping the inner secret of the Snowy Mountains,
I’ve kept it to myself, thinking no one would believe me.
While I teach this morning I’m going to present it to you.
Guard it with extreme care, and don’t pass it on to others.

.....

The inner secret of the Snowy Mountains. “What ‘true inner secret’ is he talking about? The old fellow’s a downright menace” (annotation).

42. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD*

These instructions were delivered at the Keirin-ji lecture meeting in Kai province in 1741, Hakuin’s fifty-seventh year. This meeting figures in a number of other pieces, e.g. #337. The Blue Cliff Record (Pi-yen chi) is a collection of one hundred koans with verse comments by Hsueh-tou Ch’ung-hsien (980–1052) and annotations and commentary by Yuan-wu K’o-ch’in (1063–1135).

THE *BLUE CLIFF Record* consists of a hundred entwining creepers and entangling vines that resemble the torments of the flaming Avici Hell that Devadatta called upon himself. The comments Yuan-wu delivered on these koans at three different temples evince discernment and learning as impressive as Pilindavasta's. In adding verses and capping words to the koans he displayed his erudition as effortlessly as a caddis worm sprays out sand.

The verses Hsueh-tou wrote on the koans work with a merciless power that brings to mind an eagle setting a bead on a gimp-legged hare. Thinking his teacher Yuan-wu's *Blue Cliff Record* would be an obstacle to students studying Zen, master Ta-hui had it burned. But that was stirring a pool of stagnant water looking for a carp when the fish had already turned into a dragon and soared into the heavens. He was like the man who dropped his sword overboard and marked its whereabouts by cutting a nick in the ship's side.

This work is a fabled sword whose marvelous glint illuminates even the North Star. Indeed, is this not Hsuan-sha's "Triple Invalid"? Is it not Ch'ien-feng's "Three Kinds of Infirmity and Two Kinds of Light"? Years ago, on the night before he returned to Japan from Sung China, Dōgen of Eihei-ji procured a copy of the *Blue Cliff Record* and during the night was able to copy out the first eighty of its hundred cases. Later, back in Japan, with the deity of the Hakusan Shrine lending assistance, he transcribed the entire text in a single night.

Now I have rashly acceded to a request from Keirin-ji in Kai province to deliver comments of my own on the *Blue Cliff Record*. Zen master Fo-chien, who censured Yuan-wu for making comments on these koans, will surely condemn me. Never mind. Alluding to words old San-chiao used in his preface to the *Blue Cliff Record*, I pass the following message along to the students who have assembled here at Keirin-ji:

Entangling vines snarl insufferably up into the very heavens,
Befuddling Zen monks' minds in every corner of the universe.
On paper, Prince Chang's picture may seem a perfect likeness,

But you could yell yourself hoarse and he'd never respond.

.....

Devadatta, a cousin of the Buddha, attempted to usurp his position as leader of the order. When rebuked by the Buddha, Devadatta attempted to kill him. Although he repented of his misdeeds on his deathbed, he still fell into the Avici Hell, the lowest hell whose horrendous tortures are reserved for those who have committed one of the five grave offences.

“For defaming the Buddha, Devadatta fell into hell while still alive. Eventually, Ananda was sent to speak with him. ‘Is your mind at rest here?’ Ananda asked. ‘Although I am in hell,’ replied Devadatta, ‘it seems to me like the pleasures of the third Dhyana Heaven’” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, section on Shakamuni Buddha). Hakuin also seems to imply that working on the hundred koans of the *Blue Cliff Record* is like the ecstasies enjoyed in the third Dhyana Heaven (the third Dhyana Heaven is the highest paradise of the world of form).

Pilindavasta (literally, “left-over habits”) was a talented and erudite man born into a family of Brahmans who became a disciple of the Buddha. He cursed the god of the Ganges when crossing the river, and later entered religious life hoping to atone for this transgression, but because of his ill-temper and self-attachment he was reborn as a Brahman for five hundred generations (*Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra*, ch. 2).

As effortlessly as a caddis worm sprays out sand. A simile evidently inspired by a line by the Sung poet Huang T'ing-chien. For the word translated “caddis worm” the text has *she-kung*, a worm described in Chang Hua's (232–300) *Po-wu chih* (*Treatise on Research into Nature*), ch. 3, as “an unusual worm found in the rivers and streams of Chiang-nan. It emits a stream of water if people approach. If the water touches human skin it causes boils that can result in death if left untreated.”

Master Ta-hui had it burned. This story appears in a postscript to the *Blue Cliff Record* by Ching-shan Hsi-ling: “Later on [after the *Blue*

Cliff Record was published], Zen master Ta-hui [a Dharma heir of Yuan-wu] saw that all of a sudden students were giving answers in the *sanzen* room that were markedly different from responses they had given him previously, and he began to have doubts about his teacher's work. 'I can see that the responses these students give have come from the *Blue Cliff Record*. There's not a particle of enlightenment to be found in them.' From then on Ta-hui taught using words and sayings whose fundamental meaning was unknown to his students. He dealt with them directly using his spontaneous verbal skills. Because of this and in order to save students from the harmful effects of the *Blue Cliff Record*, he consigned it to the flames."

Hsuan-sha's "Triple Invalid". "Master Hsuan-sha addressed his assembly and said, 'Veteran priests everywhere talk about benefiting living beings with their teachings. If a triple invalid came to one of them for teaching, how would he deal with the person? If the teacher raised his *hossu* or picked up his mace, the invalid, being blind, couldn't see him. Even if he spoke with surpassing eloquence, the invalid, being deaf, couldn't hear him. And if the teacher tried to get the invalid to say something, being mute, he couldn't speak. How, then, would he teach this person? If he couldn't teach him, then the Buddha's Dharma must be judged ineffective'" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 88).

Ch'ien-feng's "Three Kinds of Infirmary and Two Kinds of Light" is discussed in the third note to #222 in Book Seven, pp. 402–3.

Zen master Fo-chien . . . will surely condemn me. "Zen master Fo-chien would no doubt censure me for coming to Kai province to give these lectures, but I would not be deterred even if the whole world joined in against me" (annotation). Fo-chien (T'ai-p'ing) Ch'ing-yuan (1059–1117) was a brother monk of Yuan-wu, but elder to him. A letter he is said to have written Yuan-wu criticizing him for the lectures, which were later incorporated into the *Blue Cliff Record*, is reproduced in *Admonitions for Buddhists*, ch. 6.

Alluding to words old San-chiao used in his preface. San-chiao Lao-jen ("Old Man of the Three Teachings") is the sobriquet of an unidentified person who wrote a preface to the *Blue Cliff Record*. In

it, he states: “A teacher in the past wrote a poem about the painting of portraits in which he said, ‘[The portrait of] Prince Chang is painted clearly and distinctly on the paper, but however loudly you cry out to him, he won’t answer.’”

Entangling vines snarl . . . he’d never respond. See previous note. “Once you get to know Prince Chang intimately, you have no need for his image on the paper” (annotation). “Perhaps this means that when you have passed through all the hundred koans, the *Blue Cliff Record* is no longer a collection of entangling vines” (annotation).

The *Kuzō Kattō-shō* collection of Zen phrases comments on these words: “Don’t cling to shadows! Don’t get waylaid by words and letters! He might look real depicted there on the paper, but he’s not! Something that merely looks real isn’t going to do you any good!”

43. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING BUDDHA’S NIRVANA

This verse was delivered on the fifteenth day of the second month, 1741, during the lecture meeting at Keirin-ji on the Blue Cliff Record.

Buddha poked a foot out of his casket to show people his sole.

For Great Turtle, it was like a pile of dust blinding his eyes.

You won’t see such a spectacle unfolding under our Sala trees,

I get up at dawn, I wash my face, and I grope around for a cloth.

.....

Buddha poked a foot . . . his sole. The legend of Buddha sticking a leg out of his casket is told in the *Tsu-t'ing shih-yuan*, ch. 1, based on an account in the *Nirvana Sutra*: “At that time Mahakashapa [‘Great Turtle’] and the Buddha’s other disciples were in samadhi on Mount Grdhrakuta. Suddenly, they became alarmed. Their bodies began shaking. Arising from meditation, they looked out over the landscape. The earth and all the hills quaked mightily. They then knew that the Buddha had entered Nirvana. They hastened forth, hurrying in their sadness to reach Kushinagara. It took them seven days. They made seven circumambulations of the Buddha’s casket, keeping it always on their right . . . with tears pouring from their eyes. They composed verses to express their deep bereavement. ‘World-Honored One, we are filled with great sadness. . . . Should we revere the top of the World-Honored One’s head, should we revere the Tathagata’s shoulder, should we revere the great Sage’s hands, should we revere the Tathagata’s back, should we revere the Tathagata’s belly, or should we revere the soles of the Buddha’s feet? Why were we not aware that you would enter Nirvana? We only ask that you indicate to us where to revere you.’ The World-Honored One in his deep compassion pushed his leg out of the casket, revealing to them the thousand-spoked wheel on the sole of the foot [Skt. *Sahasrara*, one of the 32 marks of a Buddha]. . . . A light of brilliant radiance shining out from the wheel spread through the ten quarters and illuminated the entire world. The Buddha then put his foot back into the casket and closed it as before.”

You won't see . . . for a cloth. “You won’t see disorder of that kind around my place just because we are commemorating the Buddha’s Nirvana. There’s nothing interesting or amusing at all. We just wash our faces in the morning and dry them with towels” (annotation). When the Buddha entered Nirvana in a grove of Sala trees, the magnitude of the event made the trees suddenly fill with blossoms “as white as cranes.” Hakuin compares this to the commemorative observances at Shōin-ji, whose “mountain” name *Kokurin* (“White Crane”), which Hakuin also took as a sobriquet, derives from this story.

44. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE DAY COMMEMORATING BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

This verse dates from around 1741; it appears to have been delivered at Shōin-ji.

There's a young fellow in my house: he's got no face at all,
A dark little boy from India: we're celebrating his birthday.
He's a strapping lad, he's noble, and he is very very strong,
But if you start pondering him, he skips the border in a trice.

.....

There's a young fellow . . . his birthday. "It's said he was born under a Bo tree, but let's set that aside for now" (annotation). "Among the monks at my temple there's a young Buddha without a face. He has none of the Buddha's thirty-two characteristic marks, and none of his eighty minor marks of physical excellence. He's just a jet-black fellow" (annotation). The Japanese original describes Shakamuni as a "dark little boy," *makuro makuro kuronbo*, literally "black, black, black person," a Japanese expression for a person of Negroid complexion.

He's a strapping lad . . . in a trice. "He's superior to other people, possessed of great capability and strength. Because he has no face, if you try to approach him through discrimination he will immediately cross the border into Silla [Korea] [i.e., he slips beyond your reach]" (annotation).

45. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING SHAO-LIN'S [BODHIDHARMA'S] DEATH

Hakuin refers to Bodhidharma by the sobriquet Shao-lin, taken from the Shao-lin temple on Mount Sū where he is said to have resided after coming to China. A colophon Hakuin added to the holograph text of this piece dates it to 1740, his fifty-sixth year.

THE THIEF CUT off his arm but never succeeded to his father's trade. The snaggletooth Indian would never flout the taboo against mentioning the old man's name. In producing evidence, it's best not to give too much. In making a contract, an incontestable seal is desirable. Fresh blood from Hui-k'o's arm reddened the white snow, penetrating down to the deepest floors of hell, shattering stone walls with its poisonous mist and plucking out the eyeballs of the thousand Buddhas.

Bodhidharma's ghost comes around in the evening with a white horse's bones in his arms and peeks into my hidden chambers. The thief Hui-k'o comes at dawn bearing sparrow eggs and sleeps in my empty citadel. When they see how small and light my bag of gold is, they both break into smiles.

It was for this very reason the Great Sage of Ssu-chou appeared in the world after his death. Riding a skinny ox through the bustling streets of Yang-chou, he poked his head in at the fried bun shops, cantered off three or four *li* to the east, and rode half a day out to the west. *Buwahahah! Heyheyhey!*

Two streams of red tears fall because of a crazy man's dreams.

A barbarian flute in a lonely hamlet brings sad thoughts to mind.

.....

The thief cut off his arm . . . the eyeballs of the thousand Buddhas. “The thief” is Bodhidharma’s student Hui-k’o, who cut off his own arm to demonstrate his dedication to the Way. Tradition calls him Bodhidharma’s successor, the Second Chinese Zen Patriarch, but Hakuin emphasizes the emptiness of such a legacy: “He [Hui-k’o] never received a single thing from Bodhidharma” (annotation); “The snaggletooth old codger never uttered a single word to him about Buddha [the ‘old man’] or Buddha Dharma” (annotation), apparently meaning that, try as he might, Hui-k’o never managed to steal anything from his teacher.

The snaggletooth Indian is Bodhidharma (often shortened to Daruma). “According to Zen legend, a priest of one of the Teaching Schools became enraged during a debate with Bodhidharma and struck him with his *nyoi* [a scepter-like staff used by persons of high rank], breaking some of his front teeth” (Muchaku Dōchū, *Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 196). “A truly filial son avoids any mention of his father’s name” (annotation). “To the end Bodhidharma didn’t utter a single word about the Buddha’s Dharma” (annotation).

In producing evidence . . . is desirable. “In making records, best keep your evidence to a minimum.” “The stamp affixed to a certificate [of Dharma transmission] has to be perfectly clear” (annotations). “It wouldn’t be good for the Second Patriarch to be dragging out stolen goods” (annotation).

Fresh blood from . . . the thousand Buddhas. “The poison that Bodhidharma fed Hui-k’o brought about his enlightenment, an event that shattered the surrounding cliffs [at Mount Shao-lin] and put out the eyes of all the thousand Buddhas” (annotation). Despite the stress Hakuin puts on the emptiness of Bodhidharma’s teaching, he is remembered for uttering a phrase that occasioned Hui-k’o’s awakening (see #187, p. 326).

Bodhidharma’s ghost . . . my hidden chambers. The annotations, on grounds not entirely clear, state that “a white horse’s bones” signify the Dharma transmission. “Bodhidharma transmitted his Zen by not giving his student Hui-k’o even a drop of water, but now we are in the Dharma’s latter day, with cutthroat brigand priests content to stay hunkered down inside the dark cave of their eighth consciousness,

believing that their satori, which stinks of rotten horse bones, is perfectly clean and pure” (annotation).

The thief Hui-k’o . . . in my empty citadel. A difficult crux. Yoshizawa suggests that the sparrow eggs (literally, “sparrow pearls”) may allude to a story about the Han dynasty recluse Yang Pao. The story would have been fairly well known in Hakuin’s time since it appears in the *Meng Ch’iu*, a common reference work. Yang Pao came upon a tree sparrow that had been wounded by an owl. Seeing the bird lying on the ground, covered with ants, Pao felt sorry for it. He picked it up, put it in a hatbox, and carried it home where he fed it chrysanthemums for a hundred days. One morning when its wings had healed, Pao set it free. The same evening the bird returned, taking the form of a youth dressed in yellow garments. Bowing to Pao, he said, “I am a messenger of the Queen Mother of the West. After that owl suddenly attacked me, you took compassion on me and saved my life.” He presented Pao with four jade bracelets. “Take care of these,” he said. “They will make your descendants for four generations as pure and spotless as themselves” (found in *Sou-shen chi*, ch. 20, a 4th century collection of extraordinary and supernatural anecdotes). Hakuin is perhaps using the phrase “sparrow eggs” to indicate Bodhidharma leaving the essentials of his Zen behind for his student.

My bag of gold refers to the tools and assets Hakuin employs to teach his students. “Both of them smile to see the meagerness of my Dharma assets” (annotation).

The Great Sage of Ssu-chou continued his Bodhisattva career even after his death, raising funds to help in the liberation of sentient beings. See the note on Seng-ch’ieh in the following piece.

Buwahahah! Heyheyhey! “The great sage Seng-ch’ieh’s buffoonery is so hilarious I can hardly bear it. Buwahahah! Heyheyhey!” (annotation). Hakuin’s amusement is evidently caused by Seng-ch’ieh’s antics in carrying out his Bodhisattva vow of leading others to awakening.

Two streams of red tears . . . dreams. “A crazy man sees a dream and rains down tears of blood” (annotation). The crazy man may be Hui-k’o or Hakuin himself, and the dream the dream of awakening.

46. UNTITLED [EXAMINING A KOAN]

I PUT THIS before you:

A monk once asked Tung-shan Hsiao-ts'ung, "Why did the Great Sage of Ssu-chou appear in Yang-chou [after he died]?" "A superior man has a liking for wealth, and he knows the way to get it," replied Tung-shan.

To monks exploring the hidden depths I respectfully say: Do any of you understand these words of Tung-shan? Give me a turning word!

Tapping the floor with his wooden staff, [Hakuin] said, I want this new arrival, Senior Monk Moku [Wood], to listen to what I have to say: To welcome Zen monks from all over the world with a heart as great as a mountain and a mind as vast as an ocean, never slackening my efforts, never yielding to the obstructing demons, preaching the Dharma to large numbers of people and leading sentient beings to freedom — such is my vow. With disheveled hair and bared teeth I answer my students' needs, responding to their vital movements with unfettered activity. Senior Monk Moku, it is possible to fulfill this vow of mine only because you are here to help me. As I ramble through the world of the lotus repository, or return to the minutest particle of dust, you and you alone will be with me. In the future, never leaving my side, help me restrain my faults and shortcomings!

He gives the floor a tap with his staff.

.....

A monk once asked . . . replied Tung-shan. The "Great Sage of Ssu-chou" is the Central Asian monk Seng-ch'ieh (628–710), who lived in Ssu-chou (Chiang-su province). He always carried a willow branch in his hand, and performed various miracles to gather donations to aid those in need both during his lifetime and after his death. When people asked, "What is your name?" he would answer, "My name is what." When they asked "What land are you from?" he said, "I'm from what land." He became known as the Great Sage of Ssu-chou

(*Ssu-chou Ta-sheng*) and was revered as an embodiment of the Bodhisattva Kannon. Biographical sketches are found in various T'ang dynasty works and in *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 27.

Hakuin quotes the full koan in *Sokkō-roku kaien-fusetsu*: “When Tung-shan Hsiao-ts’ung was at Mount Yun-chu serving as keeper of lamps, he heard a monk say that the Great Sage of Ssu-chou had recently made an appearance in Yang-chou. The monk then asked him, ‘What do you think the Sage is up to, appearing in Yang-chou like that?’ ‘A person of superior attainments also has a liking for wealth, but he knows the proper way to get it,’ replied Hsiao-ts’ung” (*Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 80–81).

A superior man has a liking for wealth, and he knows the [proper] way to get it is a favorite saying of Hakuin. “I don’t receive wealth that has not been acquired in [the proper] way. In the end, that way is working for the sake of saving sentient beings” (annotation). “It is not that a superior man [*kunshi*] does not have a liking for wealth, only that he does not obtain it by wrongful means” (Muchaku Dōchū, *Goke Shōjūsan Joketsu*, p. 772). A commentator glosses these “wrongful means” as those tainted by any hint of self,” echoing Hakuin’s comment in *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams*: “What this is aiming at is extremely vast and free of even the slightest particle of self” (*Kaian-kokugo* II, Dōmae Sōkan, p. 105).

Tapping the floor . . . I want this new arrival. . . . “Apparently it was a brand new staff Hakuin had recently made” (annotation). From here on Hakuin directs his comments to this “new arrival,” addressing him, however, as Senior Monk Moku. “With a heart/mind as large as a mountain and as vast as an ocean, making all the Zen students in the land your companions” (annotation).

The world of the lotus repository (rengezō-sekai) is the Pure Land of Vairocana Buddha as expounded in the *Flower Garland Sutra*. It is a realm where great lotus flowers float on an infinite, fragrantly scented sea, encompassing within it worlds smaller than the most minute particle of dust.

47. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY THANKING MR. NODA FOR DONATING A WOODEN FISH

Annotations identify this donor as Noda (Shigetsune) Jirōzaemon, (n.d.), a vassal of the Daimyō Ōkubo Norimasa, who had two fiefs in Suruga province. Noda served in the magistrate's office at clan headquarters in the village of Matsunaga, about three kilometers east of Hara. Mr. Noda also appears in #50, a short address dated 1748 that Hakuin delivered from the teaching seat thanking Noda for donating a gift of noodles to the assembly of monks. The present instructions, thanking Noda for the gift of a wooden fish, probably date from the same general period.

Annotations also tell us that Noda purchased the wooden fish (gyoku, literally "fish drum": mokugyo) in question for several gold pieces (ryō) from a Sōtō priest (referred to by his studio name Kasuisai) in neighboring Tōtōmi province. A mokugyo is a hollowed-out wooden drum, carved in the stylized shape of two fish (or dragons), their tails in their mouths, contesting over the pearl of the Dharma shown lying between them. The drum is placed on a pillow and beaten rhythmically with a padded drumstick to accompany recitations of religious texts and to convene assemblies. It is said that beating on the mokugyo causes it to disgorge one's delusions; that, together with the belief that fish never close their eyes to sleep, made the instrument a symbol of concentration and wakefulness, qualities essential to students engaged in Zen training.

THERE WAS AN evil priest in India at the time of the Buddha Kashapa who refused to heed either his parents' advice or his teachers' injunctions. After dying he was reborn in a far-off hinterland as an enormous fish. It barked like the crocodiles that inhabit the southern seas, an evil tree grew out of its back, and its body was constantly buffeted by wind and waves.

One day the fish spied its former teacher passing in a boat. It rushed forward, emitting bloodcurdling roars, bitter resentment

burning in its eyes, and hurled itself headlong against the boat trying to overturn it. On seeing the piteous creature, the teacher was moved to offer it some Dharma teachings, and as a result the evil priest was able to eliminate his deeply rooted karma and regain human form. In thanking the teacher, he said, “Please use the wood from the tree that grew on my back and have it carved into a tool that can be used in performing Dharma rites in your temple.” The teacher entrusted the wood to a master craftsman, who created this hollow, strangely shaped percussion instrument from it. Students found it a constant aid for furthering their religious practice. It had two heads with a wonderful gem held between their two mouths; its entire body was like an enormous throat, enabling it to pour forth an endless stream of noxious fumes that spread over vast areas.

Noda Shigetsune, with a single hand, has snatched the wooden fish from under the jaws of the black dragon. His follower Egaku of Sagami carried it here to Shōin-ji, where its booming voice now penetrates deep into the ears of Shōin-ji monks.

The wooden fish, bulbous in shape like an eggplant or a gourd, its deep voice resonating like heavy thunder, distressed Zen master Shen-ting long ago, three thousand times in the morning and eight hundred times at night, greatly interfering with his dozes and naps. All twenty-eight Zen patriarchs in India and six patriarchs in China felt its steel fangs and razor teeth. It kept tune with Zen master Kuang-hui, robbing monks of their knowing and seeing. It blocked off the gates of enlightenment. It sat spinning out the inner secrets to Kasui-sai in Tōtōmi province for many years, revealing the subtle essence. It has now made its way into my inner chambers, where it devours Buddhas and treats demons of every kind with total contempt.

Just now I wrestled it to the floor and whispered into its ear, “I have a *dharani* — four five-character lines — that I want to dedicate to valiant Zen students throughout the universe. All who hear it will resolve steadfastly to attain the Way and be blessed with the fortune of eternal life. It goes [Hakuin thereupon beats the wooden fish twenty times, in time with each word of the *dharani*]:

Poku poku poku poku poku
Poku poku poku poku poku

Poku poku poku poku poku
Poku poku poku poku poku

.....

There was an evil priest . . . spread over vast areas. The source of the story about the evil priest is not known, though a somewhat similar account appears in the *Chiao-yuan ch'ing-kui*, a T'ien-t'ai work dealing with temple regulations published in the Yuan dynasty (1347).

“Asked, ‘What about before the wooden fish wumps?’ Zen master Shen-ting said, ‘Looking at the sky, looking at the ground.’ ‘What about after it wumps?’ ‘Ascending to the hall holding a begging bowl,’ he replied” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 11).

“Kuang-hui Yuan-lien (n.d.) asked his teacher Nan-yuan, ‘What about before the wooden fish wumps?’ ‘Looking at the sky, not seeing it,’ replied Nan-yuan. ‘What about after it wumps?’ he asked. ‘Looking at the ground, not seeing it,’ said Nan-yuan” (*Classified Collection of the Zen Forest*, ch. 16).

Poku poku. Larger-sized *mokugyo* make a deep resonant sound — “wump, wump” — when struck. Hakuin’s use of the onomatopoeic word “poku” suggests he was beating a smaller variety. The Chinese character for *poku* can refer to a loud din as well as to the attainment of selflessness.

48. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

Here we have a Dawn Star that shines with a brilliant
black glow,
It’s a power for snatching away life exceeding the
deadliest arsenic.

Shaka, inadvertently gazing up one night, stumbled upon
its light,
Now monks in millions of worlds bust their guts, all for
nothing.

.....

Here we have . . . exceeding the deadliest arsenic. “Shaka had the Morning Star; here at my temple we have the blinding Black Light of the Dawn Star” (annotation). See the explication on “Black Fire” in Book Four, pp. 268–9.

Shaka, inadvertently . . . all for nothing. The lines may be paraphrased: “It is said that one night, in an unguarded moment, Shakamuni looked up, saw the Morning Star, and was awakened. He was hoodwinked by the star, and as a result people everywhere have been straining to attain the Way.”

49. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF PRIEST DAZAN’S DEATH

Annotations identify this priest as Dazan Dōkō (n.d.), who is known only as the teacher of Senjū Wajō of Myōzen-ji, a temple in Takikawa, Suruga province affiliated with the Myōshin-ji Rinzai line.

None could recognize the fine sword glittering within his
breast,
Smearred with mud and ash, he worked to help his fellow
beings.
He wasn’t a Buddhist or a Confucian, or a student of Lao
or Lieh.
Ssu-ma himself would end up flinging down his brush in
despair.

.....

The fine sword. The text has “Blue-glinter,” the name of a celebrated sword. “People encountering his virtuous mind couldn’t tell whether he was a saint or a commonplace priest” (annotation).

Smearred with . . . his fellow beings. “Engaging in ‘hidden practice and secret application,’ helping others and doing zazen, he cast aside the world of differences and the realm of absolute identity, covering himself with [the world’s] mud and ashes from head to foot [i.e., undertaking the Bodhisattva’s mission of helping others reach awakening by giving practical instruction rather than confining his teaching to a lofty, pure Dharma]” (annotation).

Lao and *Lieh* are the Taoist sages Lao Tzu and Lieh Tzu.

Ssu-ma is Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju (c. 179–117 B.C.), a celebrated writer, poet, and official of the Western Han period known for his versatile use of language. “Ssu-ma is known for writing about people’s lives, but faced with someone of Dazan’s formidable presence, even he would be at a loss to portray the priest and fling down his brush in despair” (annotation).

50. ASCENDING THE HIGH SEAT AT A LECTURE MEETING ON *PRAISE OF THE FIVE HOUSES* TO THANK MR. NODA FOR DONATING A MEAL OF NOODLES TO THE BROTHERHOOD

Noda Jirōzaemon Shigetsune (n.d.) has appeared before (#47, pp. 65–7). The meeting was held at the Jōshō-ji, a Sōtō Zen temple located north of Numazu. Documents preserved at Jōshō-ji date it to the eleventh month of 1748, Hakuin’s sixty-fourth year, and confirm

the statement made below that seventy monks attended. Hakuin's text, Praise of the Five Houses (full title: Praise of the Five Houses of the True School), was widely studied in Japanese Zen circles.

NODA SHIGETSUNE, a faithful retainer of Ōkubo Norimasa Chikugo-no-kami, has donated not only a meal of noodles to feed the seventy monks housed in this poor temple; he has conveyed to us as well a heart that is deeply devoted to the Buddha Way. While doing this he has also rendered offerings to Hogin Chōrō, the former head priest at Jōshō-ji, and to Layman Ichiō Ryōen. I have heard that joyfully praising the Dharma through donating meals to Buddhist monks has long been regarded as the finest of all offerings transmitted by Buddhas of the past. Hence I am going to provide a light snack of my own — a poisonous dumpling I fried up especially for you. I don't want anyone here saying he can't take my poison words on an empty stomach, either. If you chew them up well their real taste will emerge, and you will never have to go hungry again.

.....

Ōkubo Norimasa Chikugo-no-kami (b. 1687) was a provincial governor with fiefs in both Sagami and Suruga provinces.

Hogin Chōrō (n.d.), former head priest of Jōshō-ji, was Mr. Noda's brother. *Layman Ichiō Ryōen* is the posthumous name of Noda's father.

I have heard . . . meals to Buddhist monks. The phrase “joyfully praising the Dharma through donating meals” appears in the commentary to Case 74 of the *Blue Cliff Record*, “Chin-niu's Rice Pail”, a koan which Hakuin seems to have had in mind in writing these words. The case is: “At mealtimes, Priest Chin-niu would carry the rice pail to the front of the monks' hall and dance around, laughing loudly and calling out, ‘grub for the Bodhisattvas!’” In the commentary the question is asked, “When Chin-niu said, ‘grub for the Bodhisattvas!’ what did he mean?” The master Ch'ang-ch'ing answers, “It's a lot like joyful praise on donating a meal [to the brotherhood].” “Hakuin explains ‘joyful praise’ as the sermon and the sutra chanting that follow the meal; praise that transfers the merit

that accrues from these actions to others” (*Hekiganshū Hishō*, Case 93).

51. UNTITLED [EXAMINING A KOAN]

“This was delivered at a lecture meeting on Praise of the True School held at Jōshō-ji” (annotation) — that is, at the same lecture meeting as the previous piece. Here Hakuin gives an assessment of this work, which is comprised of seventy-four biographies of eminent Zen monks compiled by the Sung dynasty priest Hsi-sou Shao-t’an (n.d.).

I PUT THIS before you:

Old Hsi-sou Shao-t’an made a collection of the lives and teachings of veteran Chinese priests and added some poisonous words of his own, thereby creating a huge cavern filled to the ceiling with entangling briars and claspings brambles. He selected seventy-four men in all, beginning with First Patriarch Bodhidharma and ending with Yung-ming Yen-shou. He included the six patriarchs of Chinese Zen and the founders of the seven Zen schools, but not the Indian patriarchs. But if the truth be known, Zen master Hsi-sou may be conversant with three and eight and nine, but he is still unclear about four and seven and one. Didn’t Confucius say, “The barbarous tribes of the east and north who have rulers cannot match us [the Chinese] who do not”?

Striking the floor with his staff, [Hakuin] said, “*Shao!*”

.....

Zen master Hsi-sou may be conversant . . . four and seven and one. “One of Hakuin’s poison dumplings [mentioned in the previous piece]” (annotation). In explaining “unclear about four and seven and one,” a dictionary of Zen colloquial phrases says: “Even the Buddhas don’t know.” Another says: “Three and eight and nine add up to the number twenty, for which the character ‘*nien*’ [thought] is sometimes

used. The phrase thus means, ‘unless you clarify the distracting thoughts in your mind you will invariably get caught up in the patriarchs’ barrier koans.’” Comments on similar numerical phrases elsewhere in the Zen records plausibly suggest meanings that derive from adding up the lists of numbers. Yoshizawa gives some examples before concluding that in effect Hakuin means, “Hsi-sou is good as far as he goes, but he doesn’t go far enough.”

“The barbarous tribes . . . without a ruler” is from the *Analects* III.5. “After satori becomes total, complete satori, you must peruse the sutras and patriarchal records” (annotation).

“Shao!” The character *Shao*, literally “to connect” or “to hand down,” is evidently intended as an appeal to Hsi-sou Shao-tan, the compiler of *Praise of the Five Schools*: “Shao-tan! What do you make of these comments of mine?” (annotation).

52. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIEST CHŌMON’S DEATH, WHEN HIS DHARMA HEIR JIKU JŌZA DONATED A MEAL TO THE ASSEMBLY

Written in 1726, Hakuin’s forty-second year. Chōmon Zen’a (1661–1714) was a Dharma heir of Sekiin Soon (n.d.), one of Gudō Tōshoku’s students. Hakuin had studied as a young monk with Chōmon at his temple Bodaiju-in in Sumpu, Suruga province. The Chronological Biography records that Hakuin attended a lecture meeting conducted by Chōmon on Praise of the True School in 1709, Hakuin’s twenty-fifth year. The only other mention of Chōmon in Hakuin’s writings is in Wild Ivy, his spiritual autobiography: “Or take the case of Chōmon Rōshi. In conversing about matters of the Way he would often tell of his experiences as a young monk, of

stubbornly refusing to allow the sleep demons near him. Whenever they tried to approach, he would take some moxa and burn his flesh at the sanri and kyokuchi points” (Wild Ivy, p. 80).

Hakuin plays throughout the verse on the name of Chōmon’s temple, Bodaiju-in, which means “The Temple of the Bo (Bodhi) Tree.”

Jiku Jōza is Binshū Sojiku (n.d.), who later served as head priest at Bodaiju-in.

A shadowless forest giant, utterly serene and pure,
With not a single leaf, it cannot wither or flourish.
Ten years in the night rain, Chōmon’s Dharma eye
Now gazes tenderly at his green Dharma offshoot.

.....

Lines 1–2: “[Chōmon] was a large shade tree providing rest and comfort to men and devas, though the unenlightened eye could not discern that he was shadeless and shadowless. As the tree of enlightenment [*Bodaiju*], utterly free and unfettered, he had neither roots nor leaves, so he could neither grow and prosper nor wither and die” (annotation).

Line 3: “Chōmon was possessed of the true Dharma eye. He served for ten years as head priest at Bodaiju-in, where he lived listening to the night rain in the darkness. Today, on the occasion of his Thirteenth Death Anniversary, he has a promising successor at Bodaiju-in in Senior Priest Jiku. When time and conditions ripen, Jiku should also become a great shade tree and provide comfort for men and devas. Old Chōmon is no doubt waiting affectionately within the great samadhi to see this happen” (annotation).

Ten years in the night rain appears in a poem by the Chinese poet and Zen layman Huang T’ing-chien dealing with the pain of separation and the sorrow of bereavement: “In the past, we enjoyed drinking wine together. I now fill my cup alone. In the past at Chiang-hu, we studied together under candlelight, listening to the rain. But

ten years have passed since then, and I now sit before the taper alone” (paraphrase).

Line 4: Jiku Jōza is being called a new shoot from the old trunk. “Though still a little green, he may develop into a fine Dharma heir” (annotation).

53. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING THE THIRTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF PRIEST TANREI’S DEATH

This verse extols the virtues of Tanrei Soden, the former head priest at Shōin-ji (d. 1701) who ordained Hakuin. It was written in 1733, when Hakuin was forty-nine.

A shadowless giant rose up in the groves of White Crane temple,
Possessed of not a single leaf it could neither wither nor flourish.
None of his branches were sturdy enough to serve as a ridgepole,
All we can do today is offer three or four flowers in his memory.

.....

Line 1: Shōin-ji’s “mountain name” *Kokurin-san* means “White Crane.” “Shadowless” alludes to Tanrei’s Zen teaching, which is eternally changeless, beyond dualities of shadow and light, beyond flourishing and fading.

Line 3: “This tree had a branch named Hakuin, but all he’s been able to do is keep the tree from withering away altogether” (annotation). A

“ridgepole” is a priest with the capacity to become a true Dharma teacher.

Line 4: After modestly declaring in the verse that he lacks the ability to carry on his teacher’s Dharma and can do no more than offer a few flowers in his memory, an annotation, presumably by Hakuin, asks: “What are these three or four flowers? Are they red? Are they green?”

54. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT A CEREMONY COMMEMORATING BUDDHA’S NIRVANA

The relics mentioned in this verse are sharira, gemlike fragments said to appear among the ashes of people possessed of exceptional spiritual attainment after their cremation. The Buddha’s relics were especially prized. From Hakuin’s standpoint, these fragments from the Buddha’s body are the Dharma-body, Dharmakaya, representing the ultimate Dharma truth and also the Buddha himself who embodies the Dharma. For an explanation of sharira, see the headnote to #176.

Buddha’s relics are his Dharma-body; they possess
primal purity,
Manifesting a serene radiance that illuminates the entire
universe.
They shine with unwavering constancy before and after
Nirvana,
Running through all things, unfathomable from beginning
to end.

.....

Buddha's relics. “Even here in my own temple, when I manifest these relics in this room, not a single person in the assembly exists” (annotation).

Manifesting a serene . . . the entire universe is a quotation from an enlightenment verse by the high-ranking Chinese official Chang-cho (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 6). Cf. *Gateless Barrier*, Case 39.

They shine with . . . from beginning to end. “These relics do not come into existence after the Buddha’s Nirvana or before it. They are a single theme running through all things, before the very opening up of heaven and earth and continuing until their very end” (annotation).” Get a good deep whiff of these words and all space before your eyes fills with the Dharma-body’s relics” (annotation). “It is totally ungraspable, like a perpendicular cliff rising up tens of thousands of feet in front of you” (annotation).

55. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY

On the Buddha’s birthday, also called the Flower Festival, a small statue of the Buddha adorned with colorful spring flowers is placed in the hall where the services take place.

“The Shōin-ji priest” is Hakuin, though neither the names of the unexpected “honored guests” nor the date of the verse are known.

The Shōin-ji priest was suddenly thrown into a colossal
fright,

Two eminent prelates arrived unannounced and sat in the
hall.

Being unable for the life of him to hatch a single decent
verse,

He ended up displaying his ugliness before the honored
guests.

56. INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGH SEAT DURING A VISIT FROM THE PRIEST OF KEIRIN-JI IN KAI PROVINCE

The Keirin-ji priest Ranshitsu Tōiku (d. 1743) visited Shōin-ji, probably in 1740, to formally ask Hakuin to conduct a lecture meeting on the Blue Cliff Record at his temple. We know from the Chronological Biography that this large lecture meeting took place in 1741, Hakuin's fifty-seventh year, and was attended by over two hundred people. It followed on the heels of a highly successful lecture meeting on the Record of Hsu-t'ang held the previous year at Shōin-ji that was even more heavily attended, which Tōrei in the Chronological Biography said "established Hakuin's reputation as the foremost Zen teacher in the land" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 205).

Hakuin was doubtless inspired to use the words of Zen master Wu-tsu that open the piece by an infestation of locusts that devastated Suruga province that year.

I PUT THIS before you:

Zen master Wu-tsu Fa-yen said in an address to his assembly, "The villages around here are suffering greatly from drought, but that is not what distresses me. What distresses me are Zen monks whose Dharma eye remains unopened. Over a hundred men who came here for the summer retreat are practicing in this hall, but not a single one who entered my chambers has been able to crack the koan of the dog and the Buddha-nature. That really distresses me."

The Old Man of the Eastern Mountain [Wu-tsu] tossed a mass of black fire into the pitch darkness, hoping it would burn a great many monks to death. The words he spoke are truly formidable. However I would not have said what he did. I don't care whether any of you understands me or not, but this is how I would put it: "In this year of heavy locust damage, my only regret is that the seventy starveling monks studying at Shōin-ji must return from their begging expeditions with empty bowls and sit back on their heels, hugging their knees, issuing mournful sighs."

Hakuin tapped his staff on the floor and said, “Pleasure is the seed of suffering; suffering is the seed of pleasure. How glad I am to hear that the fields around Keirin-ji in Kai province were not harmed by the locust plague and are ripening to full maturity.”

Striking the floor with his staff once again, he left the high seat.

.....

Much of what we know about Ranshitsu Tōiku, the priest who invited Hakuin to Keirin-ji, and his relationship with Hakuin is found in an encomium that Hakuin delivered at ceremonies commemorating the third anniversary of his death (see #68). It tells us that Ranshitsu served as head priest of Keirin-ji for twenty years, that he had an unflagging commitment to the Way that grew stronger with age, that he delivered Zen talks that were “steep and lofty,” and that he was extremely severe in dealing with the many monks and lay students who came to him for instruction. In addition to four senior Shōin-ji priests who accompanied Hakuin to supervise the Keirin-ji meeting (*Chronological Biography*), we know from other references in *Poison Blossoms* that many more monks, nuns, and lay followers studying at Shōin-ji made the trip to Kai province to take part as well.

“*The villages around here . . . distresses me.*” Wu-tsu Fa-yen’s words appear in a letter he wrote that is included in *Ling-yuan pi-yu*, a collection of letters of instruction that Zen master Ling-yuan (d. 1117) made for his students.

Black Fire, being flameless, is indiscernible, and impossible to escape. For Hakuin’s description of black fire, see #169.

“*In this year of heavy locust damage . . . mournful sighs.*” Crop damage in the home province of Suruga meant that monks at Shōin-ji were finding it difficult to obtain rice on their begging rounds.

“*How glad I am . . . ripening to full maturity.*” Hakuin’s words seem to anticipate an easing of their straitened circumstances. At the upcoming Keirin-ji lectures, he intimates, their hunger would be relieved, giving them the opportunity to focus singlemindedly on their practice. “The farmers around Keirin-ji were looking forward to a bumper crop later that year, and Ranshitsu’s compassion for the

plight of the Shōin-ji monks prompted him to issue this invitation to Hakuin” (annotation).

The difficulties resulting from crop failure, which made it impossible for farmers to pay the onerous government land tax, or even to provide for their own needs, is a recurring theme in Hakuin’s writings. Two works, *Snake Strawberries* and *Mutterings to the Wall*, are devoted almost entirely to this subject. A vivid firsthand account of the destruction caused by locust infestations, dating from autumn of the following year (1741), is found in the preface to *Sendai’s Comments on the Poems of Han-shan*. Hakuin writes that he is quoting an account he heard from one of his students: “I’ve been living cramped up in a broken-down old room I found, sleeping on branches and twigs, surrounded by decay and dilapidation, leaky ceilings above me, sodden floors below. . . . One morning I took my bowl and headed out into the balmy spring haze, bending my steps toward a nearby village where I hoped to obtain some alms. Suddenly, I found myself confronted by the headman of the village. He was blocking the way, looking like a half-crazed beggar, grasping a short club in his right hand and a shield of some sort in his left. ‘Locusts wiped us out this year,’ he shrieked. ‘There’s not even a grain of rice to pay the government land tax. I fear and loath beggars like you more than I do the plague demon. If you try to pass, I’m going to give you a dose of this club!’ His crazed eyes and high-pitched screaming were so intense I feared he might tear me limb from limb and devour me on the spot. I lowered my gaze, turned on my heels, and left. I tried some other villages, but it was the same everywhere I went. Finally I packed up my begging bowl and sheepishly returned to my rundown shack in the growing darkness. There I sat, my head hunched down, illusory thoughts flying through my mind. A constant growling came from my starved belly. Growl as it might, there wasn’t so much as a twig within my gaze to use for a fire. Not a grain of rice to put in my mouth. Not a leftover weed to gnaw on.”

An annotator adds to this: “Unless monks continue sitting until they are completely oblivious to sleeping and eating, they’ll never find their way out of Hakuin’s pit of black fire. Pleasure is the seed of suffering. Suffering is the seed of pleasure.”

57. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF SHAO-LIN'S DEATH

This verse dates from 1747, the year when Hara, where Shōin-ji is located, and other low-lying areas along Suruga Bay were struck by what appears to have been a tsunami. The intrusion of saltwater contaminated the rice fields, resulting in another serious famine. Many of the monks studying at Shōin-ji, whose lodgings were in deserted shrines and temples spread over a wide area around Hara, were obliged — with little hope of obtaining rice from begging expeditions — to disperse to other parts (Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 213).

Angry winds and waves have blasted fields and gardens,
Scattering my idle spirits and wild demons far and wide.
Twenty worthy monks, men with vitals sheathed in iron,
Gnaw on vegetable stalks, keenly savoring the adversity.

.....

Annotations provide details we could not otherwise know: seventy monks were in training at this time, but only twenty stayed on to continue their practice — these are the “worthy monks . . . with vitals sheathed in iron”; the other fifty, the ones who left, are the “idle spirits and wild demons” — the average or mediocre students.

58. INFORMAL TALK ON A WINTER NIGHT

Annotations date this account of Sōtō master Dōgen's study in China to the famine year of 1747. No doubt this explains the comment Hakuin makes about being unable to provide sufficient food for his monks. References to Dōgen in Hakuin's writings generally focus, as

this one does, on his enlightenment experience and his commitment to “continuing practice” (gyōji). The high regard in which Hakuin held sect founder Dōgen contrasts sharply with the continuous attacks he makes on contemporary Sōtō Zen teachers for their “do-nothing” attitude toward training — having students perform zazen but not forcing them, as Hakuin did, to strive with great urgency toward a kenshō experience with the use of koans.

ON THE SECOND day of the seventh month in the first year of Pao-ch’ing [1227], Zen master Eihei Dōgen set out with his teacher Myōzen Hōshi in a trading vessel bound for distant Sung China. At the monastery on Mount T’ien-t’ung he requested and was granted an interview with Zen master Ju-ching. He made three bows to the master and said, “Although I am but an insignificant young monk from a far-off country, I rejoice that karma from my past lives has enabled me to be admitted into your Dharma assembly. Please, master, in your great pity and compassion, teach me the true essentials of the Way.”

Ju-ching lit a stick of incense, placed his palms together in *gasshō*, and said, “Ever since our Zen school began the direct, undeviating transmission of the authentic Dharma from master to disciple, it has always had never leaving the training hall as its fundamental principle, and zazen alone [*shikan taza*] as the authentic way of practice. Today Zen students in temples throughout the land may sit many hours in meditation without lying down to sleep, but because they do not encounter an enlightened master, they never learn the way of entering a true state of meditation [*dhyana*]. Because of that, the zazen they practice differs not in the least from that espoused by the heretical teachers. Even if they continued performing such practice until the end of time, they would never be able to enter the great meditation of the Buddhas.”

Dōgen performed three bows, and said, “In your great pity and compassion, please teach me the correct way to enter a true state of meditation.”

Ju-ching lit incense, performed *gasshō*, and said, “Brother Gen [Dōgen], when you do zazen, you should place your mind above the palm of your left hand.”

Dōgen performed three bows and withdrew. Some days later he entered Ju-ching's chambers, made three bows, and said, "I placed my mind above the palm of my left hand as you instructed. Now, both my hands have totally disappeared. There is nowhere to place my mind."

Ju-ching lit incense, performed *gasshō*, and said, "Dōgen, you should make your mind fill your entire body. Make it reach each of your three hundred and sixty bones and joints, and each of the eighty-four thousand pores of your skin, so that not a single place is left empty."

A few days later Dōgen entered Ju-ching's chambers, made three bows, and said, "I did as you instructed, placing my mind throughout my body. Now both my mind and my body have fallen away. It is like a brilliant sun illuminating the vast heavens, although its round shape cannot be seen."

This time Ju-ching lit incense, performed *gasshō*, and said with a smile, "Brother Gen, for kalpas on end you have been revolving in the cycle of birth and death. Today you have entered the great and true meditation where defilements do not arise. Preserve and protect this. Never let go of it."

Dōgen performed three bows, three additional bows, and then withdrew with tears in his eyes.

Such is one of the secret teachings of Sōtō practice. I learned about it long ago from an old priest when I was staying at the Inryō-ji in Izumi province. I have had good results from practicing it, but I have not readily taught it to others. I thought I would wait until I found monks whose minds were deeply committed to the Way. Every time I heard about how earnestly you men were practicing this winter in the face of arduous difficulties, gooseflesh would rise all over my body. I only regret that the kitchen larders are empty and I am unable to provide you with proper sustenance for these cold winter nights. This is the reason I have been so talkative tonight, unconcerned about the loss of my eyebrows, and emulating Tung-shan with his tray of fruit.

People might call me an old Dharma reprobate for doing this, someone who has lost his nostrils and entered a dark cave to ladle water that has been lying stagnant for a thousand years; they might

say that my talk about Sōtō Zen has caused many valiant heroes of Rinzai Zen to drown. Having no way to rebut these charges, I can only clench my left hand into a fist and gnaw my fingertips. Why is that?

It is said that you should sell your bedding and buy a cow when the winter solstice falls at the beginning of the month, and sell your cow and buy bedding when it falls at the end of the month. But what about this year, when it falls right in the middle? What do you do then?

Hakuin took his staff, gave the floor a thump, and left.

.....

Dōgen arrived in China at the age of twenty-three, the first year of the Chinese Pao-ch'ing era (1223; pronounced *Hōkyō* in Japanese), accompanied by the Kennin-ji priest Myōzen (1185–1225), who was a disciple of Zen master Eisai, the man credited with introducing Chinese Rinzai teachings to Japan.

Hakuin bases his account of the dialogues that passed between Dōgen and Ju-ching on material in *Hōkyō-ki* (*A Diary of the Hōkyō Era*), a practice journal Dōgen kept at the time, as well as on other traditional sources; he seems to have added a few touches of his own as well. Since *Hōkyō-ki* was not published until 1750, several years after this piece was written, he must have relied on a manuscript of the work.

The *old priest . . . at the Inryō-ji in Izumi province* from whom Hakuin says he learned this secret Sōtō teaching is presumably Jukaku Dōnin, a person he met on the Zen pilgrimage he undertook in his twenties. In relating this pilgrimage in his autobiography *Wild Ivy*, written at the end of his life, Hakuin portrays Jukaku as a superior monk with a genuine aspiration for the Way, and describes a weeklong session of intensive practice they engaged in together. In the *Chronological Biography*, however, compiled under Hakuin's direction a decade or so earlier, Jukaku is described as "an old man who seemed half-demented, with an unsightly face and a robe hanging in tatters from his body . . . who ran off when he saw me coming" (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 185–6); Hakuin finally cornered

Jukaku and persuaded him to divulge the practice methods of his teacher Tesshin Dōin, the Sōtō priest who had founded Inryō-ji. One of these methods may have been the “secret teachings” alluded to here.

Unconcerned about the loss of my eyebrows. A teacher is said to be in danger of losing his eyebrows when compassion for his struggling students makes him resort to verbal explanations. Hakuin viewed verbal explanations as one of the essential roles of a teacher.

In another Informal Talk delivered at the winter solstice, Hakuin refers to the “tray of fruit” that master Tung-shan used in teaching his monks (see above, #27). He expresses sympathy for the difficulties faced by monks practicing at Shōin-ji, and states that he would like to follow Tung-shan’s example and treat his monks to some tangerines, but since there is no money to do that, he will instead personally dish them up some fox slobber (poisonous teachings) he has concocted specially for the occasion.

People might call me . . . gnaw my fingertips. Hakuin refers to himself by the sobriquet *Sendai*, “Dharma Reprobate,” which translates the Sanskrit *icchantika*: a person completely devoid of merit and thus unable to attain Buddhahood. The term is also used, however, to refer to Bodhisattvas, beings who forgo final attainment of Buddhahood to remain behind in the world to help sentient beings.

Nostrils stand for the original face, something of primal importance.

Clench my left hand into a fist and gnaw my fingertips is a phrase that appears twice in Hakuin’s writings. Here, as several annotations explain, it “describes [the frustration] of being unable to make any response.” In *Oradegama*, to “make a fist and bite your middle finger” is glossed as a feat that is impossible to perform, alluding to how a student can clarify ultimate truth or reality only by pursuing his practicing with unwavering resolve (HHZ9, p. 368).

Sell your bedding and buy a cow. At the winter solstice, occurring sometime during the eleventh month in the lunar calendar, the gradually shortening days and lengthening nights reach their farthest point and then start to reverse course. A standard dictionary of Zen words and phrases gives the following explanation of this phrase:

“When the winter solstice falls at the beginning of the month, a good year is said to follow, and one will be able to keep a cow. If it falls at the end of the month, a lean year is expected, and the cow should be sold. The beginning of the month alludes to the time prior to satori, the end of the month to the post-satori period” (*Zengo Ji-i*, Nakagawa Shibuan). Another source has: “When the winter solstice falls at the beginning of the month, it indicates a warm winter, hence you can sell your bedding and buy a cow; when it falls at the end of the month, it means a cold winter, so you should sell the cow and buy warm bedding. The phrases indicate the two aspects of advancing and regressing in Buddhist practice” (Yanagida Seizan, *Record of National Master Daiō*).

59. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE RŌHATSU TRAINING PERIOD

The Snowy Mountains’ perilous peaks and scarps blot out
the sky,
The great White Ox’s bellowing roars resound like
thunderstrokes.
You monks, you sons of Hsu-t’ang, what have you got to
show me?
Blowing on wet firewood won’t make it burn, just coat you
in ash.

.....

The Snowy Mountains’ . . . thunderstrokes. “The mountains of one’s mind soar high and sheer, but when they are known, the great White Ox roars out like thunder. It is not a place you can easily approach” (annotation). The White Ox appears in a parable in the *Lotus Sutra*. It represents the enlightened mind that brings liberation.

You monks, you sons of Hsu-t'ang. Hakuin alludes to “Hsu-t'ang's prophecy”: When Nampo Jōmyō (Daiō Kokushi, 1235–1309) was leaving to return home after studying with the Chinese teacher Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu, Hsu-t'ang told him that in the future authentic Zen students would “increase daily in the land beyond the eastern sea [i.e., in Japan].” Hakuin and his students belonged to this lineage.

Blowing on wet firewood. This expression also appears in a verse in *Wild Ivy* (p. 3):

What is earth's vilest thing? From which all men recoil?
Crumbly charcoal, firewood that's wet? Watery lamp oil?
A cartman? A boatman? A stepmother? Skunks?
Mosquitoes? Lice? Blue flies? Rats? Brigand monks!

Hakuin goes on to describe “brigand monks” as “the do-nothing silent illumination Zennists that now infest the land.” The determination to attain the breakthrough into *kenshō*, leaving the students with a partial and incomplete realization. The last two lines would thus mean: “Are you really one of the true Zen students that Hsu-t'ang said would increase daily in Japan, or will you become stuck in the partial attainment preached by bogus Zen teachers of the present day?”

60. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

After the dawn bell, a cockerel announces the arrival of spring.

Beyond the hedge the first buds open, faces beam into smiles.

Today the god of spring sleeps as calmly as a snoozing dragon.

At the brazier, green tea; beyond the fence, a plum in blossom.

.....

Beyond the hedge the first buds open. Plum flowers are the first to blossom in the new year.

Today the god of spring. “A truly quiet New Year’s day — the god of spring (*Tung-huan*) is sleeping as peacefully as the Dragon King” (annotation). “The god of spring is found [like the Buddha-nature] within each and every person; he brings peace throughout the world, imparting a spontaneous, transcendent radiance that overflows with the meaning of the Zen patriarchs” (annotation).

At the brazier . . . a plum in blossom. “These manifestations reveal before our very eyes the First Patriarch Bodhidharma’s Dharma-body with direct and vivid clarity” (annotation).

61. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY FOLLOWING LECTURES ON THE *TREATISE IN DEFENSE OF THE DHARMA*

The date of this lecture meeting, unrecorded in the Chronological Biography, is not known. In his Hu-fa lun (Treatise in Defense of the Dharma; T52) Chang Shang-ying (1043–1121) attempts to rebut Confucian attacks on Buddhism by showing essential similarities between the two teachings. A high-ranking official who rose to become prime minister, Chang is also known by his Buddhist name, Layman Wu-chin. He studied with the Rinzai teacher Tou-shuai Ts’ung-yueh and was also a good friend and supporter of Ta-hui Tsung-kao.

Li T’ung-hsuan (635?–730?) was a T’ang scholar and Buddhist layman of the T’ang dynasty, the Hua-yen-ho lun, an important commentary on the Flower Garland Sutra, and other works on Hua-yen Buddhism. Chang discovered a manuscript titled Hua-yen-ching chueh-i lun (Treatise on Resolving Doubts about the Hua-yen Sutra)

that Li T'ung-hsuan had written over three centuries before. In a colophon he wrote for it (Chueh-i lun hou-chi), he explains that on reading Li's work he experienced a deep realization that resolved all his doubts about the sutra. Chang Shang-ying came to be regarded as a reincarnation of Li T'ung-hsuan.

I PUT THIS before you:

In a colophon for Li T'ung-hsuan's *Hua-yen chueh-i lun*, Chang Shang-ying wrote: "Here is the Hua-yen teaching. This is the matter of Buddhahood and the single vehicle of Bodhisattvahood. End and beginning are a single instant of thought. Present and past are a single time. Cause and effect are one and the same Buddha. Ordinary person and sage have the same nature. All ten directions are a single place. The triple world is one. True, semblance, and latter day teachings are one and the same. Beginning, middle, and end have the same span. All this is being manifested here before your very eyes, totally unconnected with ideas or views produced by the mind."

Of this the master [Hakuin] said:

This is fine as far as it goes. Examine it carefully, however, and you find problems arising. A man of Layman Wu-chin's stature carried around a huge sesame bun weighing several pounds, behaving as though it was something of the greatest importance. But it did nothing to appease his hunger, or anyone else's hunger either. If I were doing the talking, I would put it this way:

"The Hua-yen teaching was not preached for the sake of Bodhisattvas alone. Shravakas, Pratyeka-buddhas, Bodhisattvas, *icchantikas*, and other sentient beings of each and every kind all partake of its benefits. End and beginning are not a single instant of thought, but two. Present and past are not one time, but three [future, present, past]. Cause and effect are not one Buddha, but five. Ordinary persons and sages don't have a single nature; they have four. The ten directions are not a single place, but eight; the triple world not one place, but nine. The true, semblance, and latter day teachings are not the same; beginning, middle, and end are not a single span of time."

If you understand what I have said, you will also grasp that a single mote of dust is in and of itself the Dharma universe, as the Hua-yen school teaches, that everything moves and turns with perfectly free and unrestricted activity. Like one of those whales sporting in the seas off the port of Numazu. Like the Naga gods causing rain to fall at will.

To express this more succinctly:

White egrets descend into a field, a thousand flakes of snow;
Yellow birds alight upon a tree, a branch bursts into bloom.

.....

“Here is the Hua-yen teaching.” “The essence of the Hua-yen teaching is direct and immediate attainment of Buddhahood. Approach it in stages, you’ve gone astray” (annotation).

End and beginning are a single instant of thought. “Attaining Buddhahood in your present lifetime, owing to the Hua-yen principle of *jijimuge*, mutual unhindered interpenetration of all things” (annotation).

Cause and effect are one and the same Buddha. “The nature of Buddhahood, the Buddha-nature” (annotation).

All ten directions are a single place. “A single Dharma universe, the oneness of the triple world” (annotation). “All the bodies continually moving through the triple world are essentially one body. There is nothing but the Universal within the Phenomenal [*Henchūshō*], with no need for Arriving at Mutual Integration [*Kenchūshī*]” (annotation); see Hakuin’s commentary on the Five Ranks in #144 on pp. 199–203.

True, semblance, and latter day teachings are one and the same. A reference to three successive periods following the death of the Buddha (*shō-zō-matsu*): when the true teaching, practice, and enlightenment prevail; when only imitations of these remain; and finally, when they disappear completely.

All this is being manifested . . . by the mind. “Buddhahood attained in this life” (annotation). “This room we’re now sitting in preaches the immeasurable teaching of the Dharma in a single instant of thought” (annotation).

A man of Layman Wu-chin’s stature . . . hunger either. “Wu-chin is not yet fully enlightened, yet he is still hauling a big heavy lump of satori around with him — clinging to it, holding to it with a mulish embrace. He’ll never ease his hunger that way” (annotation).

End and beginning are not a single instant of thought, but two. “Here’s where you find the rank of Arriving at Mutual Integration [*Kenchūshi*]! This remark shows the outstanding prowess that master Hakuin possessed” (annotation).

If you understand . . . the Hua-yen school teaches. “There’s no problem at all in calling this room in which we are now sitting the universe of the Hua-yen teaching” (annotation).

White egrets descend . . . bursts in bloom. “In such a world the difference is so slight you can’t discern it” (annotation). “The yellow birds and the white egrets evoke the sameness or nonduality of things; the thousand flakes of snow and branch in flower, their particularity or difference” (annotation). Hakuin uses these same lines in his comments on the *Heart Sutra*; see p. 609 in #391.

62. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING BUDDHA’S NIRVANA

The myriad sutras down inside the Dragon King’s watery palace,
Eight bushels and five pecks of gem-like relics left us by Buddha.
I will scatter them out here so you’ll get you a good look at them.

Out in the barley field the warm sun quickens the growing green.

.....

The myriad sutras . . . left us by Buddha. Hakuin emphasizes the oneness of the storehouse of sutras and the relics (*sharira*) found after the Buddha's Nirvana. In a story about the Arhat Dragon-queller (*Kōryū Rakan*), one of the 18 Arhats, we are told that when the inhabitants of a small country stole the Mahayana sutras, the Naga (Dragon) King, Lord of the Seas, flooded the kingdom and saved the sutras, taking them for protection to his palace at the bottom of the sea. The Arhat Dragon-queller overcame the dragon guardians of the sutras and brought them back to earth. In the *Flower Garland Sutra*, Nagarjuna is taken to the Naga King's palace and shown the *Flower Garland Sutra*, which he memorizes and brings back to the human world. "In each of your bellies you all have genuine Buddha-relics. The retired man and the landlord are both of them Buddha-relics" (annotation).

Eight bushels and five pecks are the amount of relics said to have been found after the Buddha's cremation: "in order to lead sentient beings to awakening the Buddha left behind *sharira* [relics] amounting to eight bushels and four [Hakuin has five] pecks" (*Ta-chuang-yen-lun ching*, ch. 15). Hakuin's view of relics is seen in a story from *Talks Introductory to Lectures on the Record of Hsu-t'ang* (*Sokkō-roku kaien-fusetsu, Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 77–8) describing an attendant of Zen master Yun-chu who was unable to answer one of Yun-chu's Zen questions. When the monk died and his body was cremated, relics were found among his ashes [which would indicate he was a priest of great spiritual gifts]. When these were shown to Yun-chu, he said, "I'd much rather have had one good phrase in answer to my question when he was alive than ten bushels of relics from a dead man."

63. INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGH SEAT DURING THE SUMMER RETREAT AT RYŌTAN-JI

This meeting took place in the summer of 1742, Hakuin's fifty-eighth year; it was conducted at the request of Priest Tokusō of Ryōtan-ji (full name, Banshō-zan Ryōtan-ji) near Hamamatsu in neighboring Tōtōmi province. The text that Hakuin used for these lectures was Precious Lessons of the Zen School (Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 207). The saying of Zen master Wu-tsu Fa-yen that Hakuin cites here appeared before, in #56.

I PUT THIS before you:

Zen master Wu-tsu Fa-yen said in an address to his assembly, “The villages around here are suffering greatly from drought, but that is not what distresses me. Over a hundred men who came here for the summer retreat are practicing in this hall, but not a single one grasps my teaching — that is what distresses me.”

A hundred monks in tattered robes are attending the summer retreat this year. All of them are seasoned veterans, blind to the ways of the Buddha-patriarchs, and deaf to their words and phrases. They have the horse faces, magnificent swallow-like jaws, crocodile eyes, and tiger necks found in men of outstanding capacity. They asked me to say a few words today at the beginning of this sacred meeting. I searched my parched-up bowels high and low, not once but a hundred, a thousand times. I was still unable to come up with a single word worth smearing like warm shit over their young faces.

Why is that? Yesterday I went to Jissō-ji, accompanied by the priest of Ryōtan-ji and Goan Oshō of nearby Kōgan-ji. The head priest welcomed me as though I was an old friend. Ren and Min, senior monks at Jissō-ji, took extremely good care of me. They offered me rare delicacies with my meals and urged me to spend the night at the temple. When I rose the next morning a torrential rain was pelting down. Spating torrents had overflowed their banks and were howling angrily, rushing by with tremendous force, sweeping

even heavy ox carts from the roads. Signs were up at all the fording places forbidding river crossings. I was obliged to wait until the rain let up and the swollen rivers had subsided.

Later that evening when I returned to the Ryōtan-ji priest's quarters, I found seven or eight monks I knew sitting together engaged in pure talk about the Buddha Way that would continue long into the night. Others were doing zazen with their futons pulled over them. One of the attendants had set out a tray of burning sawdust to keep the mosquitoes at bay. The smoke was so thick it was difficult to breathe. To avoid suffocating, I pulled the bed covering over my head and slept, dead to the world, until the next morning.

But don't start saying Hakuin is old and worthless, that he's lost his nostrils and isn't interested in giving Dharma talks. Have you not heard? "When walking at night, don't tread on anything white. If it's not water, it's usually a stone."

.....

Horse faces . . . and tiger necks are extraordinary attributes said to be found in superior Zen seekers. The *Book of the Han (Han-shu)* describes outstanding warriors with splendid jaws like swallows and necks like tigers, moving with incredible swiftness and freedom and striking with great ferocity.

"*When walking at night . . . a stone*" is a caution for students to watch their step and be alert at all times, especially when they think they have reached some attainment. Hakuin uses these same words in his commentary on the *Heart Sutra* as a capping phrase for the words "The Highest Mantra."

64. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING BODHIDHARMA'S DEATH

I like drawing Daruma, I've done him thousands of times,
No wonder I'm having trouble depicting his features now.
As soon as paper is put before me his true face
disappears.
Any monks here acquainted with this unpaintable
Daruma?

.....

This verse, probably from Hakuin's mid-fifties, contains a rare personal reference to his Zen painting, revealing that he had already painted a surprising number of Darumas (the original says "several thousand"), and at a much early date than art historians have suspected.

65. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY

This verse was delivered two years before the important lecture meeting on the Record of Hsu-t'ang held in the spring of 1740. In it, he thanks "the brothers for the efforts they were making to transform an old building that had been purchased into a new kitchen [kuri]" (annotation). This places the verse in 1738, Hakuin's fifty-fourth year. We know from the Chronological Biography and other sources that improvements were being made to the temple to get it ready for the lecture meeting. Another annotation says that the more immediate occasion for these instructions was the re-thatching of the kayabuki (miscanthus reed) on the temple roof. In the original text of the verse the building is described as being nine ken (just under sixty feet long).

The Chronological Biography describes Shōin-ji at this time. "At Shōin-ji the monks made good use of the master's absence [he had left to avoid the excitement caused by the repairs being made to the temple]. Taku, Tetsu, Sha, and Sū repaired the old temple roofs and sank a new well shaft. Kyū and Chū made begging rounds to lay

parishioners to gather a store of beans and wheat and vegetables to stock the kitchen. All the monks worked ceaselessly and selflessly, mending gaps and cracks in the walls and making other repairs that were needed” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 205).

One day we gathered reeds, the next day we were
thatching roofs,
Fine young lads working like heroes atop a broken-down
old hall.
Enduring hardship and privation, they’ve grown thinner
than rails;
As for me, I have had a bellyful and more of Sokkō’s
poison words.

.....

As for me . . . Sokkō’s poison words. In preparation for the upcoming lectures, Hakuin was studying the *Record of Hsu-t’ang*, a notoriously difficult Zen work.

66. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE RŌHATSU TRAINING PERIOD

“This dates from the winter of 1739, Hakuin’s fifty-fifth year, when he lectured on the Gateless Barrier collection” (annotation).

Breaching countless gateless gates, skinny elbows flying,
He now returns, enters his native home in the mountains.
What is it like, going back to one’s old home in the hills?
It’s like losing human stripes, acquiring those of a tiger.

.....

He is Shakamuni. This verse was no doubt delivered at a ceremony celebrating the Buddha's enlightenment.

It's like losing . . . those of a tiger. Tiger stripes are a sign of exceptional ability.

67. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

Judging from the verse itself, as well as the place assigned to it by the editor in the ostensibly chronological sequence, it seems safe to suppose these instructions date from some time in Hakuin's fifties.

You've made long trips to come here; it shames me deeply,
We only have enough space here to put up one or two men.
I learned that yesterday some monks had to be turned away,
They left in tears to try to find a derelict shack somewhere.

.....

Providing for monks, including visitors, was part of a master's obligation. In *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* Hakuin describes the conditions faced by monks who came to study at Shōin-ji: "They were obliged to take up shelter in old houses and other abandoned dwellings, ancient temple halls, and ruined shrines. Their lodgings were spread over an area five or six *ri* around Shōin-ji. Hunger awaited them at daybreak. Freezing cold lurked after them at night. They sustained themselves on greens and wheat chaff" (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 90).

68. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF PRIEST RANSHITSU OF KEIRIN-JI

Ranshitsu Tōiku has appeared before (#56). The services referred to here, commemorating the third anniversary of his death, were held in 1745 in conjunction with a lecture meeting on the Vimalakirti Sutra at Jitoku-ji, a branch temple of Keirin-ji in eastern Kai province (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 209–10); three hundred people attended. Rempō Chishō (d. 1770), Ranshitsu's Dharma heir and the incumbent of Keirin-ji who requested the lectures, was a longtime student of Hakuin.

WE APPROACH THE twenty-ninth day of the fourth month, the second year of Enkyō [1745], the third anniversary of Priest Ranshitsu's death. On the third day of the third month, Priest Rempō, his successor at Keirin-ji, opened a lecture meeting on the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. To fill the monks' bellies, I had Yun-men's sesame buns ready for them from the earliest hours of the morning. Other delicacies were also provided, as choice as those that Layman Vimalakirti served the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who attended his assembly. At noon, Chin-niu came dancing out with his rice pail and treated the monks to a fine vegetarian repast. After the chanting of the sutras and *dharanis*, I was asked to offer incense and say a few words.

Old Ranshitsu resided at Keirin-ji for twenty years. He delivered superior utterances of forbidding loftiness, guiding with wonderful means students who submitted to the tempering blows of his hammer. Immense billows of virulent flame and smoke shot out from his forge, burying students alive. In his inner chambers, he devoted himself with tremendous vigor and authority to the timeless work of turning the wheel of the vow. In his later years he moved into a retirement temple, Fukuju-in, in the village beneath Keirin-ji. There his attainment, deeply grounded in the Bodhisattva vow, grew

deeper and more powerful with the passing years. Thanks to this man's dedication to the path of Zen, many priests, nuns, and lay followers in this part of Kai province are at this moment sincerely devoting themselves to the practice of the Buddha Way.

Head priest Rempō has now resided at Keirin-ji for ten years and tirelessly carried out the great aspirations of his teacher. He asked me to conduct a meeting and deliver lectures on the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. People from both far and near have come in large numbers to take part, devoting themselves earnestly to their practice and transforming the meeting into a great Dharma assembly. This is all owing to wind and waves that Priest Ranshitsu stirred up during his lifetime.

Offering incense and performing prostrations, I now hold up for praise the great virtues of the deceased.

I say: This soup of wood shavings is not a natural product of heaven and earth. Nor was it created by any human craft. It has emerged from the pitch-black ocean depths where it has been submerged for kalpas beyond time.

Forty years ago I was doing zazen seated on a stinking, ragged old cushion inside the deep pit of black fire that is primal ignorance. I was groping all around, and suddenly I grasped it. Ever since that time, I have held it up and sported with it wherever I have gone, throwing inhabitants of Buddha-lands into fear and panic, staggering denizens of Mara's court into quivering fits. No one could possibly discern its traces.

The fragrance from the incense that I now offer will reach the proud nostrils of old Ranshitsu seated in the tranquility of the great samadhi, and it will pierce them to their depths. It will drift on, permeating the entire universe, empowering with its blessings Buddhas, Dharma, and priests throughout the ten directions, the Naga deities who protect them, and every imaginable kind of being, sentient and non-sentient.

A virulent perfume permeated the stinking orchid's
sanctum,
Its odor lingers on even in the dreams of folks in eastern
Kai.

After three years his words still shine with incisive brilliance.
A single strand of incense smoke rises within Amra's gardens.

.....

Yun-men's sesame buns. "What is the talk that transcends Buddhas and patriarchs?' Yun-men replied, 'A sesame bun'" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 77).

Other delicacies were also provided, as choice . . . is a reference to passages in the "Fragrance Accumulated" chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. At one point, Vimalakirti tells Shariputra, who is worried about feeding the great multitude of Bodhisattvas who have assembled, "Why be distracted by thoughts of eating when you are listening to the Dharma? If you want something to eat, wait a moment. I will see to it that you get such food as you have never tasted before" (*The Vimalakirti Sutra*, p. 112).

At noon, Chin-niu came dancing out . . . vegetarian repast. "At mealtimes, Priest Chin-niu would carry the rice pail to the front of the monks' hall and dance around, laughing loudly and calling out, 'Grub for the Bodhisattvas!'" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 74).

Soup of wood shavings (bokusatsu-kō). "Master Tung-lin said to the assembly, 'I have nothing especially deep or subtle for you at this time. Just soup of wood shavings and a plate of iron spikes. It's up to you how to get them down'" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 20). Here the expression seems to allude to bits of incense wood, which in Hakuin's comments become a metaphor for the ultimate reality or Buddha-nature. In *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams*, the expression appears paired with "a plate of iron spikes" (*tetsuteihan*) to signify something impossible to get your teeth into.

Forty years ago. "He was in Echigo, sitting on a stinking old cushion not even a crow would take a second look at" (annotation). The reference is to Hakuin's initial breakthrough into enlightenment, which he experienced at the age of twenty-three during a practice session at Eigan-ji in Echigo province.

Deep pit of black fire. “He’s probably referring to the bottomless depths of his cinnabar field [*tanden*]” (annotation).

Verse, lines 1–2: Ranshitsu’s name literally means “orchid chamber.” “The fragrant incense that I [Hakuin] have secretly had in my possession these forty years is no different from Orchid Chamber’s odor. Thanks to Orchid Chamber’s virtue, people in eastern Kai province whom he has guided and taught will remember his outstanding accomplishments even in their dreams” (annotation).

Verse, lines 3–4: “This is because on arriving at this third anniversary, master Ranshitsu’s exemplary influence continues to grow stronger. Hence this meeting on the *Vimalakirti Sutra* and Ranshitsu himself represent the totally emancipated Dharma-body — it all came about from this single strand of incense smoke” (annotation).

Amra’s gardens refers to the park on the outskirts of Vaishali where the sutra was preached.

69. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING SHAO-LIN’S DEATH

We hold special rites for this fellow each year on October fifth,
His progeny are like a gimpy turtle chasing a fleet-legged quail.
A few, haggard and gaunt, are now at Shōin-ji busting their guts,
Subsisting on duckweed greens mixed with a wild sprout or two.

.....

Lines 1–2: “Each year on the fifth day of the tenth month everyone gets excited and starts bustling about. ‘Oh! Daruma’s Death Anniversary! Daruma’s Death Anniversary!’ But we never manage to perform a true memorial service for the old fellow. Too late now, he’s already long gone” (annotation). “Daruma’s descendants are the gimp turtles, Daruma the quail” (annotation).

Lines 3–4: “With the poor fare they get around here, it’s no wonder they’re skin and bones” (annotation).

70. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

Don’t say two-year-olds have no trouble understanding it,
When even we eighty-year-olds can’t put it into practice!
Wise men Matanga and Gobharana both botched it all
up.
Endless barriers block the way into the Snowy Mountains.

.....

Don’t say . . . into practice! “The T’ang poet and Zen layman Po Chui asked master Tao-lin, ‘What is the essential meaning of the Buddha Dharma?’ ‘Do no wrong. Do only good,’ he replied. ‘Even a two-year-old child could say that,’ said Po. ‘Yes,’ said the master, ‘But an eighty-year-old man can’t put it into practice’” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 2).

Wise men Matanga and Gobharana. Kashyapa-Matanga and Gobharana are traditionally regarded as the first Buddhist monks to arrive in China; they are said to have translated the *Sutra of Forty-two Sections*.

71. INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE TEACHING SEAT AT A VEGETARIAN FEAST THAT SENIOR MONK YAKU HELD FOR HIS DECEASED FATHER

Senior Monk Yaku (Yaku Jōza), full name Donsen Gen'yaku (n.d.), from Bungo province (present-day Oita prefecture on the island of Kyushu), arrived at Shōin-ji after experiencing a strong satori. After Hakuin disabused him of the notion that his training was over, he stayed on to engage in post-satori training. He took up residence in Kannon-ji on the eastern outskirts of Hara and commuted to Shōin-ji for sanzen with Hakuin. Yaku later became head priest at Chūshō-ji in Kawachi province, south of Osaka. The deceased father on whose behalf he provided the vegetarian feast is referred to by his posthumous name, Teian Sempo Jōza. The suffix Jōza (Senior Priest), though usually reserved for clerics' posthumous titles, was on occasion given to lay followers as well, sometimes in conjunction with a deathbed ordination. The piece is dated 1745, Hakuin's sixty-first year.

Yaku appears three times in Hakuin's Chronological Biography: in the capacity of a temple steward during lectures on the Record of Hsu-t'ang, as a supervising priest at a lecture meeting on the Vimalakirti Sutra, and in an episode in which he submits the enlightenment verse to Hakuin that is alluded to below. Hakuin apparently thought highly of Yaku's literary skills; he entrusted him with editing his lectures on the Record of Hsu-t'ang (Sokkō-roku kaien-fusetsu), his first publication, and also had him contribute a preface to it (Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 1–7).

DON'T GO HANGING out any calabashes. People will only laugh if you do. When the yellow dragon's blind eyes opened for the first time and he peered dimly around, wasn't he met with howling laughter?

And don't go around stamping impressions with a phony gourd seal, either. It will only make your own hackles rise if you do. Tse

Wei-na attained satori, but when his teacher rashly confirmed it, didn't he burn with anger and resentment long afterwards?

Senior Monk Yaku from Bungo province began his religious training at a certain temple, achieving a significant breakthrough that filled him with strength. He was all ready to cease his training and begin sweeping the Zen world clean from top to bottom. In the spring of the fifth year of Gembun [1740], Yaku strode into my Dharma precincts with a cocky, self-confident air. He wore a battered sedge hat and was dragging a large staff he'd broken off a wisteria bush somewhere. He looked like an old crane stalking through a flock of chickens. My monks rubbed their eyes and stared enviously.

After a quick glance at him, I tested him with a line of ordinary dialogue. It seemed to knock him right back. His Zen function was dull and sluggish, incapable of turning freely or responding without hesitation. This was completely contrary to the reports I'd been getting about him. I told him: "Now that I see you face to face, you're not quite what I'd been led to expect." From that time on I assaulted him with endless sallies of stinging invective, assailed him with deafening shouts. I was merciless. I didn't let up on him for a second.

Yaku decided to hang up his traveling staff for good and stay on at Shōin-ji as my student. He would come to me for *sanzen* mornings and evenings, his head lowered in shame. He would run off afterwards, his bugged-out eyes filled with tears. But he bore down, spurred on by the burning indignation he felt toward priests like Ch'eng San-sheng and Ch'ing-feng, who had prematurely confirmed their students' enlightenment. Before long he gave up both eating and sleeping. He was oblivious to hunger and cold.

In the autumn of the second year of Kampō [1742], I went in response to a request from Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province to conduct a Dharma meeting. All the Shōin-ji monks accompanied me on the trip except Yaku, who was in too sorry a state to travel. During the month we were away, Yaku continued to bore his way into the story of Ch'ien-feng's "Three Kinds of Infirmity". Suddenly, the prison walls fell away and he was free. Knowing that I was on my way back from Ryōtan-ji, he set out from Shōin-ji and made his way down the Tōkaidō to meet my palanquin. He waylaid me on the road, holding

out a verse he'd written expressing the understanding he had achieved. I took one glance at it and began assailing him angrily, hurling even stronger abuse than before. As Yaku walked back to Shōin-ji with us, he kept scratching his head. Deep creases lined his brow.

Three years later, Yaku achieved another sudden breakthrough. This time, he had managed to stumble up into the foothills to the left of Eastern Mountain. But I still wasn't happy, and he wasn't really satisfied either. He was kindled by a burning aspiration that could not be held back. He proved to be of vital importance to the assembly, firing up the younger monks around him and spurring them to greater effort.

This year, the second of Enkyō [1745], is the seventh anniversary of his father Teian Sempo Jōza's death. Senior Monk Yaku emptied his purse of the few coins it contained and said, "I would like you to hold a ceremony for my deceased father. There is no need to chant sutras or *dharanis*. What I want is for you, in your great compassion, to raise up the Zen teachings, to utter a phrase or two, one of those impenetrable adamantine cages or prickly chestnut burrs, for the sake of the many cold, starving monks practicing here at Shōin-ji."

I thought of Kuang Tao-che penetrating the koan about Hsing-hua striking Supervisor Monk K'o-pin and dreaming that very night of his mother, who told him that owing to his attainment she had gained rebirth in the deva realms where she could hear the compassionate teachings of the Bodhisattvas. Master Ta-hui of the Ching-shan monastery was deeply moved by this story. "When accumulation of merit from deep faith and devotion to practice results in the attainment of *prajna* wisdom," he said, "it is something truly beyond our comprehension."

How can there be a single doubt that Teian Sempo Jōza will be delighted beyond measure in the other world to learn what his son Senior Monk Yaku has achieved? It is because of this that I agreed to the senior priest's request and have offered these words. Will it perhaps be a case of offering a great reward and waiting for a valiant man to appear?

.....

Hanging out any calabashes. Merchants did this to advertise they had vinegar on sale. Here the expression cautions students against mistaking an initial, partial attainment for genuine enlightenment, as Yaku did when he arrived at Shōin-ji. There is a saying: “even though he doesn’t hang out a calabash, his vinegar is perfectly mature” (*Record of Hsu-t’ang*, ch. 8).

The yellow dragon with the blind eyes is Huang-lung (“Yellow Dragon”) Hui-nan. Although Hui-nan’s enlightenment was sanctioned by Ch’eng San-sheng (Le-t’an Huai-ch’eng), he was later humbled in an encounter with master Tz’u-ming. Hakuin deals with Huang-lung’s study under Tz’u-ming in *Talks Introductory to Lectures on the Record of Hsu-t’ang (Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 83–6).

A gourd (or melon) seal is a sham seal that is easily carved from the flesh of the fruit and yields impressions resembling that of a genuine seal. Here it indicates the fraudulency of the certification Tse Wei-na had received from his teacher, Ch’ing-feng (see following note).

Tse Wei-na (probably the priest later known as Pao-en Hsuan-tse) lived in Fa-yen’s assembly for many years. He was given the position of *wei-na*, in charge of supervising other monks, but he never once attended master Fa-yen’s lectures or talks. When Fa-yen asked him why he never had any questions about his Zen practice, Tse explained that he had already finished his training under master Ch’ing-feng. Fa-yen asked how he had achieved his realization. “I asked Ch’ing-feng,” Tse replied, “What is the self of the person who studies Zen?” and he replied, ‘Ping-ting t’ung-tzu [the fire god] comes for fire.’” “Those are fine words,” replied Fa-yen. “But I doubt that you understood them.” “Since Ping-ting is associated with fire,” replied Tse, “looking for fire with fire would be like looking for the self with the self.” Fa-yen burst into laughter. “Tse Wei-na, now I can assure you that you didn’t grasp Ch’ing-feng’s meaning.” Tse indignantly stalked out of the monastery. Some days later he reconsidered his action. “Fa-yen is a great teacher. He has five hundred monks studying under him. There must be something in what he says.” When he returned to the monastery, Fa-yen said, “Why don’t you ask me that question?” “What is the self of the

person who studies Zen?” said Tse. Raising his voice, Fa-yen answered, “Ping-ting t’ung-tzu comes for fire.” At that instant, Tse entered great enlightenment (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 7, commentary).

Ch’ien-feng’s “Three Kinds of Infirmity”. The *Book of Equanimity*, Case 11. Hakuin deals with this koan at some length in *Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 19–23.

The foothills to the left of Eastern Mountain. Tung-shan, “Eastern Mountain”, refers to master Wu-tsu Fa-yen, who called himself “the fellow who lives in the foothills to the left of Tung-shan,” as well as to the style of Zen taught in his lineage. According to an annotation, it signifies “Yaku had grasped the true meaning of constantly striving forward [in post-satori training].”

Adamantine cages (kongō-ken) are enclosures made of a diamond-hard substance from which escape is impossible; the phrase often describes the formidable difficulties of *nantō* (hard-to-pass koans).

Chestnut burrs (rikkyoku-hō) is a metaphor for matters, usually koans, that are impossible to swallow.

Kuang Tao-che penetrating the koan. . . . The story of Kuang Tao-che (n.d.) appears in *Ta-hui’s General Discourses (Ta-hui p’u-shuo*, ch. 3): “Kuang Tao-che was a Dharma heir of master Chen-ching, who prized his simplicity and honesty and appointed him head priest at Chiu-feng. When Kuang was on his first Zen pilgrimage, he always told his companions, ‘Because I hated to part from my mother, I wasn’t eager to leave on a pilgrimage. I must study very hard and turn any merit I acquire to her benefit.’ He formulated a set question and posed it to priests wherever he went: What is the meaning of Hsing-hua striking Supervisor Monk K’o-pin? [see following note]. One teacher responded to the question by getting down from his chair, extending his arms, and sticking out his tongue. Kuang struck his zazen mat and left. . . . He next took the question to Priest Lin of Shih-shuang, who said, ‘What about your own meaning?’ Kuang struck his zazen mat. ‘A fine zazen mat,’ said Lin, ‘but you don’t know where this ends.’ Kuang then took the question to master Chen-ching, whose response was also, ‘What about your own meaning?’ Kuang struck his zazen mat. ‘Others hit things, so

you hit things too!’ shouted Chen-ching. At that Kuang entered great enlightenment, grasping the inner meaning of the koan. That night his mother appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Because my son achieved enlightenment, I have been reborn into the deva realms and am able to receive the compassionate instruction of the Bodhisattvas.’” Ta-hui’s comment: “When faith and devotion to practice achieves merit like this that results in Buddha-wisdom, it is truly beyond human comprehension.”

Hsing-hua striking Supervisor Monk K’o-pin. . . . After a dialogue between these two monks, Hsing-hua struck K’o-pin, telling him that because he had lost their Dharma battle he must pay a penalty of five taels and treat the entire assembly to a vegetarian feast, which he himself will not be allowed to attend. K’o-pin quit the temple in a huff, but some years later he became Hsing-hua’s Dharma heir and successor (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 12). Commenting on this encounter, Sung master Po-yun Shou-tuan said, “K’o-pin later completed his religious quest and greatly venerated Hsing-hua. Throughout the centuries K’o-pin has been held up in Zen temples as a monk who realized his great debt to his teacher and went on to repay it in full” (*Extensive Records of Zen Priest Po-yun*, ch. 2). In stressing the need for continued practice following satori, this story highlights an essential theme of Hakuin’s Zen.

Offering a great reward . . . to appear? Hakuin’s final comment is originally from *San Lueh* (*The Three Strategies*), an early Chinese treatise on war: “Beneath a great reward valiant men are sure to gather.” It is used as a capping phrase in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 26; the *Book of Equanimity*, Case 13; and other Zen works.

72. UNTITLED [EXAMINING A KOAN]

I PUT THIS before you:

One day Zen master Hsing-hua said to Supervisor Monk K’o-pin, “If you’re not careful you’ll turn into one of those priests in the Teaching Schools.” “I won’t become one of those,” retorted K’o-pin.

“You won’t join them because you understand them? Or because you don’t?” asked Hsing-hua. “Neither,” said K’o-pin. Hsing-hua struck him and said, “You lost the Dharma battle. As a penalty you will donate five cash. We’ll use it to give the brothers a meal. But you must leave the temple.”

Many students take up this story, but they do it the same way they investigate the koan “Seeing Through the Old Lady”, focusing only on Chao-chou’s words and remaining blind to the sharp nip the old lady gave Chao-chou; or the koan “Wu-chiu’s Blows,” seeing only the monk turning the tables on Wu-chiu and striking him, unaware that Wu-chiu repulsed the monk with ease. Why is this?

Spare no pains, be thorough, and never ever stop! Thank you and take care of yourselves.

.....

One day Zen master Hsing-hua . . . “But you must leave the temple” is Hakuin’s telling of the koan “Hsing-hua Strikes K’o-pin” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 11). This koan also appears in the previous piece, #71. Master Hsing-hua strikes Supervisor Monk K’o-pin and sends him from the temple, and because of this K’o-pin goes on to achieve great enlightenment and become Hsing-hua’s Dharma heir.

Those priests in the Teaching Schools. “Like a plausible teacher of garrulous habits from one of the Teaching sects” (annotation). “Teaching sects” commonly refers to schools other than Zen, which purports to point directly to the mind of man without recourse to verbal teachings. Zen’s “pointing directly to the mind of man” is said “not to rely on words and letters.”

The koan “Seeing Through the Old Lady”. See “Chao-chou investigating the old woman” in the long second note to #28 above, p. 49. The koan “Wu-chiu’s Blows” is found in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 75.

Spare no pains, be thorough, and never ever stop! (hitotsu, kasazareba, futatsu, kyū sezu). “Words more precious than the entire Tripitaka” (annotation). These words may be explained in various ways according to the context in which they appear.

Annotations suggest the most plausible explanation in this case: “The first rule, and second rule too, is: once you start something, don’t stop until it’s finished!” “If someone comes at you with a knife, you can’t stop until the matter is finally settled.”

73. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA’S DEATH

Kitchen piled high with vegetables, chopping blade worn thin,
Stoking the stove with autumn leaves the fire tongs keep busy.
We will set out a memorial offering he will be unable to touch;
For the blue-eyed Indian’s belly, it’s truly gut-wrenching news.

.....

Lines 1–2: An annotation explains the sense of the first two lines: “Because we consume large amounts of carrots and burdock root at Shōin-ji, the blade on the vegetable chopper was worn thin. Lacking firewood, we used autumn leaves instead, so the kitchen fire had to be constantly stoked.” Hakuin used the first two lines of this verse in his autobiography *Wild Ivy* (p. 48) to express his state of mind as a young monk when he took leave of his teacher Shōju Rōjin, apparently signifying that although he had tried diligently to bring his training to completion, he still felt the need for further effort.

Lines 3–4: “A feast that no one knows how to get his teeth into” (annotation). “He” and “the blue-eyed Indian” both refer to Bodhidharma.

74. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

These verse instructions were delivered on the fifteenth day of the second month of 1746, Hakuin's sixty-second year, during a lecture meeting on the Lotus Sutra conducted at Genryū-ji in Tadehara, Suruga province (Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 210).

In the *Nirvana Sutra* he filled in what was unsaid in the *Lotus*,
Putting lethal poison and finest ghee to good use in them both.
He refused three times before he delivered the Nirvana Sutra,
Like a warbler reviling the peach blossoms after a heavy rain.

.....

Lines 1–2: It is said that after preaching the *Lotus Sutra* the Buddha felt it was too difficult for the capacity of some students, so he preached the *Nirvana Sutra*. “Zen teachers make their virulently poisonous medicine into finest ghee, and because of that neither of these sutras can be said to take precedence over the other” (annotation).

Finest ghee (daigo). Taking a statement by the Buddha in the *Nirvana Sutra* about “five flavors,” the T’ien-t’ai school made it a metaphor for the “five periods,” indicating the order in which the Buddha’s teachings were expounded. The *Nirvana* and *Lotus* sutras, representing the fifth and most advanced period, are described as the finest ghee.

Line 3: Shariputra asked the Buddha to preach the *Lotus Sutra*, but the Buddha refused, fearing the harm that might result. Shariputra repeated the request two more times, and the third time the Buddha agreed and preached *the Lotus Sutra*. Then, asked a fourth time, he expounded the *Nirvana Sutra*, whose teaching came to be epitomized as one that “supports the rules [*vinaya*] and speaks of the eternal [*furitsu danjō*].” He teaches in the *Nirvana Sutra* that the Dharma-body of the Buddha is indestructible and eternal; that the state of Nirvana is endowed with the four virtues of eternity, happiness, true self, and purity; that all living beings possess the Buddha-nature; and that even *icchantikas*, or persons of incorrigible disbelief, can attain Buddhahood.

Line 4: “This is the scene when the sun emerges after a great deluge and the damage to the flowers is seen” (annotation). “It is just like a warbler after a heavy rainfall cursing the peach blossoms damaged in the storm” (Yoshizawa paraphrase).

75. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY OPENING A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *POEMS OF HAN-SHAN*

This was delivered during a lecture meeting Hakuin conducted on the Poems of Han-shan at Hōrin-ji in Kai province in 1746.

I found a stake on Mount T'ien-t'ai smothered with
clinging vines.

I dragged it with all its coils and convolutions up here to
Hōrin-ji.

I will choke monks intent on pulling the weeds from their
minds,

Or insert nails and wedges from the stinking softness of
my heart.

.....

Lines 1–2: According to a preface to the *Poems of Han-shan* (*Han-shan shih*) by a person named Lu-ch'iu Yin, Han-shan was a recluse who lived in the mountains of T'ien-t'ai in Chekiang province. The stake or post of clinging vines (*kattō-tō*) apparently refers to Han-shan's poems and Hakuin's own recently published commentary on the poems, *Kanzan-shi sendai kimon* (*Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan*), which he was using as the text for the lectures at Hōrin-ji. Clinging vines, coils, and convolutions connote the difficulties his comments will create in students' minds. "Demons will seize you in their grip; Buddhas will seize you in their grip too" (annotation).

Lines 3–4: "Nails and wedges" are attachments and impediments in students' minds, impeding their progress to full enlightenment. In *Hekiganshū Hishō* Hakuin says, "Nails are the sutras and commentaries implanted by the Teaching Schools, wedges the satori implanted by Zen teachers. All must be extracted." Here an annotation adds: "By attaching unnecessary words and delusory comments to the poems, I'll snatch in their coils students from the four quarters and strangle the life out of them. I'll bring the unenlightened to awakening and encourage those who apply themselves diligently to even greater effort. I'll take them under my wing [teach them all a lesson]. The Zen school educates people in a different manner. The unenlightened think we're cruel to them, but no, we take good care of them" (annotation).

76. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA'S DEATH

This verse is dated the fifth day of the tenth month, 1746, and was most probably written while Hakuin was at Sekirin-ji in Kai province delivering lectures on the Lotus Sutra (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 211).

Yesterday news arrived of the Ryūun-ji priest's death.
Today we hung up the portrait of the old Indian monk.
Both convey the meaning of the coming from the West.
When you finish your rice, wait until your tea is served.

.....

The Ryūun-ji priest's death. Ryūun-ji was located in Numazu. Its head priest at this time was Taidō Zekan (d. 1746), who was succeeded by Settan Ehatsu, a close friend of Hakuin from the days when they were young acolytes at Daishō-ji in Numazu. In 1717, when Hakuin became head priest of Shōin-ji, Settan served for a time as his attendant.

The old Indian monk is Bodhidharma; the text has "Bear's Ears Peak," the site of Bodhidharma's tomb in eastern I-yang province.

Both convey . . . from the West [to China]. "What is the meaning of Daruma's coming from the West?" is one of the most common Zen questions.

77. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY FOLLOWING LECTURES ON THE *POEMS* OF *HAN-SHAN*

This piece was apparently written in 1746, Hakuin's sixty-second year, when visiting Hōrin-ji in Sasago, Kai province, for lectures on the Poems of Han-shan (see #75). His Zen commentary on the poems, Kanzan-shi sendai-kimon (Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan), had just been published in three volumes

(kan), and he was apparently using that as his text. “In the spring, Hakuin conducted a lecture meeting on the Lotus Sutra at Genryū-ji in Tadehara, Suruga province. . . . In autumn, his commentary on the Poems of Han-shan was published. Hakuin first saw a copy when he arrived at Hōrin-ji in Kai for a lecture meeting on Han-shan’s poems. . . . When the meeting ended, he proceeded to Sekirin-ji in Kai for lectures on the Lotus Sutra” (Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 210–11).

After I had put down Cold Mountain’s handle-less broom,
I left one of Daruma’s stinking boots behind me in
Sasago.

Goading on a White Ox fat with sleep and spring grasses,
I reckon I’ll wring my guts out gibbering about the *Lotus*.

.....

After I had put down . . . in Sasago. The Zen eccentric and poet Han-shan (Cold Mountain) is often portrayed in art and literature holding a broom, here an allusion to the poems themselves. Sasago, located in Kai province to the northeast of Mount Fuji at the foot of Sasago Pass, is one of the most difficult stretches on the Kōshū-kaidō road that linked Kai province with Edo. A large Japanese cedar tree at the summit (*Yatate no Sugi*) was later made famous in the woodblock prints of Hiroshige and Hokusai.

I left one . . . in Sasago. Daruma’s single boot (*sekiri*), or sandal or shoe, is a common trope in Zen art and poetry for Bodhidharma’s Zen. It is based on the following story: “Bodhidharma entered Nirvana on the 5th of the 10th month in the 19th year of T’ai-ho. On the 28th of the 12th month of that year he was interred on Bear’s Ears Peak, and a memorial stupa was erected at the Ting-lin monastery. Three years later, an emissary of the emperor of Wei named Sung-yun who was traveling in Central Asia encountered Bodhidharma in the highlands of the Pamir range. He was carrying a single shoe in his hand and strolling leisurely in a westerly direction. When asked, ‘Where are you going,’ he replied, ‘To India,’ but he also told Sung-yun, ‘Your sovereign has passed away.’ Astonished

by these words, Sung-yun hurried home, where he learned that the emperor had indeed died. When he reported his meeting with Bodhidharma to the new emperor, the emperor had the funerary tower in which Bodhidharma was interred opened and searched. Nothing was found inside but a single shoe” (*The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, p. 208).

What at first seems a rather gratuitous reference to Daruma is justified by annotations informing us that Hakuin “crossed Sasago Pass with one boot [like Daruma], hiking six or seven leagues from Hōrin-ji [to Sekirin-ji, westward, again like Daruma, for lectures on the *Lotus Sutra*; see #76],” and mentioning that commemorative services for Bodhidharma’s death were held at Sekirin-ji on the fifth day of the tenth month (they are described in the previous piece, #76).

A White Ox fat with sleep and spring grasses. This is evidently a reference to the lectures Hakuin had given that spring at Genryū-ji in Tadehara (with an allusion to the name Tadehara, “field of smartweed,” a forage crop). “White Ox” is a metaphor from the *Lotus Sutra* for the sutra itself, and for Hakuin himself as an embodiment of the sutra’s enlightened teaching.

78. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *LOTUS SUTRA*

Hakuin delivered this long verse at the meeting on the Lotus Sutra held at Sekirin-ji in Kai province which is described in #76.

Anyone who seeks to master the Buddha’s Way
Must begin by attaining a *kenshō* of total clarity.
When it is as clear as a fruit lying in your hand,
Crack the secret ciphers of the Eastern Mountain:

How did Chao-chou see through the old woman?
What made Hsing-hua hit supervisor monk K'o?
Chen Ts'ao sizing Zen monks up from the railing.
Huang-lung planting vegetables by the zazen seat.
Chien-feng's three kinds of deep-rooted infirmity.
Yun-men's Barrier liberating groups of blind men.
What's it like rubbing shoulders with him all day?
A band of brigands dozing under an old oak tree.
When you've bored through each of these koans,
You may turn to the *Lotus* and *Vimalakirti* sutras.
Unless you grasp their meaning, even with *kenshō*
You will fall unawares into the abyss of emptiness,
The two horrible voids of the self and the Dharma,
Trapped in the net of half-baked Two Vehicle Zen.
People today think experiencing *kenshō* is enough,
A great fraud the Lesser Vehicle has long avowed.
Always quick to scorn the Two Vehicles, they are
Unaware that they are as good as dead themselves.
Venerable disciples Purna, Shariputra, Kapphina,
And Ananda, Mahakashapa, and Subhuti as well
Had far deeper understanding than today's priests,
They were heroes who could swallow India whole.
To stop students from squatting inside attainment,
The Mahayana sutras decried attachment to satori.
Angulimalya reviled it as an earthworm's wisdom,
Buddha dismissed its adherents as scabrous foxes.
Old Layman Vimalakirti strongly denounced them
As charred seeds from which no life could emerge.
The Shravakas, Solitary Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas
Ended up as fervorless as flies trapped in hot soup;
Though wise, they lamented, cried sorrowful tears,
Possessing attainment, they were dejected and sad.
But on hearing the Buddha espound his third teaching
Regarding faith and reason, their eyes cleared at last.
I have always lamented Zen's ignorance of the sutras,
Monks plodding ahead aimlessly like blind donkeys.
Even after *kenshō*, unless you know Buddha's words,

You're like a carriage only fitted out with one wheel.
And if you read the scriptures without having *kenshō*,
You're only a parrot imitating someone else's speech.
I want you men to keep the ancients' practice in mind
While spurring the vow-wheel on to save living beings,
Never forgetting how Hui-chung arrived at attainment,
Always keeping Daitō's broken pot firmly in your hand.

.....

Eastern Mountain (Tung-shan) refers to Wu-tsu Fa-yen (1024–1104), who lived there. Regarded as founder of the Fa-yen school of Chinese Zen, he was celebrated for the marvelous efficacy of his Zen utterances.

Secret ciphers or “passwords” (*angō-rei*) originally referred to secret passwords used by soldiers in wartime; here it means potent koans generally. Hakuin enumerates a series of such koans in each of the successive eight lines of the verse:

1. “Chao-chou Sees Through the Old Woman” (*Gateless Barrier*, Case 31).
2. “Hsing-hua Strikes Supervisor Monk K'o-pin” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 11). Temple Supervisor (Wei-na) K'o-pin left the temple after being struck by master Hsing-hua but later attained great enlightenment and became Hsing-hua's successor.
3. “Ch'en Ts'ao Sizes Up Zen Monks”. Standing high on the upper story of a pavilion, Layman Ch'en Ts'ao correctly discerns the character of some traveling monks passing below (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4; also *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 33).
4. Huang-lung Hui-nan said to monks who came to him for instruction: “Reciting sutras in the bell tower. Growing vegetables by the zazen seat.” When head monk Sheng offered a good turning phrase: “A ferocious tiger sits blocking the road,” Huang-lung retired, turning his position over to Sheng.
5. Ch'ien-feng's “Three Kinds of Infirmity” appears in a dialogue between Ch'ien-feng and Yun-men (*Essentials of Successive*

Records of the Lamp, ch. 33). See *Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 19–20.

6. *Yun-men's Barrier* appears in the koan "Ts'ui-yen's Eyebrows" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 8).
7. "In the morning our eyebrows entangle, in the evening our shoulders rub. Who is it? All day long the pillar goes back and forth. Why am I unable to move? If you can penetrate these two turning phrases, your lifetime of practice is complete" (*Daitō's Final Admonitions; Daitō Yuikai*).
8. Kanzan Egen (1277–1360), founder of Myōshin-ji, said that "[The koan] 'Chao-chou's Oak Tree' works like a bandit."

Venerable disciples . . . and Subhuti as well are priests who are numbered among the Buddha's ten great disciples.

Angulimalya reviled it . . . from which no life could emerge. In *Oradegama*, Hakuin comments on students who, instead of engaging in koan practice directed toward *kenshō*, follow the teachings of "do-nothing Zen": "Even the Buddhas cannot cure an understanding such as this. . . . Even if they continue in this way for endless kalpas, they will still be nothing more than dead dogs. . . . The Buddha has compared them to scabrous foxes. Angulimalya has scorned them as having the intelligence of earthworms. Vimalakirti has placed them in the category of scorched buds and rotten seeds" (adapted from *Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings*, p. 115).

Though wise . . . dejected and sad. The text specifies students who have attained the three stages (*san-ken*) of the Bodhisattva's career and the four fruits (*shi-ka*) or degrees of sainthood in the Lesser Vehicle teaching.

His third teaching / Regarding faith and reason. The Buddha is said to have preached the *Lotus Sutra* in three different ways to accord with the capacities — superior, average, and inferior — of his Shravaka disciples so they would all be able to grasp his meaning. The chapters on faith and reason (or study) belong to the third preaching, in which he explained that with faith and study it was possible for all his disciples to attain Buddhahood.

How Hui-chung arrived at attainment. After receiving the Dharma transmission from his teacher, Hui-chung went to live on Mount Po-ya in Nan-yang and did not leave his mountain hermitage for over forty years (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 5).

Daitō's broken pot. "If even a single person concentrates his practice on investigating his own self, he may be living in the wilderness in a hut thatched with a single bundle of straw and spending his days eating the roots of wild herbs cooked in a pot with broken legs, but it is he who is face to face with me every day, and it is he who requites his debt to me. Who should ever despise such a person? O monks, be diligent, be diligent" (*Daitō's Final Admonitions*).

79. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE RŌHATSU TRAINING PERIOD

This verse was probably written in 1746, Hakuin's sixty-second year, when according to the Chronological Biography he was busy teaching in various temples in Suruga and neighboring provinces. When winter came he completed lectures on the Lotus Sutra he had started at a previous meeting. Although the exact circumstances surrounding this verse are unclear, it seems Hakuin was caught up in various other affairs when the rōhatsu training period arrived.

Giving talks and meeting guests amid the noise and bustle,
Grabbing some shut-eye — all are forms of zazen practice.
On offering incense this morning I forgot to read my verse,
So I recited *Namu Myōhō-renge-kyō* after the meal instead.

.....

Lines 1–2: “Zazen that continues in one’s daily activities” (annotation).

Lines 3–4: “I forgot to read the verse, but I couldn’t do anything about that, so I recited the *Daimoku* several times instead” (annotation). The *Daimoku* is the invocation “*Namu Myōhō-rengē-kyō*,” literally, “I place my trust in the *Lotus Sutra*.”

80. INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGH SEAT AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *WISDOM SUTRA* AT SEIBON-JI

Seibon-ji is a Zen temple located on the Tōkaidō road a few hundred yards east of Shōin-ji. The text was delivered at a lecture meeting held there during the New Year period of 1747. This would place it at a period of severe famine in Suruga province, and apparently in the aftermath of a fire that caused great destruction in Hara village as well.

These fires were not uncommon. This one could be the conflagration described in the text on “Black Fire” (#169), which Hakuin says ravaged Hara when he was in his mid-fifties. In a section titled “Kyūshinbō encounters a devastating fire” in the work Dharma Words in Japanese on Cause and Effect, Hakuin vividly narrates memories of another fire he had witnessed as a four-year-old in 1690, possibly the same one the German physician Kaempfer mentions hearing about when he passed through Hara on his way to Edo in 1691.

Lecture meetings on the six-hundred fascicle Wisdom Sutra, whose full Japanese title is Daihannya Haramitta Sutra (Sanskrit: Mahāprajñā-pāramitā sūtra), were sometimes conducted to obtain

protection from fire and sickness, as well as to ensure good harvests. Because of the sutra's enormous size, it was usually recited by the tendoku method, in which the recitation is divided among the monks; each monk reads two or three pages at the beginning and end of each fascicle of the sutra, while the portion in between is "read" by shuffling the pages a few times.

Seibon-ji still houses one of Hakuin's largest paintings, a depiction of Emma, the Lord of Hell and the realm of the dead, which is hung at annual gatherings to worship Jizō, the "Bodhisattva of Hell." For a reproduction, see The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, p. 233.

THE VIRTUOUS POWER of the gods is perfectly clear, yet if a person does not revere the gods, its light is unable to shine with full and radiant effect. The misfortunes people suffer are many and various, yet with the gods' help and protection their troubles can be eliminated. Hence it is said: "It is owing to people's devotion that the gods' divine power gains in strength; it is owing to the gods' divine power that people's good fortune increases."

My home village Ukishima-ga-Hara is located not far from the ocean. It is subjected to strong winds that have been the cause of catastrophic conflagrations in the past. These fires occur about every five to ten years, and cause the villagers great distress. In some cases it has obliged family members to disperse and move to other parts. An idle old priest like me, who lives in relative comfort in a temple, is able to exist only because of the villagers' support — they supply the food I eat. Whenever they experience distress, it cannot help distressing me as well.

Although these recurring fires have long troubled me, since I lack the secret arts that Luan Pa possessed to prevent them, not to mention the illustrious virtue of National Master Shōichi, my only recourse is to rely on the six hundred fascicles of the *Great Wisdom Sutra*. I feel confident that if we offer a recitation of this sutra to the gods, they will take pity on the villagers and exempt them from the calamity of fire forever. In any case, I could not just sit by in my temple and watch them suffering such grievous losses.

This year, in the spring of the fourth year of Enkyō [1747], I privately informed senior priests in the surrounding areas of my intention to hold such a meeting. All lent their wholehearted support. “It will be an excellent source of good karma in this life and the next,” they said. We borrowed a set of the *Great Wisdom Sutra* from Tokugen-ji next door and are now assembled here for this splendid Dharma meeting. I pray most humbly that all Buddhas throughout the ten directions, the various gods who protect the Dharma — Devas, Dragon Kings, and the other guardian gods, and especially our great and august ancestral Japanese *kami* Amaterasu-ō-mikami and the sacred deities enshrined at Mount Fuji, Mount Ashitaka, Mount Akiba, and Kitano — will muster all their radiant illumination and bestow its virtues on this meeting, so that our village will be freed forever from the calamity of fire. If the villagers understand our aspiration, and from now on assemble regularly on the twenty-fourth of the first month of each year to chant this sutra, it will be an outcome for which I have long and fervently wished.

The senior priests at Seibon-ji issued me solemn orders: “You must take advantage of this rare opportunity to deliver formal Zen lectures on a koan story that will serve as an offering to men and devas and promote the teachings of our Zen school.” Unable to refuse them, I have taken these moments to babble out a word or two to the brotherhood. Don’t say Seibon-ji doesn’t show concern for its weary monks.

.....

“It is owing to people’s devotion . . . good fortune increases.” The source of this saying, which Hakuin also uses in *The Tale of Yūkichi of Takayama (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 47)*, is unknown. “If a person has a firm belief in the Way, whoever he is, he will enjoy good fortune” (annotation).

Luan Pa. Governor of an ancient Chinese province, Luan Pa was known for his knowledge of occult arts. He once spat out a mouthful of wine in a southwesterly direction, saying it would help put out a fire raging in a neighboring province. It was later learned that a fire in a large city to the southwest had been extinguished by a sudden

rainsquall from the northeast that smelled strongly of wine (*Biographies of Divine Sages*, ch. 5).

The illustrious virtue of National Master Shōichi. Enni Ben'en (1202–80), also known by his posthumous “National Master” title, Shōichi Kokushi. Hailing from Hakuin’s native Suruga province, Enni studied in Sung China, receiving the Dharma transmission from master Wu-chun at the Mount Ching monastery. He returned to Japan and founded the Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto. “There is a legend that when a great fire was raging at the Mount Ching monastery, Enni helped put it out using water from the stream that runs under the Tsūten Bridge at Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto” (annotation). Charms offering protection against fire are still produced and distributed at Tōfuku-ji.

81. UNTITLED [EXAMINING A KOAN]

I PUT THIS before you:

Once an old woman asked someone to take master Chao-chou a donation and request that he revolve the sutra repository for her. Upon receiving the donation Chao-chou got down from his seat, walked around the chair one time, and said, “Tell the woman I have revolved the sutra repository.” When the person reported this, the woman said, “I asked him to turn the sutra repository one revolution. Why did he only turn it half way?”

Scrutinize this story closely and you find that Chao-chou is like a venerable dragon lying hidden inside an old well, the woman like a half-starved hawk peering down at a lump of fresh meat. Why is this?

Peach flowers aspire of themselves to ripen into fruit,
People should not be resentful of the predawn winds.

.....

Revolve the sutra repository for her. The sutra repository rests on a central axis that allows it to be turned. Devotees who revolve it are

thought to gain the same merit as reading the works in the Buddhist canon. The story of Chao-chou and the old woman is found in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4. In *Essentials of Successive Records of the Lamp*, ch. 10, the priest who receives the request is Ta-sui Fa-hsin, not Chao-chou. Zen master Ta-hui's comments on this koan may be found in Daisetz Suzuki's *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*, p. 78.

Scrutinize this story . . . a lump of fresh meat. An annotation attached to Hakuin's comments reads: "Chao-chou (the dragon) purposely conceals his ability to fly freely through the air. The old woman is out to swallow Chao-chou whole."

Verse: Hakuin concludes with a couplet by T'ang poet Wang-chien. It is included in *San-t'i-shih (Poetry in Three Styles)*, a 13th-century collection of T'ang poetry carefully studied by Zen priests in Japan. The following explanation of the couplet appears in a Japanese commentary on *San-t'i-shih*: "Fresh spring colors have faded, the few remaining peach flowers rapidly fall and scatter. Since they do this because they themselves want to ripen into fruit, we should not resent the wind for scattering them. The peach flowers are like a lovely court lady who having lost her youthful beauty and her lord's favor is obliged to give up her position at court. She cannot blame her lord, or others, for her sorrow. The fault is hers alone. She could have avoided this fate if she had not sought such a life in the first place" (*Soin-shō*, a Japanese commentary on *San-t'i-shih* by Sesshin Soin).

82. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE CEREMONY COMMEMORATING THE THIRTY-FIFTH DAY OF SHINTATSU-MYŌSŌ-SHINNYO'S DEATH

Shintatsu-myōsō-shinnyo is the posthumous name of the wife of Furugōri Tsūgen (n.d.), the eldest son of a prominent samurai family of Suruga province with close ties to Hakuin. Hakuin uses the term Shoshi to describe Tsūgen, a designation signifying that he had not been appointed to an official position, so presumably he and his wife were still young, probably in their twenties or thirties. The memorial service referred to here was the fifth in a series of weekly observances held over a forty-nine-day period following a person's death, normally held on the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, twenty-eighth, thirty-fifth, forty-second, and forty-ninth days.

Tsūgen's father Furugōri Kentsū (1695–1746), a retainer of Inaba Tango-no-kami, the lord of Odawara Castle, was a fervent Nichiren Buddhist who lived in Hina village not far from Hara. After beginning koan study under Hakuin in his mid-thirties, Kentsū became a patron of Shōin-ji. An enlightenment verse he presented to Hakuin is recorded in the Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 200).

In the present piece, dating from 1747, the year after Kentsū's death, Tsūgen and his wife appear as Hakuin's students as well. Tsūgen may also be the physician Furugōri that the Chronological Biography mentions attending Hakuin in his final days (*ibid.*, p. 234).

THERE IS A country gentleman named Tsūgen living in Fuji county in Suruga province. He was married to a fine lady He was married to a fine lady who, having cultivated the chaste virtues, was adorned in the fine robes of great honesty and simplicity. I once painted an image of Kannon Bodhisattva at her request; she revered and worshipped it for many years. Together with her husband she probed the depths of Chao-chou's Mu, engaging it constantly through hidden practice and secret application. This year, the fourth of the Enkyō era [1747], she contracted a serious illness, and it was not long afterwards that the mirror on her dressing chamber was covered over for good.

It is now the thirty-fifth day since her passing. To commemorate the occasion Tsūgen has provided a vegetarian meal, and I have been asked to lecture on the *Lotus Sutra*. I earnestly hope that the services we conduct today will further the cause of Zen.

I put this before you:

Once Tao-wu and his student Chien-yuan went to pay their respects to a man who had passed away. Chien-yuan rapped on the coffin and said, "Living or dead?" Tao-wu replied, "Won't say living. Won't say dead." "Why won't you say?" asked Chien-yuan. "Won't say," replied Tao-wu. On their way back to the temple, Chien-yuan declared, "If you don't say it right now, I'm going to hit you." "Go ahead and hit me if you want. Won't say living. Won't say dead," replied Tao-wu. Chien-yuan struck him.

In the bargaining between these two old veterans, one of them is like Yen-t'ou's laughter, the other like Hsuan-sha's utterance. Why is that? Give their words careful scrutiny.

When Wen-chun passed away, she left behind an empty bed,
And weeping husband Hsiang-ju to raise two children alone.
As I try to conceive the profound grief of such a bereavement,
The image of her sickbed devotion is still etched in my mind.

.....

Chao-chou's Mu, Case 1 in the *Gateless Barrier* collection, is often the first koan given to Zen students. Hakuin used it as such for many years, changing to the Sound of One Hand koan in his final decades. "A monk asked Chao-chou, 'Does a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?' Chao-chou said, 'Mu!'"

Once Tao-wu and his student . . . Chien-yuan struck him. The episode involving Tao-wu Yuan-chih (739–835) and his student Chien-yuan (768–835) appears in somewhat different form in Case 55 of the *Blue Cliff Record*.

Yen-t'ou's laughter alludes to a Zen dialogue (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7; *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 66) that requires some knowledge of current Chinese history. The rebel leader Huang Ch'ao (d. 884) led an uprising against the ruling T'ang dynasty and after

many bloody campaigns finally succeeded in capturing the capital Ch'ang-an. Putting large numbers of its inhabitants to the sword, Huang Ch'ao proclaimed himself emperor of a new dynasty, only to be overthrown several years later and forced to commit suicide.

The dialogue: "Yen-t'ou asked a monk, 'Where have you come from?' 'From Ch'ang-an,' he replied. 'That would be after Huang Ch'ao passed through. Did you pick up his sword?' Yen-t'ou asked. 'Yes I have it right here with me,' said the monk. Yen-t'ou thrust his neck forward, and shouted, 'Ka!' 'Master,' said the monk. 'Your head has fallen.' Yen-t'ou roared with laughter. Later, the monk went to visit Hsueh-feng. 'Where have you come from?' asked Hsueh-feng. 'From Yen t'ou,' he said. 'What's he telling people these days?' said Hsueh-feng. The monk told of his encounter with Yen-t'ou. Hsueh-feng gave him thirty blows with his staff and chased him from the room. Commenting on this, the Sung master Hsu-t'ang said, 'If that monk had grasped the vital Zen function in Yen-t'ou's laughter, even if Hsueh-feng's staff had been a great deal longer, it could never have touched him'" (*Record of Hsu-t'ang*, ch. 1).

Hsuan-sha's utterance refers to a comment made by Hsuan-sha Shih-pei upon hearing that Ling-yun had experienced enlightenment when he saw peach blossoms in flower: "It is all fine and good, fine and good, but I guarantee you brother monk Ling-yun still hadn't got it all." The phrase "Hsuan-sha's utterance" appears with various meanings in Zen literature; Hakuin often uses it when stressing the necessity of continuing post-satori training. He had it carved as a self-depreciatory motto on a seal that he impressed on his paintings: "I tried to depict the truth in this painting, but was unable to get it all." Here it apparently alludes to something not fully achieved.

Verse: The famous Chinese poet Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju (d. 117 B.C.), left penniless by a series of misfortunes, fell in love with a young widow named Wen-chun, the daughter of a wealthy man. They eloped, but poverty subsequently obliged them to open a small wine shop. Wen-chun served the customers and Hsiang-ju, dressed only in a loincloth, did the rest. Wen-chun's father, unable to bear the shame of having his daughter working in a wine shop, made them a large gift of money. Hsiang-ju later tried to introduce a concubine into their marriage but gave up the idea when Wen-chun wrote a poem

expressing her intention of divorcing him. Hakuin draws a parallel between this legendary couple and Tsūgen and his wife. It cannot be known with certainty how far the similarity extended, but Shintatsu-myōsō-shinnyo was young like Wen-chun, and may also have been a beautiful widow when she married Tsūgen. An annotation also states that like the Chinese couple, Tsūgen and his wife had two children.

83. ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *POEMS OF HAN-SHAN*

This assembly was held at Chōfuku-ji in Izu province. Although the Chronological Biography has Hakuin lecturing on the Poems of Han-shan (which, since this collection includes poems by Shih-te and Feng-kan as well, is also referred to as Poems of the Three Recluses) at Chōfuku-ji in 1768, the year of his death, the lectures described here — though unrecorded in the Chronological Biography — were evidently delivered at a much earlier point in his career. An annotation states that Chō of Tango, a monk about whom little is known, was in charge of the meeting, and that Layman Ittsui Kokan (Akiyama Michitomo, see #150 and #185) donated the funds to make the meeting possible.

Lu-ch'iu Yin got it into his head to get a handle on these
vagabonds,
Nosing about, he gathered up the verses they had been
jotting down.
Anything I uttered about them in this hall wouldn't amount
to much,
The three recluses have decided between them what
needs to be said.

.....

Lu-ch'iu Yin wrote a preface for the *Han-shan shih* (*Cold Mountain Poems*) collection of Han-shan's poetry; he states in it that while he was looking for information about the three recluses Han-shan, Shih-te, and Feng-kan, he assembled the verses they had written on bamboos, trees, and rocks and published them as this book. Yoshizawa suggests that the references to Lu-ch'iu Yin's efforts in this regard allude to the "unnecessary" troubles that his lay follower Layman Kokan had incurred in holding the present lecture meeting on Han-shan's poems, which entailed erecting temporary training quarters at Chōfuku-ji.

The three recluses . . . what needs to be said. This is a playful allusion to the saying, "If three people insist it is so, a tortoise becomes a snapping turtle," i.e., if three people insist the same mistake is true, other people might also regard it as true" (see #38).

84. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING SHAO-LIN'S DEATH

"This verse dates from the time the master was working with the brothers to create an artificial mountain [in the Shōin-ji garden]" (annotation). "This happened when the present kuri [kitchen] was being rebuilt at Shōin-ji" (annotation).

The great spirit split Mount Hua so the river could flow eastward,
Here at Shōin-ji we're constructing our own Five Teat Mountain.
The rocks in the garden with moss-furred skins soar up like jades.
Saigyō's statue cranes its neck to take in the beauty of the scene.

.....

The great spirit . . . Five Teat Mountain. Five Teat Mountain was Shao-lin's (Bodhidharma's) residence in China. Hsueh-tou's verse on Case 32 of the *Blue Cliff Record* states that "The great spirit lifted his hand without much ado / And split apart Mount Hua's ten million layers." Yuan-wu provides a further comment on this in the same Case: "The ancient god of the Yellow River had great supernatural powers. With his hand he broke open Mount Hua to let the water of the Yellow River run through."

Saigyō's statue . . . of the scene. Evidently there was a stone statue of the poet Saigyō in the garden at Shōin-ji where the artificial mountain was created.

85. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *HEROIC MARCH SUTRA*

"This meeting was held at Shōin-ji in the spring of the sixth year of Hōreki [1756]" (annotation).

THE GOLDEN WORDS in the *Heroic March Sutra* are neither expedient teachings nor true teachings. The instructions Shakamuni expounds in it have no smell or sound. They are a gathering of the flowers of enlightenment fully laden with the precious treasures of universal wisdom. Shaka's wisdom, like the radiance of the sun and moon, saved Ananda from the prostitute Matanga's sorcery that was seducing him, emancipating him from endless kalpas of ignorance.

It must have been an extremely difficult task for Fang Jung and Shramana Pāramiti to translate the *Heroic March Sutra* into Chinese. Why is that? Because the ten kinds of wondrous teaching and the twenty-five kinds of perfect enlightenment set forth in the sutra are all as non-existent as rabbit horns or tortoise hair.

To the Zen monks who fill this hall I respectfully say: Spur yourselves on towards the place where words and understanding come to nothing. Don't wait to receive encouragement from others.

.....

Expedient teachings (gonkyō) are those preached for the sake of people not yet capable of understanding the *true teachings (jikkyō)* that directly reveal the Buddha's real intent.

The prostitute Matanga's sorcery. The attempt by the daughter of Matangi to seduce the Buddha's disciple Ananda appears in the first fascicle of the *Heroic March Sutra*. As Ananda is begging alms he passes a brothel where Matangi's daughter works as a prostitute. Because he lacks sufficient samadhic power, Ananda is seduced by the woman and almost breaks the precept forbidding sexual misconduct. The Buddha rescues him by giving him a powerful mantra to recite.

It must have been . . . into Chinese. The *Heroic March Sutra*, an important text for the Zen school, was translated into Chinese in 705 by Pāramiti, an Indian monk from central India who brought the text to China, and revised by Fang Jung, a former minister of the Empress Wu.

Because the ten kinds . . . or tortoise hair. The *Heroic March Sutra* is divided into ten sections. "The twenty-five kinds of perfect enlightenment" are the different ways of attaining perfect enlightenment as set forth in fascicles five and six of the sutra. "Rabbit horns" and "tortoise hair" are things that exist in name only and have no real substance.

Spur yourselves on towards the place . . . encouragement from others. "When one reaches the place where words and letters are of no avail, the activities of the mind vanish" (annotation). "Unless you reach understanding on your own, it will do you no good" (annotation).

86. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING SHAO-LIN'S DEATH

An annotation to this undated piece states: "A gilt Buddha from Kyoto was being taken to Edo. [The party of men] carrying it stopped for an afternoon rest at the main honjin inn at the Hara post station."

A gold Buddha, passing through fire with its color
unchanged,

Stopped after lunch on its way to Edo to rest at the *honjin*
inn.

A Buddha came from the west, a patriarch came from the
west;

When the two sages met, host and guest were clearly
revealed.

.....

Line 1: "Chao-chou said, 'A gold Buddha can't pass through a furnace, a wood Buddha can't pass through fire, a clay Buddha can't pass through water. The real Buddha sits within. Enlightenment, Nirvana, suchness, Buddha-nature — all are merely garments that cling to you, otherwise called the afflicting passions'" (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 28). Commenting on the term "gold Buddha" in *Hekiganshū Hishō*, Case 96, Hakuin says: "If you can grasp this gold Buddha that doesn't pass through a furnace, you are like the dragon reaching water, its native element. Anything is possible."

Line 2: The *honjin* inn, the main inn at the Hara post station, was designated for use by daimyōs and high-ranking government officials.

Line 4: "Host and guest" commonly indicates the self-other or subject-object duality of ordinary existence; they are transcended upon entering the realm of nonduality in the realization of Zen awakening. Here an annotator asks, no doubt echoing Hakuin's own

words: “How did you view the way in which host and guest revealed themselves?”

87. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIEST NANMEI’S DEATH

Nanmei Juō (n.d.), the founder of Jōei-ji, was a Dharma heir of Gyokuhō Myōkei in the Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan line of Rinzai Zen. From information provided in the annotations we know that Nanmei had travelled to Sung China and studied at the Ching-shan monastery. In 1232, after returning to Japan, he established Jōei-ji.

In the Chronological Biography for the previous year, we read: “In autumn the master went to Jōei-ji in Tōtōmi province. While he was there he got his first look at the newly published Dream Words from a Land of Dreams” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217). Dream Words from a Land of Dreams (Kaian-kokugo), one of Hakuin’s major works, contains his Zen comments on the records of Daitō Kokushi. Yūzan Zen’ichi (1714-61), the incumbent at Jōei-ji who arranged for the meeting, had recently published this work.

Sixty-six-year-old Hakuin delivered this address at Jōei-ji the following year, 1750, during the lectures on Dream Words. Yūzan Zen’ichi (1714–61), then thirty-seven years old, contributed a colophon to Dream Words in which he explains how it came to be published:

When my late teacher was approaching death, he made a request: “I asked Kokurin Rōjin [Hakuin] to conduct a lecture meeting at my temple whenever he could spare the time to do it. He agreed. But after that I allowed the matter to slide and the meeting was never held. Now that

my own death is approaching, I want to make sure that this meeting takes place.” The four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our temple founder Zen master Nanmei’s death falls in the eighth month of this year [1750]. I thought to myself, “This autumn would be a good time to fulfill the promise I made to my teacher.” I went to Suruga province and visited Hakuin Rōshi in his chambers, Sendai-kutsu. After we had exchanged the usual greetings, I ventured to broach the matter for which I had come. He adamantly refused. But I repeated my request two or three more times and he finally agreed.

A monk seated at a desk in the corner of the room was working on some papers. “What are those writings?” I asked. The master laughed and said, “Just some words an old priest inadvertently mumbled off in his sleep.” When I took a few pages and read them, I found they were comments he had made on the Zen records of National Master Daitō. The work, filled with master Hakuin’s fresh and original verbal flourishes and superb Zen spirit, evoked strong feelings in the reader’s mind. A brilliant wealth of words and phrases filled my eyes. It was a genuine Dharma treasure. I performed a deep bow before the master and said, “A great work like this should not be kept private. I implore you to allow me to have it printed. Wouldn’t it be an excellent text to use when you come to conduct the lecture meeting at my temple? What could be better than for you to take the lion seat with your hossu and bring immense benefit to sentient beings?”

One of the monks present at the time was indignant. “How dense and imperceptive!” he said with a grave look on his face. “The first patriarch who came from the west transmitted nothing but the mind-seal. What need did he have for words and letters? Much less for having those words carved on wooden blocks and published? Set up a target and people will be sure to loose arrows at it. How can a book such as you propose avoid the world’s

censure? I think that your assessment of master Hakuin is rather feeble.”

“How can you say that!” I exclaimed. “How can you say that! This isn’t a question of words and letters. It involves the mind-seal that has been handed down in a person-to-person transmission directly from the Buddha. Only someone who is unaware of this would take it to be words and letters. . . . Each and every word and phrase of the master’s commentary is like a blazing conflagration, like Vishnu’s invincible arrow. Draw close to any of them, you’re a dead man. Stop to muse over them, you lose your life. . . . There is no way that the significance of such a work can be fathomed merely by a cursory glance, as though you are a bystander, yawning and staring vacantly at it.”

Yūzan’s colophon continues with more exchanges between Yūzan and the monk, after which the monk gets up and leaves in a huff, “shaking his sleeves.” Yūzan says that he had hoped Hakuin would step in and set things straight regarding this argument over words and letters, but Hakuin just closed his eyes and began snoring away, “issuing audible snorts.” “I was taken aback. I didn’t know how to proceed [writes Yūzan], but soon after that the master agreed to my plan, and told me to write a colophon explaining what had happened.”

His source of poisonous oil as limitless as the wide ocean
itself,
He hung up a great lamp and repaid his debt to his old
enemies.
Four centuries ago at the base of its burning wick there
appeared
Phantom blossoms that have tortured students to the
present day.

The four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Zen master Nanmei, founder of Jōei-ji in the village of Ōsaka in Tōtōmi province, fell this autumn, on the second day of the eighth month,

the third year of the Kan'en era [1750]. Yūzan, the present head priest of Jōei-ji, arranged for a printing of the Zen records of Daitō Kokushi, founder of the Daitoku-ji in Kyoto, and he asked me to deliver Zen lectures on it. Today as we celebrate the Buddhas and offer the brotherhood a vegetarian feast, I was asked to offer a stick of incense and utter some words. I am unable to refuse. A guest must accede to his host's requests.

This fragment of fragrant wood that I offer has roots that reach down to the floors of the deepest hells, and branches that stretch up beyond the heaven of no thought and no non-thought. It may not be a famous product like Lu-ling's rice, or Kuan-chou's ginger root, yet it is as wonderful as the eyebrows of Wang-chao or the lips of Yang Kuei-fei. Even before it burns in this censer, its fragrance penetrates throughout the trichilial cosmos with a poisonous scent that burns the skin and flesh and vital organs of the Bodhisattvas.

Zen master Wu-hsueh, founder of Engaku-ji, encountered this fragrant piece of wood unexpectedly while he was studying under Zen master Hsu-t'ang at Ling-yin Monastery. After that Wu-hsueh transmitted it to Kōhō, Kōhō passed it to Gyokuhō, and Gyokuhō passed it to Zen master Nanmei. The Dharma has been transmitted in this way to all the twenty-eight Zen patriarchs of India, and all the six patriarchs of China.

Rustled by an autumn breeze, bamboo leaves glisten in the sun.
Beneath the crescent moon dew flowers sparkle on the pine tree.

.....

His source of poisonous oil . . . the wide ocean itself. Hakuin plays on the name Nanmei, literally "vast southern ocean."

He hung up a great lamp. "He" is Nanmei. "Great lamp" is the literal meaning of the name Daitō (Kokushi). The second verse in the *Kyōun-shū* (*Crazy Cloud Collection*), a collection of Ikkyū Sōjun's Chinese poetry, begins, "He [Daitō] raised up a great Dharma lamp, illuminating the entire world."

He asked me to deliver Zen lectures on it. Hakuin was in fact lecturing on his own recently published *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams*, in which he comments on the words in Daitō's records.

The floors of the deepest hells: The Hell of the Scarlet Lotus and the Hell of the White Lotus, the seventh and eighth of the eight cold Hells (*Hakkan Jigoku*).

The heaven of no thought and no non-thought (hisōhihisōjo) is the fourth and highest of the abodes in the realm of the heaven of no form.

The trichilial cosmos. A concept found in the Mahayana cosmology in which the universe is said to be comprised of three thousand clusters of world-systems, each of which consists of a thousand worlds.

Zen master Wu-hsueh . . . to Zen master Nanmei. The lineage Hakuin gives here is: Hsu-t'ang → Wu-hsueh → Kōhō Kennichi → Gyokuhō Myōkei → Nanmei. Wu-hsueh had studied with Hsu-t'ang after receiving the Dharma transmission from Wu-chun Shih-fan.

88. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT SHAO-LIN'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY

This verse was delivered on the fifth day of the tenth month of 1750 at Jōei-ji (see previous piece). "In the ninth month a large typhoon struck the Hara area" (annotation).

Last month a powerful typhoon ravaged our stretch of the coast,
Shōin-ji's old pine trees stand about forlorn, their limbs torn off.
Bodhidharma's golden bone and marrow is present in all places,

But especially, I think, in these old veterans of the Dharma wars.

.....

Shōin-ji's old pine trees . . . their limbs torn off. “Looking just like Hui-k'o [the Second Chinese Zen Patriarch, who cut off his arm to show Bodhidharma his resolve]” (annotation).

Bodhidharma's golden bone . . . the Dharma wars. “Everywhere, behind the doors, outside the fences, out front and out back too, is all Bodhidharma's golden bone and marrow. But what is especially important are these pine trees. Indeed, they are men of great stature, veterans who have studied Zen long and hard” (annotation).

89. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *RECORD OF HSI-KENG*

These instructions were delivered in Hakuin's sixty-sixth year, when he was visiting Ryōkoku-ji in Akashi, Harima province, on the shore of the Inland Sea, for lectures on the Record of Hsu-t'ang. Here Hakuin substitutes the sobriquet Hsi-keng, a name used by Hsu-t'ang.

IN THE WINTER of the third year of Kan'en [1750], I responded to an invitation from Ryōkoku-ji in the walled castle town of Akashi asking me to deliver lectures on the ten fascicles of Hsi-keng's Zen records. This was like asking a crow to warble like a phoenix, or an earthworm to roar like a dragon. I sat before an audience of men and devas, sweating in my embarrassment like a man roasting on a spit. In hopes of imparting a bit of guidance, I opened my mouth and produced a few burlings — like the noises a shoddy wooden bowl makes when you pour boiling water into it — feeling greater

frustration than a swaybacked old nag trying to emulate a fleet stallion. My consternation grew to an unbearable pitch, making me feel like a gimp-legged mud turtle urging its stumbling feet into a valley of dragons.

I had received my orders directly from the abbots of Yōgen-in and Seiken-ji, yet I lacked any means whatever to repay their kindness. I hope they don't laugh at me, hauling water to sell at the river's edge.

I've found Hsi-keng's verbal complications to be like the fabulous mirror which distinguishes right from wrong, like the fabulous Dragon Spring Sword which cuts down Buddhas and devils alike. Their poisonous mists, which the sea gods have now raised up on the southern shore of the Inland Sea, have caused great anguish throughout the past to fledgling Japanese Zen monks. The crimes they have perpetrated are of such magnitude that the vast earth itself is unable to contain them.

At the start of his Zen study Priest Hsu-t'ang struggled mightily with the story of "Yen-t'ou's Old Sail". He often became incensed at his teacher for offering him too much help. He then succeeded in smashing the foundations of "Su-shan's Memorial Tower" to smithereens. It is the shrimps and clams that puzzle over the idea of small fish swallowing big fish, the mud turtles and tortoises that become distressed on hearing that one coin is the same as two. [Hsu-t'ang went on to become a great Zen teacher, serving as master at ten different temples.]

The noxious vapors rising up from the furious waves that issued from those temples wafted their way down into the very depths, causing mermaids to howl mournfully in the southern seas, causing river gods to hunker down penitently in their watery palaces. They discombobulated even the Dragon Kings, draining Sagara of all his pluck, making Ananda's knees quake uncontrollable.

Most virulent among Hsu-t'ang's teachings is the poison in his "Three Turning Words". Their lethal fumes snarl fiercely up into the farthest reaches of the heavens. When the gigantic whales that rule the sea set their teeth into these impenetrable koans from Hsu-t'ang's Dharma cave, they emit great roars that are as horrendous as those made by *p'u-lao* dragons when they are seized and crushed in the orca's jaws.

Clouds of Confucian students, seventy in all, have gathered beneath Akashi Castle's stone ramparts, each of them deeply venerating the most celebrated Confucian teacher of the day. Five hundred monks in training from around the country have also flocked to Ryōkoku-ji, resolved to swallow up all the waters of the West Lake. They enter the Zen seas and subdue the savage crocodile, making it do their bidding. They stand at the crossroads and hum out verses like "The Sweet Pear Tree."

Alas, I am not like that. I am a minnow, a small fry merely resting his tired old bones in a tiny country puddle. One of those carp that failed and returned from the Dragon Gates with a bruised and battered brow. Now I shamle around the country like a sleephappy mud snail, opening stalls to spout out nonsense, preaching toad Zen to peddle my stinking dried fish.

Here I am, like the proverbial blind turtle that encountered a floating log in the vast ocean, presiding over a great Dharma meeting, twisting the hairs on the turtle's back, holding up my worthless notions before you, gesturing like a fiddler crab with a twig in its claw. The foul odor of a dead fish rotting in a stinking puddle is something not even I am able to stomach.

Fortunately, however, the eight great Naga kings have given me their help. They have transformed the bitter seawater taste of my talks into sweet and beneficial Dharma rain. I sincerely hope it will foster right faith in lay men and lay women and raise once again the authentic Zen style that has fallen into the dust, allowing the rays of the Buddha sun to illuminate this world of the latter day Dharma. I also pray that any merit achieved here will maintain the longevity of the imperial throne, make the nation prosper, keep masters and vassals in a state of harmony and the common people safe and secure, bring tranquility to Buddhist temples so that students can pursue their practice with great vigor, and all, the high and the low alike, will achieve the same age as the venerable sage who sits astride the great turtle.

.....

Like the noises . . . pour boiling water into it is a simile used for someone uttering useless words.

Making me feel like a gimp-legged . . . a valley of dragons. Hakuin plays on the literal meaning of Ryōkoku-ji, “valley of dragons.”

I had received my orders . . . Yōgen-in and Seiken-ji. Hakuin’s Shōin-ji was a subtemple of Seiken-ji, a large temple in nearby Okitsu; Yōgen-in was the subtemple at the Myōshin-ji headquarters monastery to whose lineage both Seiken-ji and Shōin-ji belonged. “Tōgai Oshō of the Yōgen-in subtemple wrote a letter urging Hakuin to accept the invitation from Ryōkoku-ji; Shōkai Oshō of Seiken-ji also encouraged him to comply” (annotation). “Orders from above, so I couldn’t refuse them” (annotation).

Their poisonous mists . . . southern shore of the Inland Sea. “Southern shores,” *nampo*, alludes to Japanese Zen master Nampo Jōmyō, the priest who received Hsu-t’ang’s Dharma transmission in China and established the line of Zen to which Hakuin belonged in Japan.

At the start of his Zen study Priest Hsu-t’ang . . . one coin is the same as two. The story of Hsu-t’ang’s early Zen study and subsequent enlightenment is told in #189, Supplementary Note 3 on pp. 344–45. “Small fish swallowing big fish” is probably a reference to an utterance that Yen-t’ou made about “The Old Sail Not Yet Raised”, the koan that Hsu-t’ang had struggled with. When asked, “What about when the sail is not yet raised?” Yen-t’ou replied, “Small fish swallow large fish” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7). “Small fish” are students with little understanding. For the koan in which “one coin is the same as two,” see #36.

He often became incensed at his teacher for offering him too much help. This puzzling line is literally, “How often did Shao-shih [the name of a carpenter who appears in the *Chuang Tzu*] grow angry about losing eyebrows and beard.” The translation is tentative.

Dragon Kings. Sagara and Ananda are two of the eight Dragon (Naga) Kings (*hachi-dai ryū-ō*), deities who attended the gathering where Shakamuni preached the *Lotus Sutra*. They are regarded as guardian deities of Buddhism.

“Three Turning Words” (san-tengo). Turning words are those that turn the mind to the truth and awaken it to satori. Hsu-t’ang’s “Three Turning Words” appear in a biographical sketch (*gyōjō*) included in the *Record of Hsu-t’ang* (ch. 8):

1. How do you wear a robe fashioned out of empty space before your eyes ever opened?
2. How do you bore through an enclosure you’ve marked off on the ground?
3. How do you raise yourself up onto a needle-sharp peak while entering the ocean and counting the sand?

P’u-lao dragons when . . . in the orca’s jaws. The *p’u-lao* appears in T’ang dynasty literature as a beast like a dragon that lives in mortal fear of the great whales that prey upon it. When a whale attacks them, they emit roars of tremendous force. *P’u-lao* are for that reason depicted on the tops of bells. In Ming dynasty lists of fantastic creatures they are described as being shaped like a dragon, though smaller, and possessed of supernatural strength.

Resolved to swallow up all the waters of the West Lake is an allusion to Ma-tsu Tao-i’s words, “I’ll tell you when you have drunk up all the waters of the West Lake,” given in response to Layman P’ang-yun’s question, “Who is not dependent on the ten thousand things?”

They stand at the crossroads and hum out verses like “The Sweet Pear Tree” is a reference to the poem titled “Kan-t’ang” (“Sweet Pear Tree”) in the *Book of Odes*. It consists of three identical stanzas:

This shade-bestowing pear tree,
Do not hurt it or break one leafy bough;
Beneath it rested the Duke of Chou.

One of those carp that failed and returned from the Dragon Gates. Carp able to swim beyond the Dragon Gate, a three-tiered waterfall in the Yellow River that cuts through the mountains, were said to transform into dragons. They are used as a metaphor for Zen students who achieve final attainment. See also #118.

Like the proverbial blind turtle that encountered a floating log in the vast ocean. In the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha likened the extreme rarity of encountering the sutra to the difficulty of a one-eyed turtle encountering a floating sandalwood log. The turtle yearns to climb onto the log, press his belly into a cool hollow within, and warm his carapace in the sun. But he can rise to the ocean's surface only once every thousand years. The ocean is vast and floating logs are few, not to mention the rarity of a sandalwood log; even if he is fortunate enough to find one, it rarely has a hollow of the right proportions, and the turtle has very bad eyesight.

90. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE FOUNDER OF RYŌKOKU-JI

This verse was delivered in Hakuin's sixty-sixth year, at the same meeting as the previous piece. The name of the founder of Ryōkoku-ji temple is Tensō Genkō (n.d.).

A pack of one hundred horse jowls are assembled here today.

After thirty thousand days, the founder's body is radiant still.

The Zen tradition is alive and kicking in poison dragon gulch,

Once again I will offer the carpenters two coins that equal one.

.....

Horse jowls, sometimes donkey jowls, are said to be physiognomy found in superior Zen students.

Poison dragon gulch renders the temple name Ryōkoku, “Dragon Valley.”

Once again . . . that equal one refers to a passage in the koan “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower” that brought about Hsu-t’ang’s enlightenment (see #36). Temple founder Tensō Genkō is also said to have struggled with this koan.

BOOK TWO

Instructions to the Assembly (*Jishū*)

General Discourses (*Fusetsu*)

Verse Comments on Old Koans (*Juko*)

Examining Old Koans (*Koko*)

Book Two consists of fifty-three pieces. The first twenty-seven are listed as Instructions to the Assembly (Jishū), ten of which are Prose Comments on Koans (Nenkō) and two are Addresses from the High Seat (Jōdō). These are followed by five General Discourses (Fusetsu), twelve Verse Comments on Koans (Juko), and nine Comments on Koans (Koko), a genre in which the remarks focus on errors in comments or capping words others have made on the koans, or on points they have overlooked.

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92. Instructions to the Assembly at the Opening of a Lecture Meeting on the *Four Part Record*
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95. Instructions to the Assembly at Services Commemorating Shao-lin's Death
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140. Untitled [Zen Monk Chu-liang Asks a Question]

141. Untitled [Tan-hsia Eats His Rice]
142. Ch'ang-ch'ing's Three Poisons
143. Tiao-lung Visits Feng Chi-ch'uan

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY (*JISHŪ*) (CONTINUED)

91. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *DIAMOND SUTRA*

“In spring Hakuin went to Bizen province in response to an invitation from Shōrin-ji in Okayama and lectured on Ch’uan-lao’s Comments on the Diamond Sutra” (Chronological Biography, age 67; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217). In a letter sent from Akashi in Harima province in the winter of the previous year to his friend and lay student Watanabe Heizaemon of Hara, Hakuin wrote: “I am in very fine fettle. The meeting here at Ryōkoku-ji in Harima on the Record of Hsi-keng went extremely well. Retainers of the Daimyō even came and took part. You shouldn’t be in the least concerned about me or the trip. . . . From here I go on to Bizen province to conduct another large lecture meeting, this time at Shōrin-ji in the town beneath Okayama Castle. Three or four temple priests will come and they will be on hand to help throughout the lectures. Daimyō Ikeda Tsugumasa’s mother sent messages to me saying how much she hoped I would make the visit, so I had little choice but to accept. It looks like I’ll be there until the end of February. It is all quite exhausting. While I’m here in the western provinces I must also visit the Yōgen-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji in Kyoto [for lectures on the Blue Cliff Record], and respond to a request for lectures at Tōfuku-ji as well. If it was at all possible, I should have liked to decline these invitations. I am determined to return to Shōin-ji” (HOZ6, p. 386).

Dated in the text itself to 1751, these instructions were delivered to the assembly before Hakuin started in on the main lectures. His lecture text was Ch’uan-lao’s Comments on the Diamond Sutra,

consisting of Ch'uan-lao's verse comments and capping phrases on the sutra's words and phrases; see #39.

The Diamond Sutra, Skt. title Vajracchedika Prajnāparamitā Sūtra, has been translated as Diamond-cutting Perfection of Wisdom Sutra as well as simply Diamond Cutter Sutra. The word vajra, meaning both thunderbolt and diamond, is said to describe the sutra's invincible power to cut through ignorance.

HERE I AM at Shōrin-ji in Okayama in the middle of the first month, the fourth year of Kan'en [1751], to deliver lectures on *Chuan-lao's Comments on the Diamond Sutra*. I'm like the sleep-happy toad that clambered up into the palace of the Dragon King, opened his mouth and made loud croaking noises: *gero gero gero*. Or like the blind cat that stumbled into a den of ferocious tigers. Talk about over-extending myself. As if that weren't enough, I now sit here at the opening of this meeting slapping fresh coats of paint on a clod of mud, so shamefaced cold sweat is trickling down my back.

A dazzling adamantine blade, glowing with unbared
majesty,
A daunting frost freezing the livers of the gods and
Buddhas,
So cold the plum won't flower, the oriole won't start to
pipe,
The only sign of spring willow buds swelling along the
river.
Even heroes Lei or Chang could not grip the Diamond
Cutter,
Famed swordsmiths Kan and Mo could never forge its
blade.

The radiance from the precious Diamond Cutter Sword's blade penetrates all things in the universe. It cuts through fabulous gems like Pien Ho's magnificent jade or the Marquis of Sui's priceless night-shining pearl as though they were ripe melons. A touch from its blade could melt the edges of the celebrated Tai-a or Lung-ch'uan swords like frost in a warm sun. Shakamuni kept polishing this sword of wisdom for infinite kalpas. At Shravasti the fields were scattered

with skulls of the dead. His disciple Shariputra tempered the blade over many lives. In the monastery gardens at Jetavana, blood flowed out in billowing waves.

How could Kumarajiva hope to translate the Diamond Cutter's blue frost and purple bolts of thunder? How could Li-tan attach blind comments to this incomparable blade? Prince Chao-ming broke the sutra up into thirty-two sections. Chan-hui Ta-shih raised its fortunes by ascending the teaching seat and shaking the desk. Don't say Hui-neng was an illiterate barbarian from the south, for it is he who honed the Diamond Cutter to an even keener razor edge. It is said that before Ch'uan-lao entered the priesthood he served in a post that required him to wear a sword and arm himself with other weapons as well. Hence many of the verses in his commentary on the sutra are dull swords that cut straight to the bone.

The Diamond Cutter was the holeless flute that Bodhidharma held up and transmitted at Shao-lin. As a feckless teacher and rank beginner, I am shamefaced to come before you like this trying to sell you a bill of goods by attempting to play it. My miserable tunes might throw the great underlying harmony into disorder. I'll be like the man who notched the side of a boat to mark the spot where his sword fell in the water; or the man who went about flourishing his lance and cut his hand; or the man who tried to carry out a difficult task with a hopelessly dull blade. I'll bet the brows of Dragon Kings guarding the Dharma throughout the universe will run with sweat as they see me holding up the uglinesses of my broken-down house for the world to see.

How wonderful it is that even before the Vajra blade has left its scabbard the gods Bonten and Taishakuten are pricking up their ears to catch its meaning and all the obstacles created by past karma are lying severed on the ground. I sincerely hope that the Dharma meeting we hold here will prompt patriarchal teachers in both India and China to protect this castle town of Okayama from harm and evil, and arouse the four Bodhisattvas and eight Vajra deities to guard Shōrin-ji's Dharma grottoes until the end of time. Those with the capacity to obtain and use this sword are the wisest sages, the Buddha-patriarchs of Zen. Those unable to obtain it will remain ordinary and unenlightened, destined to fall into an animal existence.

As my own small personal token to celebrate this Dharma meeting, I tapped my sword guard and composed this short piece in praise of this fabulous old sword of the Buddha-patriarchs.

.....

Slapping fresh coats of paint on a clod of mud. Saying or doing something foolish.

A dazzling adamantine blade (kongō ōbō[ken]) is a metaphor for the Diamond Cutter sword of *prajna* wisdom preached in the sutra. The word “frost” (*shimo*) in the next line describes a bright, keen blade.

Heroes Lei or Chang. Chang Hua (232–300) was an official during the Western Chin dynasty. Lei Huan was an astrologer that Chang Hua consulted about a purple aura that had been appearing in the skies. Huan told him that it was produced from the essence of a magic sword buried somewhere near the city of Fen-ch’eng. When Lei Huan was sent to that city to serve as magistrate, he unearthed from beneath the state prison a stone chest containing two gleaming swords, one engraved with the name “Dragon Spring” (*Lung-ch’uan*) and the other with the name “Grand Bank” (*Tai-a*). He gave one to Chang Hua and kept the other for himself. After they died, the two swords flew into a nearby lake and transformed into dragons (*Annals of the Chin State; Chin Shu*, ch. 35).

Famed swordsmiths Kan and Mo. The celebrated swordsmith Kan Chiang forged two fabulous weapons, naming one “Kan Chiang” after himself, and the other “Mo Yeh” after his wife, who had helped him make the swords.

Pien Ho’s magnificent jade. See footnote to #385 on p. 580 in Book Nine.

The Marquis of Sui’s priceless night-shining pearl. The story of a miraculous pearl that could illuminate the darkness appears in the *T’ai-p’ing Kuang-chi (Extensive Records of the T’ai-p’ing Era)*, ch. 494.

Kumarajiva was a monk from Central Asia known for his translations of Sanskrit Buddhist texts; he is thought to be the first one to translate the *Diamond Sutra* into Chinese.

Li-tan is Li-tan Tsung-le (1318–91), a Yuan dynasty Zen teacher who wrote a commentary on the *Diamond Sutra* entitled *Chin-kang po-jo po-lo-mi ching chu-chieh*.

Prince Chao-ming (501–31) is the posthumous title of Crown Prince Hsiao-t'ung, the son of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty. He divided the *Diamond Sutra* into thirty-two sections and gave each a title, a format followed in later Chinese commentaries on the sutra. He also compiled the great *Wen Hsuan* anthology of Chinese poetry and literature.

Chan-hui Ta-shih (497–569) is the religious name of Fu (family name) Ta-shih, a celebrated lay teacher of early Chinese Buddhism. “Emperor Wu of the Liang asked Chan-hui to expound the *Diamond Sutra*. Chan-hui assumed the teaching seat, shook the desk once and then got down from the seat. He asked the dumbfounded emperor, ‘Do you understand?’ ‘No, I don’t,’ he replied. ‘My exposition of the sutra is over,’ said Chan-hui” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 2; also *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 67).

Don’t say Hui-neng . . . to an even keener razor edge. According to the biography of Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng in the *Platform Sutra*, when Hui-neng was a young man carrying some firewood to sell in the marketplace, he experienced an awakening on hearing someone recite the *Diamond Sutra*. “Illiterate barbarian” (the text has “illiterate barbarian monkey”) was a derogatory term for aboriginal natives from the uncivilized southern area of the country.

It is said that before Ch’uan-lao entered the priesthood . . . follows the account of Ch’uan-lao’s life in the Compendium of the Five Lamps, ch. 12.

The holeless flute that Bodhidharma held up and transmitted at Shao-lin. A metaphor for Bodhidharma’s Zen.

Trying to sell you a bill of goods is an allusion to the story of the Mount Tan phoenix. It is told in the note attached to Hakuin’s commentary on the *Heart Sutra* in Book Ten, #391 (see the note on “The Deep Wisdom *Paramita*,” on p. 600).

Throw the great underlying harmony into disorder is based on a passage in the *Book of Rites*: “The melodies played in the

principalities of Cheng and Wei were disordering to the social harmony” (*Li Chi* XVII 1.15).

The four Bodhisattvas and eight Vajra deities protect all who recite the *Diamond Sutra*. These deities were not found in the original Sanskrit text; they are added in Kumarajiva’s Chinese translation of the sutra.

92. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *FOUR PART RECORD*

The Four Part Record (Shibu-roku) is a compilation, published in Japan, made up of four short Chinese works: Verses on Belief in Mind (Hsin-hsin-ming), Verses on Realizing the Way (Cheng-tao ke), The Ten Ox-herding Pictures (Shih-niu t'u), and The Principles of Zazen (Tso-ch'an i).

This verse dates from 1751, Hakuin's sixty-seventh year. He delivered it while on a teaching trip to western Honshu (Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217), prior to a lecture meeting on the Four Part Record he conducted at Hōfuku-ji in Iyama, Bizen province. He spent three weeks at Hōfuku-ji, the home temple of his student Daikyū Ebō (1715–74), who later served as head priest of Hōfuku-ji and became one of Hakuin's most important Dharma heirs.

The Senjaku ("Thousand-Foot-Deep") Well in the opening line is located within Hōfuku-ji's precincts.

The springs of the Senjaku Well are infused with deadly
poison,
Spewing cold fumes, striking pilgrims down with ruthless
force,
Shriveling the guts of Buddhas or devils before they even
drink.
Any of you disciples here able to make these springs your
own?

.....

Any of you disciples . . . your own? Hakuin uses the word *shibu-shu* for “disciples,” meaning the four kinds of Buddhist disciple — monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen — suggesting that they all attended this meeting.

93. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA’S BIRTHDAY

At the kanbutsu-e ceremony celebrating the Buddha’s birthday, held annually on the eighth day of the fourth month, a statue of Buddha decorated with flowers is set out and worshippers pour ladles of scented water over it. The statue depicts him as a young child, standing with one finger pointing upward and one pointing downward, in the act of speaking the words: “Heaven above, earth below, I alone am the honored one.”

He points one finger to heaven and one finger down to earth,
Clearly a case of rubbing his eyes to create flowers in the air.
Monks have decorated the hall with flowers and green plants,
The cook took his mattock and went to dig up bamboo shoots.

.....

He points one finger . . . flowers in the air. Muchaku Dōchū reports that after surveying the sutras he found “references to the Buddha pointing at the heavens with his right hand and references to him merely lifting up his hand, but no mention of him pointing his left hand down to the earth” (*Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 935). But a dictionary compiled by the T’ang priest Hui-lin states: “When the Tathagata attained true awakening he was seated upon a seat of *kusha* [Jap.

kisshō] grasses with his left hand pointed down at the earth in the mudra that signifies overcoming Mara” (*Hui-lin’s Lexicon; Hui-lin yin-i*).

“It was quite inappropriate of him to point up at the sky and down at the earth. A beggarly stunt. Seriously deluded. Something like that wouldn’t happen here at my Shoin-ji” (annotation).

Flowers in the air (kūge). Delusory appearances seen upon rubbing the eyes.

94. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD*

Annotations provide the background for this piece: “The master, responding to a request from Daijō-ji in Ihara, finished up lectures on the Blue Cliff Record he had begun earlier that year in Kyoto at the Yōgen-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji. The meeting at Daijō-ji was held in response to the dying request of head priest Nanryū Chiban, an old acquaintance of the master. . . . Just before he died Nanryū called Shibata Gonzaemon and Yamanashi Heishirō, prominent citizens of Ihara, to his bedside and asked them to donate the funds to cover the expense of the meeting.” See Colophon to Supplement One on p. 674 for more on Shibata Gonzaemon; see #405, pp. 655–6, and Beating the Cloth Drum, pp. 62–3, for more on Yamanashi Heishirō. Daijō-ji was a Rinzai temple in Ihara village, western Suruga province, near the city of Shimizu.

An old southern dragon hidden in the void’s abyssal murk
Has asked an ailing lizard to produce a little wind and
rain.

To my chagrin, I lack the strength to alleviate this drought,
Icy clouds will not disperse their vapors on the spirit
peaks.

.....

An old southern dragon. Nanryū, the name of the head priest at Daijō-ji, means “southern dragon.”

An ailing lizard. “Lizard” translates Hakuin’s Chinese character for a mythical beast named *chiao*, described in traditional sources as a four-legged snake-like dragon.

Icy clouds . . . the spirit peaks. This last line of the verse is evidently modeled on a line in the well-known poem “Four Seasons”, long attributed to Tao Yuan-ming but now considered a forgery: “In summer, numerous clouds form around the spirit [strangely formed] peaks.”

95. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING SHAO-LIN’S DEATH

This, like the previous piece, was delivered during the Daijō-ji lecture meeting in Ihara village. Shao-lin is Bodhidharma.

A mortal enemy of all twenty-four lines of Japanese Zen,
A whirlwind skipping west, a million leagues at a bound.
Today his tunes are less heeded than dirt beneath your
feet,
In the temples sick monkeys are shackled in golden
fettters.

.....

All twenty-four lines of Japanese Zen refers to all the transmissions of Chinese Zen to Japan.

A whirlwind . . . at a bound. “We as followers are pledged to bore through to Daruma and his Dharma truth, but it moves like the whirlwind, millions of leagues at a stride, altogether impossible to grasp” (annotation).

In the temples . . . in golden fetters. The “golden fetters” are the shackles of satori or enlightenment. “A sick monkey is someone still attached to the Dharma” (annotation). The attachment is the “sickness.”

96. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *RECORD OF BUKKŌ*

These lectures were delivered in 1752, Hakuin’s sixty-eighth year, at Kiichi-ji, a Rinzai temple near the village of Matsuzaki on the lower Izu peninsula, and were attended by three hundred people (Chronological Biography). Kiichi-ji was founded in the Kamakura period by the eminent Yuan priest I-shan I-ning (1247–1317; see #174, p. 284). Five pieces included in Poison Blossoms (#96 thru #100) were delivered at this meeting. Hakuin’s lecture text, the Record of Bukkō, is described in #11 on pp. 33–4.

Each word a tangled patch of thorn snarling upward to the
skies,
Transmitting old traditions formed among the hills at
Tung-shan.
There is not a single syllable you could fasten any
comment on,
Prick up your ears to hear those words, your eyes go
deaf as well.

National Master Bukkō Enman Jōshō, a Dharma heir of Wu-chun Shih-fan of China and the father of National Master Bukkoku of

Japan, is a Zen hero who was born in Yin province of Ming-chou. At his birth, an auspicious white light illuminated the room. The outstanding progeny of his father Hsu Po-chi, the young infant at his first birthday celebration selected a sutra from the articles on a desk of offerings and broke into a smile. Before he was born, the Bodhisattva Kannon, dressed in white robes, appeared in a dream to his mother and told her that she would bear a fine son. When the child was fifteen, he visited the priest Pei-chien, and in time became one of his most cherished disciples.

Inside the chambers at Dragon Pool he eradicated the roots that for many kalpas had kept him attached to samsaric existence. Later, in the hermitage on Eagle Peak he had a realization that totally eclipsed all the satoris and understandings he had previously achieved. Cracking the secret ciphers of Eastern Mountain, he experienced what Bodhidharma had traveled from India to transmit: direct pointing to the mind of man. In driving Ch'uan Kuai-shih and his pernicious Zen teachings from the Mount Ching monastery, he showed an emperor's greatness of spirit. He accepted an invitation from Regent Hōjō Tokimune that he received while in the chambers of Chen-ju temple in T'ai-chou and came to our country, devoting his life to Dharma teaching here.

Before he left China he had a dream in which a deity appeared to him and said, "Come to our country." A golden dragon entered the deity's sleeve, and a flock of doves surrounded him. On his arrival in Japan, when the Engaku-ji was built for him in Kamakura, it is said a herd of white deer appeared and listened to the sermon he delivered at the opening ceremony. When he was about to die, he told his students, "My relics [*sharira*] will contain all heaven and earth." Twenty-four different lines of Zen were introduced into our country from China. The most outstanding among them were the ninth and eleventh transmissions — the schools founded by National Masters Bukkō and Daiō.

.....

Tung-shan. See the sixth note below on "cracking the secret ciphers of Eastern Mountain."

National Master Bukkoku is Kōhō Kennichi (d. 1314), the teacher of Musō Soseki.

The priest Pei-chien. The biographical sketch of Bukkō appended to his *Records* has him receiving the tonsure from Pei-chien Chu-chien at Ching-tz'u temple in Lin-an fu (Hang-chou).

Dragon Pool (Lung-yuan) is the name of the abbot's quarters at the Wan-shou temple on Mount Ching, where Bukkō studied under Wu-chun Shih-fan.

Eagle Peak (Chiu-feng) is the name of the hermitage Hsu-t'ang was using when Wu-hsueh studied with him. "He was twenty-seven when he encountered Hsu-t'ang and attained the samadhi that enabled him to use words and speech with total freedom. I [Hakuin] too achieved that samadhi when I heard the sound of a cricket at the age of forty-two" (annotation).

Cracking the secret ciphers of Eastern Mountain. Tung-shan, "Eastern Mountain", refers to Wu-tsu Fa-yen (1024–1104), who called himself "the fellow who lives in the foothills to the left of Tung-shan," and to the style of Zen taught in his lineage. Hakuin characterizes the style elsewhere in *Poison Blossoms* as "constantly striving forward [by working on koans in post-satori training]" (see the sixth note to #71 on "the foothills to the left of Eastern Mountain," p. 90).

In driving Ch'uan Kuai-shih . . . from the Mount Ching monastery refers to a story in the *Record of Bukkō* about a monk named Ch'uan Kuai-shih who resided at the Mount Ching monastery complex at the same time as Wu-hsueh. Ch'uan's teachings, described as consisting of doing zazen and repeating the word "Wu" (Nothing) over and over (reminiscent of the "sterile, dead-sitting, do-nothing Zen" Hakuin attacks throughout his works), had apparently spread throughout the Mount Ching monastery complex. Wu-hsueh refuted them, driving Ch'uan and his cohorts from the monastery (*Record of Bukkō*, ch. 9):

The third time Wu-hsueh went to reside at the Mount Ching monastery, a man named Senior Monk Ch'uan from Fu-chou [his sobriquet was Kuai-shih] was living

there. Ch'uan taught a strict form of Zen that focused exclusively on zazen. He vehemently denounced Hsin-yueh Shih-hsi [d. 1255], the head of the Wan-shou monastery at the time. Most of the seven hundred monks and two hundred other students who resided there had been won over to Ch'uan's teachings, and in sermons he delivered to the assembled monks [*fusetsu*] in the temple Ch'uan espoused his confused teachings with wild and boastful claims. At the Han-hui t'ing Pavilion on Mount Ching, he took a brush and inscribed the large Chinese character "Wu" [Nothing]. Over one hundred monks who followed his teaching were there, some of them standing, some sitting, some moving about. They began to leap over the railings of the pavilion, shouting choruses of "Wu! Wu!" They were like mediums suddenly possessed by a heavenly spirit, their eyes rolling up. Then they collapsed to the ground unconscious. Later when they returned to the training hall, they resumed their choruses of "Wu, Wu" once again, keeping at it throughout the night. Wu-hsueh viewed them and their goings-on with pity. One band of ignorant priests who had been bamboozled by these cohorts of Mara also went through the temple every day shouting out, "Wu!" "Wu!" "Wu!" Even old men who came to bring loads of firewood to the temple would join the chanting. Head Priest Shih-hsi, although apprehensive that the conflagration these pernicious gangs had ignited would spread further, made a point of doing nothing to stop them.

Wu-hsueh went to the P'o-lo Hermitage on the southern slopes of Mount Ching and talked things over with the incumbent, Priest Fang-an. Fang-an said, "My own pilgrimage lasted for fifty years. I continued my practice living here as a temple priest. But I've never seen anything like this — gangs of pernicious heretics ruining the lives of young men and women who have left their homes and families to pursue the Way. What can be done about them?" "At the moment these people are

enjoying great success,” replied Wu-hsueh. “I don’t think we should try to stop them yet. Let’s wait a while.” Over the next several months a score or more of the group fell ill, and some of them died. It gradually began to dawn on senior priests in the monastery that they had been mistaken. Wu-hsueh discussed the matter with three of these men, but they were unable to suggest any way to remedy the situation. “Just lend me your help,” Wu-hsueh said, “I will crush these henchmen of Mara.” They all agreed to his request.

Wu-hsueh paid a visit to Senior Monk Ch’uan and asked him for advice about continuing his practice. “You are a priest of high standing in our school,” said Ch’uan. “We both reside in the same monastery. Each of us is convinced of the efficacy of his own way of practice. I don’t believe either of us needs to seek instruction from the other.” Wu-hsueh said, “As I have not yet clarified the great matter, I have come here in hopes that you would give me the benefit of your advice.” Ch’uan, seeing that Wu-hsueh seemed genuine in his desire to receive instruction, felt like a tiger that had just relieved itself of a great load of shit. Now confident that nothing now stood in his way, he told his followers, “If you introspect this character ‘Wu,’ when you die and your body is consumed in the flames, your eyeballs will remain untouched.”

Visiting him again, Wu-hsueh asked, “The other day at Han-hui t’ing Pavilion, all the brothers were chanting ‘Wu, Wu, Wu.’ Senior Monk Ch’uan, when you die and your body is consumed in the flames, how many pairs of eyeballs will you collect?” Ch’uan didn’t know what to say. Wu-hsueh then declared, “Chao-chou said ‘*Wu*’ (Negation) but he also said ‘*Yu*’ (Affirmation). *SEE!!!* If you focus your practice on ‘Yu,’ your nostrils will remain unconsumed in the funeral pyre.” Ch’uan looked scared and confused. Wu-hsueh burst into laughter and left. Having Ch’uan’s own special concern firmly in his grasp, Wu-hsueh now went to head priest Shih-hsi, explained

what had transpired, and said. “On the first day of the meeting, when you ascend to the teaching seat to lecture, I’ll have ten questions ready to direct to Senior Monk Ch’uan. If he can answer them, fine. If he can’t answer them satisfactorily, I want you to have the big drum struck and order him expelled from the temple.” Ch’uan, learning of the plan, fled the temple in the middle of the night together with eight or nine of his fellow monks, thus saving the lives of a great many young monks. While working on Chao-chou’s “A Dog Does Not Have the Buddha-nature”, the devil Mara entered into their vitals, driving them berserk. . . . It is ridiculous. Truly ridiculous.

Before he left China . . . at the opening ceremony. The two stories — of the dream and the white deer — are told in #11 on pp. 33–4 and p. 35, fourth note, respectively.

97. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BUKKŌ’S DEATH

This piece was delivered at the Kiichi-ji meeting described in the previous headnote.

IN AUTUMN OF the second year of Hōreki [1752] I acceded to a request from the master of Kiichi-ji in southern Izu and delivered lectures on the *Record of Bukkō*. The anniversary of the National Master’s death, the third day of the ninth month, fell during the meeting. A vegetarian meal was prepared thanks to the efforts of priests Tōzan Tan and Senrin Kin and offered to the assembly. Everyone was delighted with the proceedings. They felt as though they had been transported to Vimalakirti’s Pure Land of Accumulated Fragrance.

One clumsy old grubber got especially worked up, grabbing a dull old sword and swirling it around like he was a master swordsman.

Onlookers were worried he might hurt himself. That same clumsy oaf now offers a clumsy verse.

At opening ceremonies white-haired deer came to hear
him teach,
At the tip of each hair were blossoming a million poison
flowers.
I will be holding up a few of those blossoms on this
Dharma hill.
Will their lethal venom make any student here give up the
ghost?

.....

The master of Kiichi-ji. The head priest at the time was Shundō Ichimin (d. 1798).

Priests Tōzan Tan and Senrin Kin. An annotation identifies them as head priests of Engaku-ji subtemples Butsunichi-an and Kigen-an, respectively. Many temples in the Izu area were, and still are, affiliated to the large Kamakura monasteries.

Pure Land of Accumulated Fragrance. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, chapter 10, entitled “Accumulated Fragrance,” Subhuti asks Vimalakirti what the assembled Bodhisattvas are going to eat for the noon meal. Vimalakirti, entering samadhi, uses his transcendental powers to show the assembly a wonderful pure land called Many Fragrances inhabited only by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, where the aroma of the food “wafts to immeasurable lands in the ten directions” (*The Vimalakirti Sutra*, p. 112).

Onlookers were worried he might hurt himself. An allusion to the *Tao te-ching*, 74: “It is like a man who wields a chisel in place of a master carpenter. He will invariably gouge his hands.”

At opening ceremonies . . . hear him teach. The story of the white deer that appeared when Bukkō preached at ceremonies opening the temple was alluded to in the previous piece, #96 (see p. 125), and is told in the fourth note to #11 on p. 35.

At the tip . . . poison flowers. The line alludes to a passage in the *Flower Garland Sutra*, “from a tip of the hair of the golden lion a hundred million hairs appear,” which an earlier annotation (#17, page 39) explained as referring to Shakamuni Buddha, from whose satori hundreds of millions of similar satoris will appear. “I yanked out all those hairs. Even the Buddha-patriarchs keeled over into unconsciousness when they saw that. Have any of you in this room lost consciousness yet? When you do, you’ll see master Bukkō face to face” (annotation).

I will be holding . . . Dharma hill is an allusion to Kiichi-ji’s “mountain name,” Manpō-zan, literally “hill of ten thousand Dharmas.” “Holding up a blossom” alludes to the story of the Buddha holding up a lotus blossom before the assembly; his disciple Mahakashapa alone grasped his meaning, expressing his understanding with a smile.

98. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF SHAO-LIN’S DEATH

This verse, dated the fifth day of the tenth month, 1752, was also read at the Kiichi-ji meeting.

I’ve lectured now on three occasions these past three months,
Returning the teachings at three temples to a single mountain.
Yesterday we awaited an old-timer who blew in from the west,
Today I’m going to turn five hundred of you back to the source.

.....

Returning the teachings . . . to a single mountain. The *Record of Bukkō* is divided into three parts: the first part comprises teachings he gave at Chen-ju temple in China before coming to Japan; the second and third parts are teachings he gave after coming to Japan at Kenchō-ji and Engaku-ji in Kamakura, respectively. “Returning the teachings . . . to a single mountain” plays on the temple name Kiichi-ji, literally “return to the one” temple, as well as to I-shan (“one mountain”) I-ning, the name of the priest who founded the temple.

Yesterday we awaited . . . to the source. “Yesterday at Bodhidharma’s memorial, we waited for the priest who came to China from India. Today I sent five hundred monks out on their begging rounds” (annotation).

99. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT A SUIRIKU CEREMONY SPONSORED BY MR. YODA

At the Suiriku ceremony (Suiriku-e), food and drink is offered for the repose of the dead and for the liberation of all beings, in the water (sui) and on land (riku), who suffer in the realms of transmigration, especially those trapped in the realm of hungry ghosts (gaki).

This ceremony was apparently conducted at Gyokurin-ji in Matsuzaki village, on the western coast of the Izu peninsula, in 1752. Hakuin, now sixty-seven, traveled to Izu to deliver lectures at Kiichi-ji, just east of Matsuzaki. The sponsor of the lecture meeting, Yoda Takanaga (also Sajiemon), head of one of Izu’s wealthiest and most important families, lived in Matsuzaki; Gyokurin-ji had been built as their family temple. Important patrons of Kiichi-ji, the Yodas also helped Hakuin on more than one occasion in his building and publishing projects. Another piece Hakuin wrote some twenty years earlier (in 1734) praises Takanaga for a donation he made that enabled a new sutra repository to be constructed at Kiichi-ji (see #174, pp. 283–8). The closeness of Hakuin’s association with the Yoda family is further seen in a long letter he wrote Takanaga in

1755 attempting to resolve a family dispute; the letter is translated in Beating the Cloth Drum, pp. 99–108.

ON THE FIFTH day of the tenth month of the Hōreki era [1752], a *Suiriku* ceremony was held under the sponsorship of Yoda Sajiemon, the chief patron of Kiichi-ji. Offerings were made to Kannon Bodhisattva, the central image enshrined at the temple, and to Jizō Bodhisattva, and a vegetarian feast was provided for five hundred people who had gathered for the ceremony. Mr. Yoda requested that a memorial service be conducted for the late Tengan Zenkei Zogen, former head priest at Gyokurin-ji, now dwelling in the great tranquility of eternal samadhi, to benefit him in his final attainment of wisdom. Mr. Yoda asked me to offer a pinch of incense and add a few appropriate words. As the purpose was a truly commendable one, I made the following verse:

The three worlds are Shakamuni's exquisite golden form,
The six ways of karmic rebirth are his body in its entirety.
Here there's no birth and death, there's no Nirvana either,
There's no dislike of one thing, no hankering for another.

Tengan Zenkei Zogen, your aspiration was as deep as the ocean, your self-nature as vast and clear as the heavens above. The merit that accrues to you from this meeting and vegetarian feast should enable you to awaken promptly from your thirty-year dream. The merit from the sutras and *dharani* recited here should enable you to eliminate the fundamental ground of samsaric delusion and the twelve links that create the condition of samsaric suffering. You will then dwell in the groves of Zen, enjoying the Dharma's joyful compensations, sporting freely and endlessly in the ocean of the Bodhisattvas' vow; you will fully attain the three Buddha-bodies and Four Wisdoms, raising up the great Dharma standard of the Buddhas and patriarchs and delivering beings of every kind in all the realms of existence.

The ceremony we hold today is the result of the deeply rooted faith that donor Yoda has acquired over the course of many lives. I have no doubt whatever that the Bodhisattvas Kannon and Jizō will look with favor upon Mr. Yoda's sincere aspiration and bestow their

protection not only on his own family but on the families, children, and grandchildren of others as well, guarding them from illness far into the future and granting them the blessing of long and fortunate lives.

.....

A memorial service . . . Tengan Zenkei Zogen, former head priest at Gyokurin-ji. Nothing is known about Tengan Zenkei, who according to this had died thirty years before. The suffix Zogen, literally “Senior Priest” or “First Monk,” is commonly used in posthumous names.

100. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE FOUNDER OF KIICHI-JI

This piece in honor of the founder of the Kiichi-ji temple is another teaching that Hakuin delivered during his sojourn at Kiichi-ji in Izu in 1752. Temple founder I-shan I-ning (1247–1317) was sent to Japan in 1299 as an emissary from his native China, which was then under Mongol rule. The Japanese Bakufu originally suspected him of being a spy and interned him at Shūzen-ji on the remote Izu peninsula. Hōjō Sadatoki, the regent at the time, finally recognized I-shan’s bona fides as a Rinzai priest and became his follower, inviting him to head the Kenchō-ji, Engaku-ji, and Jōchi-ji Zen monasteries in Kamakura, as well as Nanzen-ji in Kyoto. Kiichi-ji is one of the temples that I-shan founded.

Taking ship in his native China he crossed over to our shores,
A long and treacherous journey in the face of unknown perils.

Little did he dream he'd be detained here in southernmost
Izu,
Residing in Kiichi-ji and gathering fuel among its isolated
hills.

I-shan I-ning, founder of this temple, was a stalwart hero of the Zen forests. He received the honorific title Miao-tz'u Hung-chi Ta-shih in China from the Yuan emperor, and the posthumous National Master title Issan Kokushi from the Japanese emperor. He intimidated monks at the Kenchō-ji and Engaku-ji training halls, terrorizing them with his venomous utterances and confounding words.

I now find myself lecturing and dispensing ignorant comments and blind opinions on the golden sayings recorded in the *Record of Bukkō*. Bukkō, a true golden phoenix, will roost for a spell in I-shan's dragon den, and there the words from his records will swoop down and assault students with the ruthlessness of a half-starved eagle plummeting to earth and grabbing a blind fox.

Today, the twenty-fifth of the tenth month, on the anniversary of the death of temple founder I-shan, in accordance with instructions I have received, I offer incense and present a religious verse.

Hah! This fragrant piece of wood began as a seed that was dropped in a place untouched by either light or shade. There, beyond the ken of gods or demons, buds appeared, roots worked their way down into the very floors of Emma's land of the dead, and branches spread up and out, interpenetrating all the meshes of Indra's universal net.

My hand now reaches out, breaks off a piece of fragrant incense and places it inside the flameless censer to repay the immense debt I owe my ancient enemy I-shan. Its lingering perfume will fight its way up into Granny Chang's right nostril, and push its way down into Mother Li's left ear. Temple founder I-shan, sitting tranquilly within the great samadhi, do you assent to this, or not?

I-shan replies after a short pause, *I am in total accord, yet this affirmation is non-affirmation.*

Why is that?

Yu Jang ate charcoal and hid under a bridge.

Little fish breed inside Fan Tan's cauldron.

And the proof?

A ruler who ruins his country only then appeals to the gods;

A ruler whose country prospers always listens to the people.

.....

The *Record of Bukkō*, already discussed in #11, #96, and #97, is the Zen records of the Chinese priest Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan, also known in Japan by the honorific title National Master Bukkō which he received from the Japanese emperor. These records were published in Japan, hence the use of the Japanese title. They went through a number of printings in the Muromachi period, and again in the 17th century, and had recently been republished by Gekkei-ji, a Zen temple in Edo. A letter Hakuin wrote ordering a copy of this edition is translated below in #186, p. 321.

Bukkō, a true golden phoenix . . . in I-shan's dragon den. "The *Record of Bukkō* is like a golden phoenix, Kiichi-ji like a celestial dragon's den, both book and temple are splendid" (annotation). Hakuin's lectures brought Bukkō's records into the temple I-shan founded.

Words from his records . . . a blind fox. The blind fox is probably Hakuin, being taken in by Bukkō's words.

Today, the twenty-fifth of the tenth month. The anniversary of I-shan's death fell on twenty-fourth day of the tenth month; this address was delivered one day later, on the twenty-fifth.

Indra's universal net symbolizes the infinite variety of interrelations and inclusiveness of all things in the universe.

Its lingering perfume . . . left ear. "It pushes its way up the noses of totally ignorant old men and women sitting here in this room and makes them giddy; it forces its way up their ears too, upsetting them no end" (annotation). "Granny Chang" and "Mother Li" are generic names.

I-shan replies after a short pause, I am in total accord, yet this affirmation is non-affirmation. “This pause, although rarely understood, falls like a stinging blow from a tallow tree staff” (annotation). “Yet affirmation is non-affirmation”: *ikkō ichi fukō*. The rest of the piece is framed as a dialogue between I-shan and Hakuin.

Yu Jang. “The great matter of your last hours is something you must prepare for in advance, well before the time comes” (annotation). Yu Jang, a native of the Chin state and vassal of Prince Chih, vowed revenge when Prince Hsing of Chao killed Prince Chih and used his lacquered skull as a goblet. Gaining entrance to Prince Hsing’s palace, Yu Jang was apprehended, but the prince forgave him. Then, swallowing charcoal and daubing his body with lacquer, he disguised himself as a beggar and lay in wait in the marketplace for Prince Hsing to pass. When this attempt to avenge his master was also thwarted, he begged Prince Hsing to let him ease his conscience by running his dagger through the prince’s coat. His request allowed, Yu Jang ran his dagger through the coat and then used the weapon to end his own life (*Records of the Grand Historian*, ch. 86). The full story is told in #391, p. 620.

Fan Tan (d. 185). Although living in extreme poverty, Fan Tan’s face never betrayed any sign of worry. After his mother’s illness prevented him from accepting a high position in the government, Fan Tan put his wife and children in a pushcart to move about, slept under trees or in the rudest shelters, and eked out a meager existence as a fortune-teller. When he was finally able to acquire a small dwelling, he continued to live on the poorest fare. People made up a song: “Fan Tan’s rice bin is filled with dust; Fish breed in Fan Tan’s cauldron,” i.e., he was so poor his larder was always empty and his cauldron never used (*Book of the Later Han*, ch. 81).

A ruler who ruins his country . . . listens to the people. This short verse is based on a passage in *Tso’s Narrative*: “Interested only in acquiring his neighbors’ lands, a foolish ruler brings his country to ruin by oppressing the common people, and only then does he turn to the gods for help. A wise ruler makes his country flourish because of his constant belief in the gods and his compassionate regard for the common people.”

“It is a wise saying, ‘Those who forget their origins end up badly.’ To consider the end of your life is to consider your origins. No matter how much you teach goodness to a person who lacks any aspiration to do good, he will not listen and your advice will be meaningless. People of the present day are like that. As they lack faith or belief at ordinary times, when the end approaches they can do nothing but bewail their past mistakes. Waiting until you are in desperate straits before imploring the gods for help won’t do you any good. A person of constant faith dies without regret when the time comes” (annotation).

101. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

This verse, given in the twelfth month during the intensive period of meditation that commemorates the awakening of full enlightenment that the Buddha is said to have experienced while practicing in the great Snowy Mountains (the Himalayas), is otherwise undated.

Craggy peaks of the Snowy Mountains loom up before
him,
In a landscape frozen hard and solid, freed of all
defilement,
The golden Indian’s mind still hasn’t altogether
succumbed,
Any talk of leaving is on a par with a drunkard’s final
drink.

.....

Lines 1–2: “The great Snowy Mountains in Shakamuni’s [the golden Indian’s] belly pierce right through the abode of non-thought [the fourth and highest of the four abodes in the realm of nonform, where only the barest traces of discriminative thought remain]” (annotation).

Lines 3–4: “His mind is not completely dead, his attainment still not fully mature, so he shouldn’t be talking about leaving the mountains. Since he’s not ready to return to the world just yet, rattling on about it is like a drunk taking just one more cup — something best avoided” (annotation).

102. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *RECORD OF WU-TSU*

Hakuin delivered these instructions at Hōun-ji, a Rinzai temple in Suruga province, in the spring of 1753. The Record of Wu-tsu contains the sayings and doings of Wu-tsu Fa-yen (1024–1104) of the Yang-ch’i line of Lin-chi Zen.

Hakuin refers to this meeting in a letter to Tomisato Ken’ei, an attendant of Daimyō Ikeda Tsugumasa (1702–76), the Lord of Okayama Castle, which he quotes at the beginning of his work Spearflowers. Tsugumasa, accompanied by Tomisato, stopped over at Hōun-ji on his return trip to Okayama from Edo and attended the lectures. Hakuin’s letter reads: “Our unexpected meeting the other day at Hōun-ji gave me great pleasure. I was glad to learn that Lord Ikeda and his followers are now safely back at home, and that everyone is in good health” (Spearflowers, HHZ12, p. 31; Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings, p. 159).

His poison drum caused hellish suffering atop Mount Wu-tsu,

It could gouge the vitals from a wooden man or stone woman.

Words and phrases taken up inside this cluster of white cloud

Raise bone-chilling gooseflesh on a hundred million Sumerus.

.....

His poison drum (dokku) refers to a drum lacquered with poison that is said to bring instant death to all who hear it, in the same way that the Buddha's preaching divests hearers of avarice, anger, and ignorance (*Nirvana Sutra*). Here it refers to Wu-tsu's Zen teachings.

Words and phrases . . . of white cloud. The temple name Hōun-ji is literally "Dharma cloud," so the "cluster of white cloud" is the practice meeting that was taking place there.

A hundred million Sumerus. Buddhist cosmology places Mount Sumeru at the center of the universe; here it stands for the universe as a whole: "Even a hundred million Mount Sumerus would be smashed to smithereens" (annotation).

103. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *EYE OF MEN AND GODS*

This meeting took place at Nōjō-ji in Kai province in 1753, Hakuin's sixty-ninth year. According to the Chronological Biography over three hundred people attended. The Eye of Men and Gods is a work by the 12th century Zen priest Hui-yen Chih-chao setting forth the essential characteristics of the Five Houses of Chinese Zen through

selected passages from the teachings, sayings, and verse of their leading figures.

Phrases in this book can strike blind the eyes of men and gods.

At midnight a Persian topples from a peak into an empty valley.

Describing it later, it turns out no one understands his gibberish.

Gird yourselves, men! Bore through all affirmation and denial.

The secrets set forth in the *Eye of Men and Gods* are tumultuous waves that convulse the vast ocean of the Buddha Dharma. They are fully flowering poison blossoms of the Zen groves. Old Hui-yen compiled *Eye of Men and Gods* for students in his teaching line. Goppai Rōkan recently published a three-volume commentary on it. Old Goppai, in his grandmotherly compassion, wanted to resolve the doubts of Zen students for a thousand years to come. Today, at a time when the essential teachings of the Five Zen Schools have virtually disappeared, Yōshun Rōshi didn't care what others might say or think. He was solely interested in ending these doubts once and for all.

To devise as Lin-chi did “Three Mysteries” and “Three Essentials” is like digging up a patch of spotlessly clean ground and tossing a couple loads of shit over it. Ts'ao-shan meant for his “Five Ranks of Lord and Vassal” to lead and straighten the errors of sentient beings in the period of the degenerating Dharma. Both Lin-chi and Ts'ao-shan designed these teachings to stimulate students of dull capacities — the kind who acknowledge a thief as their son — by explaining the great matter of Zen awakening as a progression that begins from the rising of the religious mind and continues until final attainment.

[The *Eye of Men and Gods* appraises the Five Zen Houses] without ranking one above the other, calling the house of Fa-yen the “rear guard,” the house of Lin-chi the “tip of the lance,” the house of Yun-men “the emperor,” and the house of Kuei-yang “the nobility.”

But you should be aware that the teaching styles of the different houses are not without qualitative differences.

For example, I always lament how everyone today misunderstands Yun-men's "*Look!! Look carefully!!*" The Hua-yen doctrine of six characteristics addresses this point. You must scrutinize it carefully if you wish to understand the house of Yun-men.

The world is now in the period of the latter day when the genuine Dharma has lost its marvelous efficacy. Wherever you go, you hear teachers say, "You don't need to introspect koans or use words and letters. Zen's highest reaches are a matter of simply remaining mindless and thoughtless." Don't they know what the Buddha said? "The Dharma gates are countless, I vow to learn them all. The Buddha Way is peerless, I vow to master it completely."

.....

Phrases in this book . . . into an empty valley. "For men and gods to lose the eyes they were born with is like a Persian falling from Kengamine [Fuji's highest peak]. These words have untold profundity. No one can grasp them" (annotation). In Zen texts the word *bashi*, translated here as "Persian," usually has the sense of "foreigner."

Describing it later . . . his gibberish. "[Through this experience of death and rebirth] the Persian enters the post-satori samadhi and gains the ability to preach with total and effortless freedom, but when he tries to tell others about it, they have the greatest difficulty understanding him" (annotation). "That's just the way it is with my [Hakuin's] lectures" (Yoshizawa comment).

Gird yourselves . . . affirmation and denial. This exhortation is based on the koan "Shou-shan's *Shippei*" (*Gateless Barrier*, Case 43). Master Shou-shan raised his *shippei* (short staff) and said to the assembly, "You monks! If you call this a *shippei* (affirming it), you attach to it. If you say it is not a *shippei*, you deny its reality. Tell me, what do you call it?" Wu-men, author of the *Gateless Barrier*, comments:

Holding up his *shippei*
Enacting the order to kill and revive.
Where affirmation and negation interfuse
Even Buddhas and patriarchs beg for their lives.

Tung-shan's poem *Precious Mirror Samadhi* (*Pao-ching san-mei*) has: "[The true Dharma] is like a great mass of raging fire. You can neither handle it nor avoid it." Tung-shan's lines allude to a passage in the *Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom* that compares *prajna* (wisdom) to a raging conflagration that can neither be embraced nor evaded but that is attained, once your grasping for it ceases, in the realization of "the grasping of non-grasping."

The Zen teacher Iida Tōin comments on Tung-shan's lines: "You can't escape it by running away. You'll find a burning conflagration wherever you go. . . . You are burned alive if you draw close to it, so you can't do that. But you can't turn your back on it and pretend it is none of your concern. Such is the terrifying power possessed by the Buddha Way's ultimate truth" (*Sandōkai Hōkyō Sammai Kōwa*, Kōbe shūyō-kai, pp. 110–11).

Goppai Rōkan. Old Man Goppai; a sobriquet of Yōshun Shūdaku (1666–1735), head priest of Seiken-ji, the large Zen temple at the Okitsu post station in Tōtōmi province to which Shōin-ji was affiliated. Yōshun was nineteen years senior to Hakuin; according to the *Chronological Biography* he was instrumental in persuading Hakuin to become head priest at Shōin-ji (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 192) and lent him his support after he began residing there. Two other pieces on Yōshun in *Poison Blossoms* are: "Lamenting Priest Yōshun" (#330 on p. 532 in Book Nine), and "Priest Yōshun of Enryū-ji" (#267 on pp. 452–3 in Book Eight). Hakuin painted at least one portrait of Yōshun (Takeuchi #347), which was used as a frontispiece for an edition of Yōshun's Zen records published by Seiken-ji in 1936.

Yōshun's commentary on the *Eye of Men and Gods*, entitled *Ninden ganmoku okusetsu* (*Conjectures on The Eye of Men and Gods*), was published in three volumes in 1733.

"*Three Mysteries*" (*Sangen*) and "*Three Essentials*" (*Sanyō*) are teaching devices used by Lin-chi I-hsuan (*Record of Lin-chi*). The

Eye of Men and Gods devotes a section to them.

“*Five Ranks of Lord and Vassal*” (*Goi-kunshin*). Ts’ao-shan Pen-chi, an heir of master Tung-shan and considered with him to have co-founded the Ts’ao-tung (Japanese Sōtō) sect, used the relation of lord and vassal in clarifying teachings which Tung-shan had adumbrated in his Theory of Five Ranks (#144): “A monk asked about the secret of the Five Ranks of Lord and Vassal. Ts’ao-shan said, ‘The Universal [*Shō*] Rank is an empty sea where from the first nothing exists. The Phenomenal [*Hen*] Rank is the world of form with all its myriad shapes. Phenomenal within Universal [*Shōchūhen*] means leaving the Universal and entering the Phenomenal. Universal within Phenomenal [*Henchūshō*] means leaving the Phenomenal and entering the Universal” (*Record of Ts’ao-shan*).” There is a short section in the *Eye of Men and Gods* on Ts’ao-shan’s “Five Ranks of Lord and Vassal”.

“Because his students were dull-witted, Ts’ao-shan devised a teaching that satori is achieved gradually, step by step. But he did it for the express purpose of awakening people like them who had become shackled by mistaken understandings” (annotation).

The kind who acknowledge a thief as their son is a metaphor from the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* (*Yuan-chueh ching*; T17). “They were confounding their own mistaken understanding for the true one” (annotation).

[*The Eye of Men and Gods appraises . . .*] . . . *not without qualitative differences*. Hakuin omits the house of Ts’ao-tung from his enumeration. In the *Eye of Men and Gods* the Ts’ao-tung school is characterized as “the peasants.”

The Hua-yen doctrine of six characteristics addresses this point. The Hua-yen teaching of six characteristics (*roku-sōgi*) states that each and every thing possesses six features or aspects: totality, particularity, generality, distinctiveness, formativeness, and destruction. The teaching appears in the fourth fascicle of the *Eye of Men and Gods*. These features appear to the unenlightened to be different but are in fact perfectly integrated in each individual existence.

“They devised the teaching of six characteristics to help those who had become attached to mistaken teachings” (annotation). “If you want understand the Yun-men school, you must penetrate this teaching” (annotation).

Don't they know what the Buddha said? “The Dharma gates . . . vow to master it completely.” Hakuin cites two of the Bodhisattva's Four Universal Vows.

104. INSTRUCTIONS ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF BODHIDHARMA'S DEATH

This verse was written on the fifth day of the tenth month — the anniversary of Bodhidharma's death — in 1754, when Hakuin, seventy years old, was visiting Tōgen-ji (“Peach Blossom Temple”) at the Yui post station, three stops west of Hara, for lectures on the Record of Sung-yuan. Yui was regarded as one of the most beautiful spots on the Tōkaidō road.

One balmy fall day I burst into the Peach Blossom spring,
And ran into Daruma proceeding homeward, boot in
hand.

A horse-leech baring his fangs snarls up at the Big
Dipper,

A dew worm takes the bit in his mouth and fords the river.

.....

Peach Blossom spring (Tōgen) is a utopia of great beauty, based on a fable written by the 5th century poet Tao Yuan-ming about the chance discovery of an idyllic realm of continual springtime where inhabitants lead an ideal existence completely isolated from the outside world.

And ran into Daruma . . . boot in hand. The story of Bodhidharma carrying a single shoe as he strolled westward to India after his Nirvana is given in a note to #77.

A horse-leech . . . fords the river. The final two lines are typical Zen impossibilia. “They describe the situation in Peach Blossom country, Hakuin’s encounter with Bodhidharma” (annotation).

105. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA*

According to the Chronological Biography for age 71 (1755): “Acceding to a request from Ryōshin-ji in Kojima village (west of Hara) the master conducted a lecture meeting on the Vimalakirti Sutra. Lord Matsudaira Awa-no-kami Shigenobu [1728–71], chief patron of the temple, attended daily and was completely won over by the master’s teaching” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 221). Lord Matsudaira, twenty-eight at the time, was the recipient of a book-length teaching entitled Yasenkanna (not to be confused with the more well-known work of the same title), which Hakuin wrote to admonish him for errors in governing his fief (Yasenkanna, gekan, HHZ4).

Even if you are able to enter through the gates into
nonduality,
If you lack the Bodhi-mind you’ll end up under Mara’s
sway.
Anyone who wants to achieve complete mastery of the
Dharma
Has to spur forward the wheel of the four great universal
vows.

.....

This verse is a concise recapitulation of Hakuin's Zen teaching. It appears in slightly different wording in *Wild Ivy* (p. 1) and *Horse Thistles*.

As a young monk on pilgrimage Hakuin was greatly distressed on reading of the great deity of the Kasuga Shrine's rejection of the eminent priest Gedatsu Shōnin for lacking the Bodhi-mind. All those who lack the Bodhi-mind, said the deity, would fall into the paths of Mara. Hakuin tells this story below, Book Eleven, pp. 695-6; also in *Wild Ivy*, pp. 40–4.

Even if you are . . . nonduality. The teaching of nonduality is the central teaching of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, sometimes called the Sutra of Nonduality. "If you listen to the *Vimalakirti Sutra* with an insincere mind, you will get no benefit whatsoever from hearing it" (annotation). In other words: You must also put the four universal vows into practice, and continue to strive with great resolution, never falling back, to put the vows into constant practice; otherwise you will be no better than adherents of the Two Lesser Vehicles.

106. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT SERVICES COMMEMORATING BUDDHA'S NIRVANA

This verse was delivered on the fifteenth day of the second month at the Nehan-e ceremony held in commemoration of Buddha's Nirvana, during the lecture meeting Hakuin was conducting at Ryōshin-ji on the Vimalakirti Sutra described in the previous piece, #105.

Yesterday, I offered my respects to a layman who had
fallen sick,
Today at the Nirvana ceremony I burn a fragrant stick of
incense.

Three faces, two heads, none you can either approach or evade,
Master Hsieh, fishing at night, carves notches on the boat railing.

.....

Yesterday . . . who had fallen sick. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, Layman Vimalakirti, a fully attained Bodhisattva, pretends to be ill as a means of teaching others (the illness is emblematic of the impermanence of all worldly existence). When the Buddha tells his disciples to pay a visit to the Layman, all of them refuse, knowing from painful experience about Vimalakirti's superior understanding. Finally, Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, agrees to go. He enquires about Vimalakirti's illness, and the two of them proceed to engage in a rambling dialogue about aspects of Buddhist doctrine.

Today at the . . . stick of incense. Hakuin delivered this verse while offering incense at the commemorative services. "With the smoke from that incense he cremated the Buddha, reduced him to ash" (annotation).

Three faces, two heads. "Although the Buddha, Vimalakirti, and I have three different faces, and the Buddha and I have two different heads, when it comes to the actuality of Nirvana itself, there's not the least bit of difference between us" (annotation). "Three faces, two heads" appears several times as a capping phrase in the *Blue Cliff Record*, alluding to words, states, or activities that constantly change and transform into other shapes or forms. Hakuin, explaining it in *Hekiganshū Hishō*, his commentary on the *Blue Cliff Record*, says: "as indistinct and unclear as a ghost or specter, it changes into various shapes" (Case 91, p. 819).

None you can either approach or evade (mu-kōhai) is literally "no facing or turning away." "Whether you face the ultimate Dharma truth or turn away from it, in either case you fall into dualistic discrimination, because the Buddha Way [which remains eternally constant even as it constantly changes and transforms] is something you can neither approach and acquire, nor turn away from and

avoid” (*Hekiganshū Hishō*, p. 254). See note on “unattainable and ineludible” in #117 below.

Master Hsieh, fishing at night, carves notches on the boat railing. Master Hsieh (Hsieh San-lang) is the secular name that Zen master Hsuan-sha Shih-pei used before entering the priesthood, when he lived as a poor fisherman. The name Hsieh San-lang is for some reason also used in later Chinese Zen in a derogatory sense for a person who lacks all his marbles, or is always hesitant and missing the point. “When it comes to this, any hesitation at all makes you a Johnny-come-lately!” (annotation).

Carving notches on the boat railing is an allusion to the saying *kokushū kyūken*, “seeking a lost sword by carving a mark on the gunwale,” from the story of a man who lost his sword overboard and cut a mark on the side of the boat thinking it would help him recover the weapon when he came back for it later. The saying is also used disparagingly for a dull-witted person who is unable to adapt to circumstances.

107. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON BUILDING A MONKS’ HALL

“Delivered at Bodhidharma’s Death Anniversary” (annotation). In the Chronological Biography for 1736, age 52, we read: “In autumn the construction of a new Monks’ Hall at Shōin-ji was completed, thanks largely to the efforts of Chō of Tando and Tan of Bungo. The master composed a verse to express his gratitude” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 203).

As we construct a hall for monks who come to plumb the
depths,
The winds of Mara the destroyer are dimming the
Dharma lamp.

Thirty years we have gathered here for *rōhatsu* training sessions,
Carpenters, please do not provoke the ire of monks far and wide.

.....

As we construct a hall . . . the Dharma lamp. The first two lines of the verse warn that Mara, who is always on the lookout for any laxity in Buddhist training, is sure to take advantage of this suspension of their practice.

Thirty years . . . the ire of monks far and wide. The last two lines of the verse foresee that, due to the construction work, we probably won't be able to hold the *rōhatsu* training session in the twelfth month as usual, but go on to ask the builders, because the monks are eager to return to the training hall, to please complete their work as soon as possible. Annotations tell us that the work began in the autumn and continued until the second month of the following year.

108. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF DAIŌ KOKUSHI'S DEATH

Hakuin states in the text that the head priest of Kōrin-ji in the city of Sumpu asked him to deliver lectures on the Record of Daiō in the winter of 1756. He accepted, and the lectures apparently began on the twenty-ninth day of the sixth month of that year. The Chronological Biography (age 72) has: "In summer, the fourth month, a ceremony and vegetarian feast was held at Kōrin-ji near the city of Sumpu to commemorate the 450th death anniversary of National Master Daiō; over two hundred people attended. The master was asked to offer incense and deliver comments on Daiō's recorded sayings" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 222). This is the first of three

pieces Hakuin delivered during the Kōrin-ji meeting; the others are found in #109 and #110.

LONG AGO ZEN master Tz'u-ming braved the frigid winter of Fen-yang and did zazen through the nights without sleeping. When sleep demons approached him, he said to himself, "It is because the ancients engaged in extremely arduous practice that they were able to acquire such splendid radiance. What am I? If I let such difficulties deter me from my practice, my life will be meaningless, and at my death no one will remember me," and taking a gimlet he jabbed it into his thigh to spur him on.

How valuable that story is. When the ancients engaged in Zen practice, they saw the teachings of the Buddha-patriarchs as their sworn enemies. When they walked, some even forgot they were walking. Some had the haggard look of a person in deep mourning for his parents. As a consequence of their dedication, these men penetrated the Great Way to its deepest source. Undertaking the most rigorous practice with total resolve, Ma-tsu, Nan-ch'uan, Ch'ang-sha, Chao-chou, Yen-t'ou, Hsueh-feng, Shao-yang, Tz'u-ming, Wu-tsu, and Chen-ching all grasped that great matter the Buddha spoke of when he said, "This is something none of my Arhats can understand. It takes a great Bodhisattva to grasp it."

Particularly distinguished among the many Zen masters of the past was Hsi-keng Rōshi of Mount Ching. He attained realization while studying with master Yun-an, but was not satisfied and began working on the story of "Su-shan's Memorial Tower," keeping at it for four long years. Only then did he complete his training and become a great Dharma vessel, and go on to become a Zen teacher esteemed throughout the land.

National Master Nampo Jōmyō crossed the seas and visited many Zen teachers in temples in the land of the Sung before he finally ran up against old Hsi-keng. At that time he had already completed several years of exceedingly rigorous practice. After he had finally succeeded in pulling out Hsi-keng's claws and fangs inside the Dharma cave, he returned to Japan and proceeded to menace and terrorize young Japanese students. Some of these men eventually became his descendants. The extreme severity of Daiō's

practice and the splendid radiance he acquired from it are both unequalled. From that radiance a poison flower was brought to blossom inside the Purple Fields, and a hateful fruit made to form in the Flower Gardens. Zen master Sekkō sent out poisonous waves from the Flower Gardens; the waves dispersed and branched out into four pernicious tributaries. From one of them master Daikyū's authentic wind spit out the strange fragrances of the *Record of Kentō* [*Kentō-roku*].

It is a pity that errors begin to appear as the Zen transmission is handed down to later generations, in the same way that scribes copying the Chinese character for *crow* will turn it into *what* and then into *horse*, or turn *fish* into *stupid*. A hundred years after Zen master Daikyū's death teachers of the grandmotherly type were rising up like hornets from the hive, silent illumination Zennists were swarming the country like hordes of ants, and the true Zen traditions were falling to earth and vanishing. It is for this reason that I continually express my loathing for grandmotherly Zen. It does nothing but inflict great harm.

The priest of Kōrin-ji has been concerned about the degeneration of the Zen school for many years. Because of that, in the winter of this year, the sixth of the Hōreki era [1756], he came to Shōin-ji and asked me to deliver lectures on National Master Daiō's Zen records to commemorate the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his death. A score of leading laymen — Shōin, Kusaya, Shibata, Fukashin, Aoki, Shiozaki, Yamanashi, Haraguchi, Hasegawa, Suzuki, Kawaguchi, Yoshikawa, Koyanagi, Ishii, and others — joined forces and worked to bring about this great assembly. More than ten superior veteran priests from surrounding areas and two hundred ragged hero-monks from various parts came together. We all engaged in zazen practice day and night, strictly adhering to established monastery norms, forgetting all about food and sleep.

I did my part, showing none of them the slightest mercy. I wielded my angry fists and delivered stinging blows with my staff, giving them the kind of treatment I would mete out on a deadly enemy I had cornered in a dead-end alley. Everyone who witnessed it was quivering with fright; everyone who heard it was sobbing copious tears. Even the gods and demons were pressing their palms

together in supplication. To witness such an unprecedented meeting, at a time when the Dharma is so weak and Mara's power so strong, makes me think that it must be the secret intervention of the gods and spirits that protect this temple.

Today, the twenty-ninth day of the fourth month, the anniversary of National Master Daiō's death, I deliver these remarks in response to the veteran priests assembled here who had requested something that would uplift the fortunes of our school. Please don't say I'm like the drunken man indulging himself in that one last cup of wine.

.....

Long ago Zen master Tz'u-ming . . . to spur him on. This is the story that caused Hakuin to re-dedicate himself to Zen training when he read it as a young monk. See *Chronological Biography*, age 20 (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 158–9). Hakuin uses the story again in #115.

"This is something none of my Arhats . . . to grasp it." These comments of the Buddha, appearing at the end of the koan "Seven Wise Sisters", refer to the koan's great difficulty (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 1). Hakuin discusses the koan in *Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 31–2.

Particularly distinguished among . . . Hsi-keng Rōshi of Mount Ching. Hakuin recounts details of Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu's (Hsi-keng is his sobriquet) religious career throughout *Poison Blossoms*; e.g., #189, pp. 342–3.

National Master Nampo Jōmyō. Here Hakuin uses the *Kokushi* title posthumously awarded to Daiō.

Began working on the story . . . for four long years. Only then did he complete his training. "Four years of bone-breaking work, enduring the torments of hell over and over and over. Any monk who becomes a teacher of Zen must go through this" (annotation).

From that radiance a poison flower . . . Zen master Sekkō sent out . . . four pernicious tributaries . . . strange fragrances of the Record of Kentō. Purple Fields (*Murasakino*) in Kyoto is the location of Daitoku-ji, founded by Daiō's Dharma heir, Daitō Kokushi. Flowers

Gardens (*Hanazono*) is the location of Myōshin-ji, also in Kyoto, founded by Daitō's Dharma heir, Kanzan Egen. Sekkō Soshin (1408–86) was a fifteenth-century abbot of Myōshin-ji who is credited with restoring the temple. Four of his disciples — Keisen Sōryū, Gokei Sōton, Tokuhō Zenketsu, and Tōyō Eichō — founded important Myōshin-ji teaching lines that were successful in making the temple the most important subsect of Rinzai Zen during the Edo period. Daikyū Sōkyū (1468–1549) appeared from the teaching line of Tokuhō Zenketsu. Hakuin's assessment of Daikyū's recorded sayings, *Kentō-roku*, is the subject of a long piece below (#385, pp. 577–83).

It is a pity . . . turn fish into stupid. The ideographs for these words are similar and thus scribes can easily mistake and miswrite them. “When written three times, fish becomes stupid, emperor becomes tiger” (*Pao p'u tzu, Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity*, by the Taoist Ko Hung). Here Hakuin compares the way mistakes are made in the transmission of texts to the changes that occur as the Dharma is passed down from teacher to disciple over many generations. “Changes occur and the teaching becomes different. Over the last hundred years, with the appearance of grandmotherly Zen and silent illumination Zen, the true traditions have almost disappeared” (annotations).

It is for this reason . . . nothing but inflict great harm. An annotation in Tōrei's hand records Hakuin's own comment on this statement: “My attendants are always warning me, ‘If you keep on expressing your loathing for grandmotherly Zen, someone is sure to slip some poison into your food. But what can I do? I must set them straight’” (annotation).

The priest of Kōrin-ji at this time was Daien Genjō (n.d.). Kōrin-ji, on the west side of the Abe River in Suruga province, is located near the birthplace of National Master Daiō.

Today, the twenty-ninth day of the fourth month. The anniversary of Daiō's death fell on the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month, so they were conducting the ceremony in advance.

Please don't say . . . one last cup of wine. “Don't say it would be better left unsaid” (annotation).

109. UNTITLED [DAIŌ KOKUSHI OFFERS INCENSE AT A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR ZEN MASTER HSU-T'ANG]

This, like the previous piece, was delivered during the 1756 lecture meeting on the Record of Daiō at Kōrin-ji in Suruga.

I PUT THIS before you:

On offering incense at a memorial service for Zen master Hsu-t'ang, National Master Daiō said, "For many years I served as Hsu-t'ang's attendant. We were together constantly — face to face, eye to eye. Because of that, once each year on the anniversary of his death I light a stick of incense and make a bowl of tea to offer to his memory. I don't perform a woman's bow like Priest Yang-ch'i did. Big turnips are a well-known product of Chen-chou."

Reading those words I had not a single doubt that National Master Daiō threw body and soul into making this fine tribute to his teacher's memory. I only regret that the temple pillars will shake their heads in disapproval. Why is that? All carriage wheels on earth leave tracks behind them, yet when we speak of the wheel's merits, the subject of its ruts doesn't even come up.

.....

I don't perform a woman's bow like Priest Yang-ch'i did. "On the anniversary of his teacher Tz'u-ming's death, Yang-ch'i held a vegetarian feast in his memory for a small number of monks. He went before Tz'u-ming's portrait, raised his hands above his head, then inscribed a circle in the air with his prostration mat. He lit some incense, stepped back three paces, and performed a woman's bow" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 19). Muchaku Dōchū cites the Yuan dynasty priest I-shan I-ning's explanation of a woman's bow as one performed while standing, bending only at the knees, but he adds that the body should be slightly bowed as well, with the hands together at the chest. Hakuin comments in the *Hekiganshū Hishō*

(Case 69) that as a matter of decorum the *gasshō* in a woman's bow is performed without touching the head to the floor.

Big turnips are a well-known product of Chen-chou. “A monk asked Chao-chou, ‘I’ve heard that you met with Nan-ch’uan. Is that true?’ Chao-chou replied, ‘They grow big turnips in Chen-chou’” (*Record of Chao-chou*).

“Why is this? A man able to know by himself whether water is cold or hot is a Zen priest who is genuine to the core” (annotation).

Reading those words I had not a single doubt . . . shake their heads in disapproval. “Master Daiō performed a truly splendid memorial service to repay his debt to his teacher, and he did it with absolute sincerity” (annotation). “Hakuin’s criticism of Daiō [‘the temple pillars will shake their heads in disapproval’] is a case of him rejecting Daiō’s understanding in this case while at the same time acknowledging his deep attainment” (annotation).

All carriage wheels . . . doesn’t even come up. Su Shun is said to have spoken these words on naming his two sons. He named his younger son (who became the poet Su Tung-p’o) Shih (a word for the decorative armrest used on carriages), and his elder son Che (meaning carriage-wheel track) saying, “All carriage wheels in the world leave wheel ruts, but when we discuss the merits of carriage wheels, the subject of ruts never comes up. Even if a wheel breaks or the horse pulling the carriage stumbles, those misfortunes have no connection to the wheels leaving tracks or to the wheel’s merits or misfortunes” (“On Naming the Su Family’s Two Sons” in *Ku-wen Chen-pao hou-chi*, ch. 2). Putting himself in the position of Su Shun’s son and Daiō in that of Su Shun himself, Hakuin implies that whatever merits he achieves in his life are a result of the deep considerations of his father Daiō.

110. INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HIGH SEAT ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIFTH

MONTH

Like the previous two pieces (#108 and #109), this was delivered at Kōrin-ji in Suruga province during Hakuin's lectures on the Record of Daiō.

NATIONAL MASTER DAIŌ ascended the high seat and said, "There is a Zen saying, 'When a single person returns to the source by awakening to the truth in himself, the great void in all ten directions disappears without a trace.' Zen master Wu-tsu said, 'When a single person returns to the source by awakening to the truth in himself, he bumps into the great void in all ten directions.' I wouldn't say that. What I'd say is, 'When a single person returns to the source by awakening to the truth in himself, the great void in all ten directions exists in the tip of a single strand of hair.' Tell me, do these venerable old teachings say the same thing as I do, or not? I want one of you monks in the assembly to explain."

I [Hakuin] would not say that. I would say: "When a single person returns to the source by awakening to the truth in himself, the great void in all ten directions breaks into laughter." Can you tell me where the difference between these two venerable teachers lies? I want one of you monks to explain this.

.....

"When a single person returns to the source . . . disappears without a trace" is from the Heroic March Sutra, ch. 9. Wu-tsu Fa-yen's version of the saying appears in Essential Sayings of the Old Worthies (Ku-tsun-su yu-yao), ch. 20.

I [Hakuin] would not say that. I would say: "When . . . breaks into laughter." "That's hilarious. Things like that don't happen" (annotation). Tōrei, or his student Karin, has inserted this annotation following Hakuin's comments: "I wouldn't say it that way, either. I'd say: 'When a single person returns to the source by awakening to the truth in himself, the great void in all ten directions snorts like thunder through its nose.' Tell me, are these venerable old teachers

saying the same thing, or something different? I want one of you in the assembly to try and explain.”

111. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF SHAO-LIN'S DEATH

Seventy blind donkeys sheltering in small broken-down shrines,
Face the bitter cold as resolutely as Hui-k'o, waist-deep in snow.
Thinking to offer some comments in verse as my humble tribute,
I put on special *tabi* this morning, but still the words won't come.

.....

Seventy blind donkeys. . . . The “donkeys” are the monks in training at Shōin-ji at this time, who we know from other records lodged in old shrine halls and other vacant buildings in the countryside around the temple. Their number suggests a possible date for this piece, since a discourse Hakuin wrote in 1743 (#118, p. 153) mentions seventy monks in the assembly at the time.

Hui-k'o is the second Chinese Zen patriarch, said to have shown his resolve by standing outside Bodhidharma's dwelling in the dead of winter waist-deep in the snow.

Thinking to offer . . . the words won't come. To offer incense and read this verse at ceremonies commemorating Shao-lin's (Bodhidharma's) death, Hakuin puts on a pair of *betsu*, a special kind of Japanese *tabi* sock worn by officiants on such occasions. Although dressed for the part, he hasn't been able to come up with any good lines for the verse.

Humble tribute translates *suiso*, literally “grass and water,” the most basic food and drink, thus indicating the poorest of offerings.

112. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE *RŌHATSU* TRAINING PERIOD

Hakuin used this verse for an inscription on a painting of “Shakamuni Leaving the Mountain”. Although the painting was destroyed during World War II, it appeared in a rather poor reproduction as a frontispiece in the second volume of the Hakuin Kōroku (Hakuin’s Extensive Zen Records), published in 1902 in two volumes.

Long ago when the Buddha did zazen in the Snowy
Mountains,
Lightning split the great cosmos; rivers turned in their
courses.
When he arose from samadhi folks began dashing madly
about,
A white ox was reported trembling mightily from head to
hoof.

.....

When he arose from samadhi . . . trembling mightily from head to hoof. “When the World-Honored One left samadhi, lightning began flashing out and striking the ground. Everyone scattered and began dashing wildly about” (annotation). “The ox is the white bullock of the *Lotus Sutra*, a metaphor for the mind; it is the white ox that Shakamuni had been disciplining in the Snowy Mountains” (annotation).

113. ASCENDING THE HIGH SEAT ON THE FIFTH DAY OF THE FIFTH MONTH

One of five important annual Japanese festivals, Tango no Sekku was celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. Five is an auspicious number, and two fives even better, hence this day is also called Jūgo no Hi, or “Day of the Double Fives.” In Japan, it later came to be celebrated as Boys’ Festival.

ZEN MASTER CH’ANG-CH’ING said, “If all the days are like this one, the old Indian still has some hope.” National Master Daiō commented on this: “In a wealthy house, the young son is proud.” Zen master Pao-fu said, “If all the days are like this one, the old Indian’s hopes are dashed.” To this Daiō commented: “In a country ruled with impeccable honesty, talented young men are greatly prized.”

The comments made by the two Zen teachers Ch’ang-ch’ing and Pao-fu stem from deep compassion — they wanted everyone to understand. But if it was me [Hakuin], I’d respond differently than Daiō did. I’d say: “If all the days are like this one, Kashapa Bodhisattva will certainly conceal the fact.”

Why is that?

I might also put it this way: “The seeds of Buddhahood sprout through causation.”

Tapping the ground with his staff, he [Hakuin] left the high seat.

.....

“If all the days . . . the old Indian still has some hope” appears in *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 18, and presumably alludes to hope for the continued and unfaltering transmission of the true Dharma.

“In a wealthy house . . . is proud” is from the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 17. An old commentary on the *Gateless Barrier* koan collection has: “When a house has an excess of wealth, the young children do not experience difficulties and thus become proud and arrogant.”

“In a country ruled . . . greatly prized” is also from the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 17. A gloss on this phrase in *Kuzō Kattō-shō*, a 17th century edition of the *Kuzō-shi* book of Zen phrases, says: “This means that you will always find good monks studying under a great teacher.”

“Kashapa Bodhisattva will certainly conceal the fact.” “The World-Honored One had a secret utterance, but Kashapa couldn’t keep it hidden” (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 17), which is a reference to the Buddha holding up a yellow lotus flower and Kashapa smiling his understanding. The scholar-priest Muchaku Dōchū held that this Kashapa is not the Buddha’s disciple but a Bodhisattva of the same name (*Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 709).

“The seeds of Buddhahood sprout through causation” is from *The Lotus Sutra*, “Expedient Means” chapter (Watson, p. 41):

The Buddhas, most honored of two-legged beings,
know that phenomena have no constantly fixed nature,
that the seeds of Buddhahood sprout through causation,
and for this reason they preach the single vehicle.

114. ON OFFERING INCENSE AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF SHAO-LIN’S DEATH

Hakuin delivered this verse on the fifth day of the tenth month of 1756 at Jishu-in in Izu province. He had been invited there to lecture on Ta-hui’s Arsenal, a collection of koans and anecdotes on contemporary Sung dynasty Zen compiled by Ta-hui Tsung-kao.

Dispersing the virulent fox slobber Shao-lin bequeathed
to him,
Miao-hsi confounds and torments people throughout the
world.

Who among students here is going to give up his body
and life?
Most will turn into idle spirit-demons of quiet illumination
Zen.

.....

“No matter how much trouble Ta-hui goes to for your sakes, trying to get you to lick up his fox slobber, none of you licks it up and, to date, no one has died the great death. Because of that, the Zen traditions will fall to the earth and perish” (annotation).

Miao-hsi is a name Zen master Ta-hui adopted in his later years.

115. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FROM THE PRIEST AT DAIFUKU-ZAN

Daifuku-zan is the “mountain name” of Kenchū-ji, a Rinzai temple in Nanbu, Kai province, where Hakuin’s student Benteki was the resident priest. Hakuin delivered these instructions in 1757. According to the Chronological Biography for that year, “In spring, responding to teaching requests, the master set out for Kōzen-ji in Shinano and Nanshō-in in Kai. After stopping at Nanbu in Kai province to instruct students at Kenchū-ji, he went directly to Nanshō-in, where he delivered a Dharma talk and lectured on Dream Words from a Land of Dreams” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 223). The two following pieces, #116 and #117, were delivered on this same teaching trip. Although Benteki (n.d.), who is referred to here as Benteki Shuso, Senior Monk Benteki, and also as Ha Anjū, the “Master of Ha Hermitage,” is not listed as one of Hakuin’s Dharma heirs, he figures in several interesting anecdotes in the Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 196) and again later in Poison Blossoms in #375 in Book Nine, p. 568.

LONG AGO ZEN master Tz'u-ming braved the frigid cold of Fen-yang doing zazen through the long nights without sleep. Whenever the sleep demons approached, he said to himself, "It is because the ancients underwent extremely arduous practice that they were able to acquire their splendid radiance. What am I? If I let something like this discourage me, my life will be meaningless and after I die I'll be completely forgotten," and spurred himself to greater diligence by jabbing a gimlet into his thigh. This is a fine story, one that should serve as a model for all Zen practitioners.

In spring of the seventh year of Hōreki [1757], I set out from my home temple Shōin-ji for Kōzen-ji in Shinano and Nanshō-ji in Kai. On my way I stopped over at Kenchū-ji in Nanbu village in Kai. The head priest was a former student of mine named Ha Anjū, otherwise Senior Priest Benteki Shuso, who accorded me the greatest hospitality. The next morning, he brought out some paper and asked me, not twice but three times, to write something that would benefit Zen students long into the future. So I licked my brush tip and wrote the following:

"There is in this great universe a treasure of incalculable worth. Anyone who gets hold of it will become a person of great happiness, prosperity, and wisdom. But if this treasure eludes him, then even if he is a king, a prince, a nobleman, or a person of immense wealth, he will remain ordinary and commonplace — a base, poor, ignorant fellow."

Benteki, you have acquired this great treasure, and you have become the head priest of Daifuku-zan Kenchū-ji. You have acquired two great blessings that are extremely difficult to acquire. However, if you become satisfied with those accomplishments, if you rest on your laurels and live out the rest of your life eating and sleeping comfortably, thinking only of yourself, looking down your nose at others, you will become like one of those ignorant followers of the lesser vehicle that the Buddha compared to mangy foxes with suppurating sores, and vilified as muckworms wriggling in the mud and mire.

But if you do not get buggered up in your present attainment, if you strive day and night to put the four universal vows into practice, striving to lead all sentient beings to salvation and create a Buddha-

land on earth, acquiring the deportment of a Bodhisattva and storing up great Dharma assets, preaching the Dharma unflaggingly to benefit sentient beings for endless kalpas — repaying in this way the profound debt you owe the Buddha-patriarchs — are you not then a most loyal and trusted minister of the Dharma King, a person who has fully realized the four great Dharma vows and put them into practice? Strive hard for that, Benteki. Strive hard. Do not blunder away your life. I sincerely hope that you will not do that.

.....

Long ago Zen master Tz'u-ming . . . by jabbing a gimlet into his thigh. A favorite story of Hakuin's, e.g., #108.

116. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY ON THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

These instructions were given on the Buddha's Birthday (the eighth day of the fourth month) in 1757, Hakuin's seventy-third year, at Nanshō-ji in Kai province, a temple in the highlands west of Mount Fuji overlooking the swiftly flowing Fuji River. He went to Nanshō-ji to lecture on Dream Words from a Land of Dreams, his commentary on the Record of Daitō which he had published seven years before. See the headnote to the previous piece, #115.

I raise up the Great Lamp in celebration of Buddha's
birthday,
The Fuji River turning suddenly into a torrent of
complexities.
I pray that his divine life-taking amulets will always be
with us,
Staggering the withered-tree Zennists, silencing their
nonsense.

.....

I raise up . . . torrent of complexities. “Great Lamp” is a literal translation of the name Daitō, whose records Hakuin was using for his lectures. “Torrent of complexities” (*kattō-gawa*) alludes to the difficulties of Daitō’s koan-type utterances. The word *kattō*, literally “entangling vines,” and the following “divine life-taking amulets” (*datsumyō no shinpu*), each often used as a synonym for koans, refer here to Daitō’s words.

Withered-tree Zennists is, like “do-nothing Zennists,” a term of reproach that Hakuin uses liberally in his writings. Withered-tree (*kozen*) Zennists are those contemporary members of the Zen school who, because they do not make the active and ongoing pursuit of koan study the object of their practice, find it impossible to make further progress.

117. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *LOTUS SUTRA*

The Chronological Biography states that Hakuin set out to deliver these lectures on the Lotus Sutra in the spring of 1757, his seventy-third year, in response to a request from Kōzen-ji, a large Zen temple in the mountainous Kiso district of central Japan (see above, #115 and #116). We know from this verse and references in Hakuin’s letters that the Kōzen-ji meeting was held in autumn, the eighth month of that year. It came on the heels of a long and grueling period of travel to lecture at various temples in Suruga, Kai, and Shinano provinces. Letters Hakuin wrote at this time reveal the great importance these lectures held for him: he felt they would be his final opportunity to set forth to a large audience his understanding on this important sutra (see Beating the Cloth Drum, Letter 22, pp. 162–9).

Hakuin states in a letter he wrote the previous year to his students Shikyō Eryō and Ishin Eryū that although he had wanted to turn down the lecture invitations from the temples in Shinano and Kiso provinces by citing his advanced age and the long travel involved, he became obliged to accept them (Hakuin Oshō Zenshū 6). Yet in a letter to Tōrei the following year Hakuin describes his pleasure on visiting the temples of Shinano and Kiso and discovering the extraordinary beauty of their natural settings (ibid., pp. 162–3).

On a pine-clad peak, in shade redolent of a thousand
autumns,
A lotus flower in the fullness of time bursts into splendid
bloom.
Unique, wonderful, pure and perfect, unattainable and
ineludible,
Solemn with the majesty of Buddha's preaching at Vulture
Peak.

.....

On a pine-clad peak. Kōzen-ji is a mountain temple; its “mountain name” Banshō-zan means “mountain of ten thousand pine trees.”

A lotus flower . . . unattainable and ineludible. These beautiful lines refer to the *Lotus Sutra's* full title, *Myōhō-renge-kyō*, “Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma;” also sometimes called *Jun'en Dokumyō Kyō*, “Immaculately Pure, Perfect, Utterly Unique, Wondrous Sutra.” “As the *Lotus* is the king of sutras, it is unique and wonderful; as it is the great vehicle of the unadulterated Mahayana teaching, it is pure and perfect. ‘Unattainable and ineludible’ alludes to the fact that the Dharma, continually changing in form and aspect, can neither be attained nor avoided” (annotation).

Solemn with the majesty . . . Vulture Peak. Vulture Peak is the site where the *Lotus Sutra* was preached. “None of you knows that the meeting that is now taking place in this room and the meeting Buddha held to preach on Vulture Peak are not two different gatherings” (annotation).

GENERAL DISCOURSES (*FUSETSU*)

General Discourses (Fusetsu) are oral teachings given in relatively informal circumstances. Fusetsu are thus contrasted with the personal, one-on-one teaching that takes place in the master's room during dokusan, and also with the more formal Jōdō, which the teacher delivers from the high seat, wearing a Dharma robe, after offering incense at the altar. The teacher may deliver a General Discourse from the high seat, but without offering incense or wearing the Dharma robe. It should perhaps be noted that Hakuin does not seem to have always observed the fine distinctions of temple discourse. He is said, for example, to have on occasion delivered Jōdō while seated on the floor, wearing his everyday robe and holding his kiseru pipe.

118. GENERAL DISCOURSE GIVEN DURING A LECTURE MEETING ON TA-HUI'S ARSENAL

This meeting was held at Shōin-ji in 1743, Hakuin's fifty-ninth year. Ta-hui's Arsenal (Ta-hui wu-k'u; 1186) consists of anecdotes about contemporary and near-contemporary Rinzai priests that Ta-hui Tsung-kao related to his students. The first two paragraphs of the dialogue between Hakuin and a monk questioner appear in the Chronological Biography entry for 1743 (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 208).

IN SPRING OF the third year of Kampō [1743], on the day master Hakzn began lecturing on *Ta-hui's Arsenal*, a monk who had come to attend the meeting asked, "It is said 'an enlightened person does not peck. The moment there is any pecking, it is lost.' What does it

mean?” Master Hakuin replied, “When the chick wants to get out of the egg but has not yet begun pecking at the shell, the mother hen must not peck at it from outside. You must be able to discern whether the time is right for the student or not.”

The monk bowed before the master. The master said, “Peck!” The monk immediately emitted a shout. The master said, “Awakened!”

Another monk asked, “What does ‘arsenal’ mean here? I can understand that a granary stores grain and an arsenal stores weapons, and that during a crop failure when the people don’t have enough to eat the emperor orders the granaries opened to provide food and alleviate suffering; to suppress uprisings he musters his armies and orders the arsenals opened and armor and weapons supplied so the troops can subdue the malefactors. But surely such weapons are useless to a Zen monk. If he is authentic, the kind of person who can take life without even blinking an eye, he will be able to get the job done even with the stub of a worn-out old broom. What good would it do him to arm himself with a lot of useless blunt swords and broken lances? And didn’t Lao Tzu say that ‘weapons are ill-omened tools, to be used only as the very last resort’? Aren’t everyone’s eyes horizontal and their noses up-and-down? When a manservant is summoned, he doesn’t change into a maid, does he? Don’t your hands grasp and feet walk perfectly well? What possible need is there for such useless tools? Not to mention lecturing and explaining the idle verbal dregs left by the ancients, smearing students’ faces in it? Doesn’t this suggest these stories of Ta-hui are highly questionable?”

[Hakuin:] Come closer and listen carefully to what I say. If a person possesses the heroic spirit of a Han Hsin or P’eng Yueh and the ability of a Kuan Yu or Chang Fei [four legendary military heroes of ancient China], and acquires their wonderful skill with sword and lance, then I would agree that he could dispatch someone with a stubby old broom. It’s no different for those patricians who plumb Zen’s secret depths. Those who have toppled the hard-to-pass barriers of the patriarchal teachers one by one, spending their sleeping and waking hours inside the thicket of thorn and briar, plunging and sporting in seas of virulent poison, could take a person’s life with a stubby broom. But a cough or clearing one’s

throat could also serve as a death-dealing weapon. A fried bun or a sesame rice cake could prove a weapon of choice, or even serve as an entire arsenal.

But to come here as you do with a totally lifeless understanding of “eyes horizontal, nose vertical,” prattling about killing people with broom stubs is absurd. You will end up falling straight into hell when you die, into the merciless clutches of denizens who will cut you in two or chop off your legs. So don’t go around asserting that the whole world is as smooth and calm as the surface of a mirror. When you babble about “a manservant not changing into a maid,” you turn those words into a sharp lance that will lay the gardens of the patriarchs to waste. When you spout off about “hands grasping and feet walking” with perfect freedom, it becomes a razor-edged weapon that can destroy time-honored Zen traditions. Nothing more ominous could occur in a training hall, where students pass through the flaming forge and are singled out to become future Buddhas.

If you don’t believe what I am saying, then try to clarify the Zen function at work in the words, “A chick inside the shell pecks. The mother hen doesn’t.” You won’t be able to. You will just stand there speechless and bug-eyed. Those hands that you claimed could grasp freely won’t be able to grasp this. Those feet that you say walk freely will be paralyzed. Or do you still insist your activity is perfectly free and unrestricted? This is the most shameful thing that can occur within the halls of Zen, and also the most unfortunate. It was to save students from such pernicious habits that Zen master Ta-hui collected these divine life-taking amulets. This is why he bequeathed these claws and fangs of the Dharma cave to us.

Over seventy monks are now assembled at my temple. They have turned their backs on more comfortable, well-appointed training halls elsewhere in the country, showing no concern for their splendid buildings. Instead, they have elected to come here to Shōin-ji, to hole up within these tumbledown old walls and steadily refine their realization in hard-fought and unwavering pursuit of the Way.

It is because I realize how deeply devoted they are that I come out like this and subject them to my windbaggery, tossing out these verbal complications. I’m like a person who tries to relieve his great privation and suffering by warming someone else’s hands. But when

the most vital point is reached, when you come up against words and phrases altogether impossible to penetrate, I will show you no mercy whatsoever. Not a single drop. Those of you who have not yet penetrated those barriers must therefore be prepared to steel your hearts and fire yourselves with an indomitable spirit of determination.

There will be some among you who will sit atop peaks where no one has yet set foot, who will descend into secret valleys that are completely cut off from the world. There, forgetting both sleep and food, cold and privation, moaning pitifully, they will press on in pursuit of the Way.

Anyone who joins the ranks of those teachers who lecture on Zen records today, who make everything crystal-clear to their students, obstructing them from entering the gates of enlightenment with their kindhearted, unstinting efforts to have them understand the meaning of the texts, is helping to perpetuate a chain of transgressions so boundless and far-reaching in extent that it will be utterly impossible to atone for them.

Look at the way a fisherman works. He gathers a suitable quantity of shellfish or shrimps to use as bait, attaches them to his hook, and casts his line into the vast sea. But once he catches a large fish, he discards the bait. I work in the same way. I let out a thousand yards or so of line, spread some verbal decoys around, make sure the koan-bait is set. Then I wait for a giant fish to show up, the kind of behemoth who could swallow the boat. I bait all my hooks with such virulent poison that all who see them are flabbergasted, all who hear them go limp and crumple to the ground. In this I outdo even Prince Jen, who baited his hook with fifty bullocks. When a golden-tailed carp of the eastern seas rises and swallows my bait, I first make sure he has given up the ghost — body and life together — and then I discard the bait.

The dim-witted priests you find everywhere you go today, who deride the use of words and letters and ridicule them as unnecessary verbal entanglements, are totally mistaken. Totally. They are hunkering over a stagnant pool at midnight groping blindly for dragons.

To the Zen patricians engaged in plumbing the secret depths, I humbly say: You who have yet to penetrate the matter should put

aside entangling words and letters and just bore into this single koan: “An adept Zen teacher does not peck. The moment he does, all is lost.”

Thank you. Take care that you all stay healthy.

.....

“It is said ‘an enlightened person . . . The master said, “Awakened!”
“This exchange cannot be explained in words. Each student must discern it through hard practice” (annotation).

You will end up falling . . . or chop off your legs. These were two methods of execution in ancient China. Hakuin means that a monk like this will undergo such punishments when he falls into hell.

Anyone who joins the ranks of those teachers . . . impossible to atone for them. Here Hakuin uses words from the *Book of the Later Han* (ch. 8) to describe the danger of a Zen teacher being too obliging and kindhearted (using “grandmotherly kindness”) when instructing students: “For men he likes, he will rip off his own skin to provide them with beautifying plumes. . . . For those he dislikes, he will wash off all the dirt to find some scar or imperfection.”

Verbal decoys. Fishermen would float grass and leaves on the water as decoys, knowing that fish would be attracted and gather beneath them. “A metaphor for a Zen teacher uttering a word to test a student. The significance is in the testing, not in the words he utters” (annotation).

I outdo even Prince Jen, who baited his hook with fifty bullocks. “Prince Jen made an enormous fishhook with a huge line, baited it with fifty bullocks . . . and cast with his pole into the eastern sea. . . . [After a year] a huge fish finally swallowed the bait. . . . When Prince Jen had landed the fish, he cut it up and dried it . . . and there was no one in the country who did not get his fill” (*The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 296).

When a golden-tailed carp of the eastern seas. Vigorous carp able to swim beyond the Dragon Gate (a three-tiered waterfall in the Yellow River that cut through the mountains) were said to transform into

dragons. Hakuin uses them as a metaphor for authentic Zen students.

They are hunkering . . . groping blindly for dragons alludes to lines in *Hsueh-tou's Verse Comments on One Hundred Zen Koans (Hsueh-tou po-tse sung-ku)*, ch. 7: "The fish have already ascended Lungmen's three-tiered sluices and transformed into dragons, but the fool still gropes for them at midnight in a stagnant pool."

119. GENERAL DISCOURSE INTRODUCTORY TO A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *LOTUS SUTRA*

Hakuin's statement in the text that this series of lectures took place in 1746 is substantiated in Tōrei's draft Chronological Biography (age 62). Tōrei also states that this was the first time Hakuin lectured on the Lotus Sutra, and that it took place in the second lunar month at Genryū-ji, a Rinzai temple in Tadehara west of Shōin-ji overlooking the swiftly flowing Fuji River.

Hakuin delivered many of the General Discourses at the beginning of such lecture meetings, using them to set the tone for the session and inspire students to greater effort in their practice. He commonly incorporates words and phrases from the text he is going to lecture on into the discourse, and no doubt they would have been recognized as such by his audience; I have only commented upon two or three of these allusions in the notes. The Lotus Sutra is known for its many parables, and a large portion of Hakuin's discourse is given over to a parable of his own.

IN SPRING OF the third year of Enkyō [1746], Kairyū Oshō, incumbent at Genryū-ji, a priest who has always desired to promote the Zen teachings, made arrangements to hold a lecture and practice session that would be open to all students. He asked me to

discourse on the fundamental aspiration for which Buddhas have appeared in the world.

I have a certain affinity with the *Lotus Sutra*. Some twenty years ago I obtained the hidden secret, so difficult to grasp, that lies concealed within it. One night, as I was reading the “Parables” chapter by candlelight, I suddenly penetrated through and grasped this hidden meaning, realizing as I did that my entire body was bathed in a nervous sweat. For many years I remained silent about the realization I had experienced, not wanting to explain it with undue haste. But today, even at the risk of losing my eyebrows, I am going to turn it into a Dharma gift by divulging it to you.

This is something students of the Lesser Vehicle can never grasp. It strikes them completely deaf and dumb, and they run off quivering in consternation. Students of deep insight and attainment might hear it and come to believe in it unquestioningly, but they would still be unable to penetrate to a full and clear understanding. That is reserved exclusively for Bodhisattvas of the highest stages, those who have achieved full attainment. They will drink it up as though it was a heavenly nectar, rejoicing that the wealthy man’s treasure has suddenly fallen unsought into their hands.

Now I am going to tell you something that happened at the beginning of the Kampō era [1741–44]. A samurai retainer of the Hikone clan of Ōmi province, Mr. Fujiwara something-or-other, was entrusted with the great sum of five hundred *ryō* and told to deliver it to Edo. He set out accompanied by four or five other men. On the road between Mino and Owari provinces, a man they encountered began walking and running beside them. When they reached the post station inn, they shared lodgings with him. He was very polite and extremely well mannered, and the samurai took a liking to him. One day, the fellow produced five *ryō* in gold coins and said to the samurai, “Because you have allowed me to accompany you, I have come this far without incident. I am the son of a poor farmer of Mino province. I have an elder brother in Edo who has been seriously ill for many months and my parents want me to use this money to bring him back home. I am on my way there now, but I am worried about carrying such a large sum on my person. If you would be so kind as to let me place it in your traveling pouch, I will be able to get a good

night's sleep, which I sorely need. I will take it back from you when we reach Edo." Mr. Fujiwara accepted the money with a smile on his face. He put it into his leather pouch, and the party resumed their trip. He had it with him when they set out in the morning and kept it close at hand when they stopped for the night. When Mr. Fujiwara got into his palanquin, the man would ask, "Is the money bag all right?" When Mr. Fujiwara got out of the palanquin, he would ask, "Is the money bag all right?"

One morning when they woke up, the man was nowhere to be seen. The leather pouch had disappeared as well. Mr. Fujiwara's companions were at their wit's end, not knowing what to do, but he remained perfectly calm. As they resumed their journey, he was even seen to smile. After walking three or four leagues, they encountered a man on horseback coming from the opposite direction. He had a letter for Mr. Fujiwara. After opening it and glancing at it, Mr. Fujiwara broke into a wide grin. When they arrived at the next post station, they saw the leather money pouch hanging from a pillar. Paying a small reward, Mr. Fujiwara retrieved the pouch and set out for Edo once again, smiling all the while. His companions, unable to fathom what had taken place, wondered at his strange behavior. When they stopped for the night and the pouch was opened, they found nothing inside but a collection of rocks. Upon pressing Mr. Fujiwara to explain what had happened, he produced from his kimono the letter that had been delivered to him on the road and showed it to them. It read:

I am known as Oshio so-and-so of Mino province. I am a thief by trade, and most certainly destined to end my life under the executioner's blade. Bowing low before his excellence Mr. Fujiwara, I take the liberty of addressing this letter to him.

I was born to a very poor family. I was nurtured in poverty by my mother and raised at the hands of my ignorant father. Despite that, my mother was never troubled by our fare of bean curd lees and rice bran, and she never took anything that belonged to others. Although father couldn't even make out the *kana* syllabary, he too never swerved from the path of honesty.

I was blessed with a fine physique and grew to be over six feet tall, with powers of observation in no way inferior to my fellows. Unfortunately, there seems to have been a larcenous streak ingrained in me from the start. I despised people like Po I and Shu Ch'i for their stupidity. I belittled the talents of celebrated brigands like Tao Chih and Chuang Yu. I fell in with Hou Pai, and forged a close friendship with Hou Hei. The past ten years I have been pretty much on the run. I haven't even known whether my parents are alive or dead. I tunneled into storehouses, broke into rice sheds, bored through gates and doors, stole livestock. Everything I ate, everything I wore, was produced by other people's sweat and blood. I have lived in constant fear of being caught and dragged to a place of execution. I have kept the dogs and crows waiting a long time to sink their teeth into my remains. So far I have narrowly escaped that fate, always expecting death to come tomorrow, perhaps even tonight. But as I can't avoid being caught much longer, I have become extremely cold-blooded. Not even a speck of mercy remains in my heart. Although in robbing people I sometimes burned their homes and took their children's lives, the money I got didn't last even a fortnight. There is no doubt whatever that I am destined for hell.

When I discovered that you were on your way to Edo with a large sum of money, I carefully searched through my bag of tricks and finally came up with a ruse I could use to take it from you. How was I to know that it would be I who would fall victim to the clever strategy you had devised? On stealing someone's money, my general rule is: if the mark goes east, you go west; if he goes west, you head east. This time, however, when I saw your palanquin heading east, I had no choice but to follow you eastward as well. After I had run along beside you for eight or nine leagues, my mind was made up. "If my plan succeeds, the money will be mine. If it fails, I will give myself up and throw myself once again on Mr. Fujiwara's

mercy.” I felt that way because I now realized you were no ordinary man.

So I was forced to continue eastward with you and your party. In the end, things turned out as I had feared. To this point in my career no one, from the far north of Honshu to Kyushu in the far west, had ever escaped the snares I laid, but matters in this case took a completely different course. When I realized you had turned the tables on me, that I had been caught in your trap, I was flummoxed. My liver froze. My knees shook uncontrollably. It would probably have been best if I had done away with myself right then and there. I regret that I was not able to throw my villainous carcass in front of your Excellency’s horse and let him stamp the life out of me. What have I to live for now? Even to think of it overwhelms me with shame.

In any case, I will return the money pouch to you. You will find it hanging on a pillar at the next post station. I ask that you please return the small amount I entrusted to you for safekeeping. It is stolen money; if you kept it, it would only tarnish your virtuous reputation.

Praying for his excellency Mr. Fujiwara’s continued long life and prosperity, and hoping he enjoys even greater success in the future, Oshio bows down with the deepest respect and offers him this letter.

Old Hakuin, half-dead, gasping out his final breaths, has once again pounded the great Dharma drum and ascended the Dharma seat to chaffer out yet one more long and prolix discourse. But somewhere within Oshio’s words is a secret key for breaking through the Barrier. Don’t complain that the old man has gone senile on you, that you are no longer able to make heads nor tails of what he is trying to say. This old buzzard’s primary concern is to set forth, in the Buddha’s place, his fundamental reason for appearing in the world, which was to promulgate the path of liberation. If a person can discern this reason, he will surely also grasp the essential meaning the Buddha revealed when he preached the *Lotus Sutra* on Vulture Peak. Hence an old poem states, “Yesterday, in wind and rain, an old friend set

out from here on a journey.” How can we clarify this? The *Lotus Sutra* says, “A being who slanders this sutra shall receive the following punishments.”

All the best to you all. Please take care of your health. A final verse:

Blind old duffer, he sits in a cave entangled in interminable vines.

Unfazed, joyfully grabbing them, holding them this way and that,

He sends eighty-four thousand men and gods sprawling to earth.

The *Lotus* is a formidable barrier, prowled by wolves and tigers.

.....

Open to all students indicates this is an unrestricted assembly (*musha no hōe*), “open to all those who aspire to the Way, adherents of all Buddhist sects, clerics and laity, men and women” (annotation).

Nervous sweat is literally “white sweat,” meaning one not caused by physical exertion but by mental or psychological stress. Hakuin tells the story of the enlightenment he attained at this time in the *Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 198)*.

Not wanting to explain it with undue haste. Words taken from the *Lotus Sutra*, “Parable of the Medicinal Herbs” chapter.

Losing my eyebrows. The eyebrows of a teacher who explains the Dharma are said to fall off.

The wealthy man’s treasure. A reference to a famous story in the “Parables” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* in which the young son of a wealthy man runs away from home and for the next fifty years wanders from place to place in abject poverty. Finally, by chance, he returns to the gate of his father’s residence, and is immediately recognized and invited inside. Terrified and overwhelmed by the splendor of the estate, the son runs away. The father entices him back by offering him work drawing night soil from the privies. After a series of gradual promotions the son finally becomes supervisor of

the rich man's affairs. Just before his death, the rich man publicly acknowledges his son and transfers to him the whole of his estate.

Po I and Shu Ch'i were princes of the ancient state of Ku-chu who renounced their birthright and wandered into the mountains, living on roots and berries until they finally perished from cold and hunger.

Tao Chih and Chuang Yu were famous brigands of the Robin Hood type in ancient China.

Hou Pai and *Hou Hei* were celebrated thieves of the ordinary mercenary type.

"Yesterday, in wind and rain, an old friend set out from here on a journey." These words appear in the following poem from a well-known collection of early Chinese poetry: "Walking out the east gate of the city, I gaze down the road toward far-off Chiang-nan. Yesterday, in wind and rain, an old friend set out from here on a journey. I want to cross the wide river, but it is deep and has no fords. I wish we were a pair of yellow cranes and could soar off back to our native place" (*Ku-shih yuan*, ch. 4). Hakuin uses the verse as a capping phrase in *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams*.

The Lotus Sutra says, "A being . . . the following punishments." These punishments are specified in the "Parables" chapter: "If he should become a human being, his faculties will be blighted and dull, he will be puny, vile, bent, crippled, blind, deaf, hunchbacked. The things he says people will not believe" (*The Lotus Sutra*, pp. 75–6).

He sends eighty-four thousand men and gods sprawling to earth. "Eighty-four thousand" is the number of people who heard the Buddha preach the *Lotus Sutra* (*The Lotus Sutra*, p. 296). "Truly understanding friends [*chiin*] are rare" (annotation).

120. GENERAL DISCOURSE INTRODUCTORY TO A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *FOUR PART RECORD*

Hakuin lectured on the Four Part Record on numerous occasions. It is not known when he delivered this General Discourse. An annotation says: "Given at the request of Chōkō-ji in Kai province." In an epilogue to his edition of the Chronological Biography Tōrei mentions the large number of talks and lectures Hakuin gave around the country, "talked about even today," whose dates he was unable to ascertain; first among those he cites is the General Discourse Hakuin gave at the Chōkō-ji in Kai province on the Four Part Record (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 235). A description of the Four Part Record is given in #92.

SENG-TS'AN'S VERSES ON *Belief in Mind* and Yung-chia's *Verses on Realizing the Way* work like invincible diamond-pounders, like drums smeared with virulent poison, like the vicious fangs of a marauding tiger, like the *pa*-serpent's terrifying maw. Even if a person possessed such learning as to be conversant with all the works in the Buddhist canon, and the native ability to swallow up every manner of thing in the eight directions, he would still be unable to fathom the unbounded vastness of these Zen poems. Among the four works in this collection, the secret harmonies of *Verses on Realizing the Way* are particularly hard to grasp, though in recent times teachers who peddle harebrained notions of them are more numerous than grains of rice in a bulging storehouse.

These smelly, shriveled-up old farts ensconce themselves atop the teaching seat and endeavor to surround themselves with large assemblies. If they can get ten or twenty of their shiftless followers to show up, they begin jabbering off things like this:

“I have nothing further to do; my study is complete. You have nothing further to do; your study is complete too. ‘Having nothing further to do’ means I no longer rely on words or letters, do not get tangled up in words, have no need to penetrate koan barriers or understand Zen’s essential principle, and can just spend my time in lumpish stupidity. That is what I mean by ‘having nothing further to do.’ ‘My study is complete’ means I have no concern whatsoever for either worldly or unworldly affairs. I put aside good and evil, picking and choosing, and engage in no religious practice whatsoever. That is what I mean by ‘my study is complete.’”

Don’t they know that the nature inherent in each and every person is not something obtained through practice and realization? It is perfectly bright and clear from the start, utterly free and untrammelled, without need of any “marvelous enlightenment.” It is just a matter of drinking tea and eating rice, relieving your bowels and bladder. What need is there to seek anything beyond that? This is Zen’s “direct pointing,” its “perfect way that is not difficult.” This is also what is meant by the words “Only you must avoid picking and choosing,” and by “a person whose study is utterly complete and has absolutely nothing further to do.”

With teachers like this, it is no wonder that the true traditions of Zen have fallen into the dust, its gardens shriveled to the roots. They are wrong! They are preposterously wrong! The great earth itself could not contain error of such magnitude. Men like this could not see Yung-chia even in their dreams. They should be looked upon as shaven-headed heretics, regarded as devils clothed in Buddhist surplices.

If any of you here harbors a single notion that bears any resemblance to the ones spouted by these priests, you will never be able to break free of Mara’s entangling nets and will remain permanently confined within the cycle of birth and death, sinking eternally into the pitch blackness of a bottomless abyss.

It is therefore with profoundest respect that I offer the following words to superior seekers of the hidden depths:

“Why do Seng-ts’an’s verses resemble the fangs of a ferocious man-eating tiger? How is Yung-chia’s poem like the *pa*-serpent’s maw?” Take these questions and gnaw at them — from the front,

from the rear. Gnaw at them wherever you can. Once you are drenched in the muck sweat experienced by those who die the great death, you will know for the first time that old Kokurin [Hakuin] did not give you a bum steer.

.....

Diamond-pounders (kongō no sho) are pronged iron or brass instruments. Used especially in esoteric Buddhist ritual, they are said to represent the firmness of spirit that overcomes delusions. Hakuin compares them to the way the enlightened utterances of these two poems destroy evil passions. The poison-smearred drums (*zudokku*) kill all who hear their sound. In ancient Chinese bestiaries the *pa-serpent* (Japanese: *hada*) is described as an immense snake that seizes elephants and swallows them whole, excreting their bones three years later (*Shan-hai-ching; The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, ch. 10). *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* also tells us that the elephants sought help from human beings for protection against the serpents. Mounted on the elephants' backs, men succeeded in killing the serpents with their arrows and amassed great fortunes by selling the mountains of elephant bones they discovered in the serpents' caves.

This is Zen's "direct pointing." . . . "The perfect way is not difficult" and "Only you must avoid picking and choosing" are the opening lines of Verses on Belief in Mind. "A person whose study is utterly complete and has absolutely nothing further to do" is from Verses on Realizing the Way.

121. GENERAL DISCOURSE INTRODUCTORY TO A LECTURE MEETING ON *THE POISONOUS SEAS OF MOUNT CHING*

Here Hakuin uses the title The Poisonous Seas of Mount Ching (Ching-shan tsa-tu-hai) for Ta-hui's Arsenal. The monastery where Ta-hui had served for a time as head priest was located on Mount Ching. The Zen phrase "sea of assorted poisons" (zōdokkai) is used as a title for several koan collections; see #202.

The lecture meeting at which this talk was given was held at the Jiju-in in Izu province in autumn of the sixth year of Hōreki (1756). It was a busy year for Hakuin, now seventy-two years old. In spring he conducted lecture meetings on the Heroic March Sutra and during the summer on the Record of Daiō, the Precious Mirror Samadhi, and his own commentary on the Heart Sutra. We further learn from the Chronological Biography that while Hakuin was delivering this General Discourse, he was greatly troubled by an inflamed carbuncle. The inflammation subsided several days later after being treated by his physician, who had also treated Hakuin for a carbuncle in 1751, his sixty-seventh year, during a lecture meeting he was conducting at a nearby temple.

THESE CLAWS AND fangs of the Dharma cave, these divine amulets that divest you of your life, are the greatest assets in the Buddhas' wonderful storehouse. Average students never see them even in their dreams. These are reserved solely for the person who commits himself to the daunting hardships of genuine Zen training.

Zen master Ta-hui was a Dharma grandson of the master of the Eastern Mountain [Wu-tsu Fa-yen]; from his chambers emerged Wan-an Tao-yen. Ta-hui's Dharma struggle began in the training hall of Zen master Chan-t'ang Wen-chun [1061–1115]. He underwent austere discipline in a hundred forms and suffered a thousand trials until with his haggard face he looked like a son who had just lost his parents. Later, he entered the chambers of Zen master Yuan-wu, and there his search came to an end and all his many efforts reached fruition. He was like a dragon that had entered its native element of clouds and rain.

Don't let anyone tell you that the head of Miao-hsi Hermitage [Ta-hui] was a reincarnation of Yun-feng Wen-yueh [1131–62]. His sagacity in devising stratagems would put Chang Liang and Ch'en P'ing to shame. His ruthless tactics would quiver the livers of a

million valiant iron knights, make their knees shake and rattle. His ploys and devices forced all the stalwart heroes within the four seas to raise white flags of surrender, and even made Sun Tzu's tactics seem lame in comparison. Thirteen men who practiced under him at Yang-yu reached enlightenment after applying themselves with the singlemindedness of a son bent on avenging his parents' murder. Ta-hui awarded the robe of transmission to his Dharma heir Ying-an T'an-hua. Seventeen years of untold difficulty at Heng-yang and Meiyang allowed his realization to mature fully, and enabled him to say, "I'd sooner throw a dipper of warm shit over you than try to teach you Zen."

In autumn of the sixth year of Hōreki [1756], the old priest of Jijū-in in Mishima, who for many years willingly lapped up the venomous slobber of past sages and has ceaselessly lamented the sad decline of Zen's true traditions, invited me to deliver some comments on the koans in Ta-hui's *Poisonous Seas* collection. The Kyōgen performer Gihan paid me a visit and tenaciously implored me to accept. The priest at Rinsen-an pledged his wholehearted support. I myself gradually warmed to the idea, and now I have taken up my *hossu* and seated myself here on the Dharma chair to speak, humbly and respectfully, to elder priests who have assembled from the surrounding areas, and to valiant patricians of the secret depths who have filled this hall. I ask you all to pledge that you will push forward the wheel of the great vow and raise up the fortunes of our school. I request as well that you kindly refrain from rejecting as worthless these clumsy ruminations of mine!

.....

Reincarnation of Yun-feng Wen-yueh. From *Stories Recorded at Yun-wo Hermitage (Yun-wo chi-t'an)*, anecdotes of Zen priests compiled by Ta-hui's student Chung-yun (1116?–?): "In the first year of Ta-kuan [1107], Ta-hui, after engaging in practice in quiet retreats, went at the age of nineteen with two other monks to Pei-tu Hermitage. A large dog had been let loose and barked angrily as they approached. While the other two monks beat a fearful retreat, Ta-hui went striding boldly ahead. The animal suddenly began

wagging its tail, greeting Ta-hui as though he were an old and trusted friend. The head priest at the hermitage gave Ta-hui permission to stay, and accorded him the greatest courtesy. 'I'm only a young monk,' said Ta-hui. 'I'm unworthy of such consideration.' Glancing at a clay statue that stood in the hermitage, the head priest said, 'At around midnight last night I had a dream. A person appeared and told me that Zen master Yun-feng [Yun-feng Wen-yueh, 1131–62] would arrive at the hermitage today. He said that while he was here I should do all I could for him.' Ta-hui, though still feeling unworthy of the attention, thanked the head priest. After he left for other parts to continue his practice, he asked elder priests that he met about Zen master Yun-feng. One of the priests, to help explain Yun-feng's teaching, showed him *Yun-feng's Records*. Ta-hui opened the book and read it avidly. After reading it just once, he had it by heart and never forgot it. From that time on, word passed through the monasteries that Ta-hui was a reincarnation of master Yun-feng."

Chang Liang and Ch'en P'ing are known for their skill in devising (often devious) strategies to advance their ruler's aims.

Sun Tzu (6th century B.C.) is author of *The Art of War*.

The Kyōgen performer Gihan. An annotation tells us that Gihan was a *sarugaku* (*kyōgen*) performer from Edo who sometimes came to stay in a hermitage at Jiju-in, presumably to engage in Zen practice. Nothing else is known of him.

Rinsen-an is in the present-day city of Numazu.

122. GENERAL DISCOURSE GIVEN DURING A LECTURE MEETING ON THE RECORDS OF NATIONAL MASTER RYŪHŌ

The lectures Hakuin refers to here were given at the age of seventy-three, in the seventh year of Hōreki (1757), at a practice meeting held at Shōfuku-zan Nanshō-in (Shōfuku is its "mountain" name) in

Minobu, Kai province. The Records of National Master Ryūhō is more commonly known as the Record of Daitō, and National Master Ryūhō is properly Daitō Kokushi, National Master Daitō being the honorific title of Shūhō Myōchō (1282–1338), founder of the Daitoku-ji in Kyoto, and the Japanese Zen priest Hakuin seems to have revered above all others. We know from an annotation that Hakuin was lecturing not on Daitō's records themselves, but on Dream Words from a Land of Dreams (Kaian-kokugo), his Zen commentary (teishō) on Daitō's Zen records, which had been published seven years earlier.

Worthy of note is Hakuin's mention of his famous "Sound of One Hand" koan, which the priest of Nanshō-in, Hakuin's long-time friend Senyū Chiei (1688–1763), had, at the age of sixty-eight, recently passed. In the verse couplet attached at the end of the talk, Hakuin alludes to Nanshō-in's location overlooking the swiftly flowing Fuji River as it rushes down from the Mount Fuji highlands and empties into Suruga Bay.

ANYONE WHO WANTS to understand the *Records of National Master Daitō* first of all must penetrate the koan "Su-shan's Memorial Tower". There are greater and lesser Dharmas; there is genuine and false fortune. Even if someone rises to the heights of worldly success and is blessed with carriages, or a crown, and more wealth than Shih Ch'ung, if within he has no links to *prajna* wisdom, if he lacks the guidance of a good friend and teacher and merely abandons himself with prideful self-indulgence to his passions and desires, after death he is destined to descend into the endless suffering of one of the three evil destinations. It is for this reason that worldly fortune is said to be a curse in the three worlds.

If, however, a person is possessed of true mettle and pursues his training diligently, heedless of his own well-being, he will one morning kick over the roiling karmic seas of birth and death and achieve a clear and unmistakable *kenshō* — as if looking down at it in the palm of his hand. His penetration will extend from the highest heavens all the way to the Yellow Springs, and he will experience a tremendous joy and perfect, untrammelled freedom. In all the human world and all the deva realms, there is nothing to compare with it. He

will not rest satisfied with this, however, but will continue to push forward, never retreating, chewing to pieces and swallowing down all the claws and fangs of the Dharma cave, ripping to shreds the divine life-destroying talismans, constantly carrying out the great practice of the Bodhisattva, assembling great Dharma assets, and attending to the great Dharma-giving that brings immeasurable benefit to men and devas. He is a then person of truly inestimable worth, a man of genuine good fortune and virtue.

The priest of Shōfuku-zan Nanshō-in is one who has attained this good fortune by engaging in secret practice and hidden application unbeknownst to others. Recently, he suddenly stomped the birthless sound of my “One Hand” koan into the ground. Then he totally silenced the ocean of words and phrases. And he didn’t stop there, either. He came and asked me to hold a lecture meeting that would elevate the path of Zen and promote its regimen for liberation.

One of the ancients said that when a false person preaches the true Dharma, the true Dharma becomes a false Dharma, and when a true person preaches a false Dharma, the false Dharma becomes a true Dharma. Tell me — are these lectures a true Dharma or a false one?

After the morning meal I stroll down the temple corridor,
Below on the Fuji River endless small boats slip swiftly
by.

.....

There are greater and lesser . . . false fortune. “Those with great resolve achieve a great satori; those with small determination achieve a small satori. Without the Bodhi-mind, any fortune achieved is bad fortune, self-centered and self-seeking. With the Bodhi-mind, it becomes good fortune, a lifework that imparts the Dharma gift to others” (annotation).

Shih Ch’ung was a man of the Chin dynasty known for his immense wealth and ostentatious life style.

Yellow Springs (Huang-ch’uan) refers to the home of the dead believed to lie under the earth.

“One Hand” koan. Hakuin’s “Sound of One Hand” koan was often given in two steps, hearing the sound of one hand clapping, then putting a stop to all sounds.

When a false person preaches the true Dharma . . . becomes a true Dharma. This statement is attributed to Zen master Chao-chou in the *Compendium of the Five Lamps* (ch. 4).

Verse couplet: “When you can wring these lines by the neck, you will know if Hakuin’s Zen lectures are true or false” (annotation).

VERSE COMMENTS ON OLD KOANS (*JUKO*)

Juko is a form of Zen discourse in which a teacher takes a koan and elucidates it with verse comments in the Zen manner. In the nenko form these comments are given in prose.

123. THE PRACTICER WHO OBSERVES ALL THE PRECEPTS DOES NOT ENTER NIRVANA

Tussling ants grapple over a Mayfly's stiff dead wings.
Two fledgling swallows perch to rest on a willow shoot.
Silkworm girls carry baskets, their faces pale and drawn,
Village lads stealing bamboo shoots vanish into a hedge.

.....

An annotation to this verse, by someone obviously close to Hakuin, describes how it came to be written: "In composing the verse, the master did not open his books and consult any of the ancients' verses. 'I will compose the verse first,' he thought, 'then see how it measures up against the exalted productions of the old teachers.' Leaving Ryōsen-ji in Tokura where he was visiting at the time, he stopped to rest as he was passing through Numazu. It was then that the first line of the verse came to him. The second line was conceived when he reached Kawabe village, and the third as he was passing through some open fields. Then suddenly, as he was entering another village, he had the final line as well. By the time he arrived back at Shōin-ji, he had a complete verse, and it was one that possessed merit even when compared against those of the ancients."

The ultimate source for the koan “The Practicer Who Observes All the Precepts Does Not Enter Nirvana,” to which Hakuin’s verse comments are attached, is *Manjusri’s Preaching of the Great Wisdom Sutra* (ch. 1): “None of the five grave transgressions is inborn, is reborn in the deva realms, falls into hell, or enters Nirvana. Why is that? Karmic causes and conditions always operate within the realm of ultimate reality, neither coming nor going, neither a cause nor a result. This is because the Dharma universe is boundless and has no before or after. As a consequence, Shariputra, we can see by considering that monks who commit the gravest transgressions do not fall into hell and that monks who maintain the precepts in perfect purity do not enter Nirvana, that such monks are not Arhats and they are not not Arhats; they have not exhausted delusions and they have not not exhausted delusions. Why is this? Because such monks maintain perfect equanimity in the midst of all things.” Zen master Ta-hui, no doubt one of the “ancient teachers” whose verses Hakuin may have considered consulting, commented on this koan: “Place a saucer of oil in the wall lamp. Set some wine on the altar before the hall. If you feel sad or depressed, drink three cups of wine. Whence can trouble approach you then?” (*Record of Ta-hui*, ch. 10.)

A sidelight on this verse is provided in the records of Daikyū Ebō, one of Hakuin’s most important Dharma heirs. Daikyū first arrived at Hakuin’s temple at the age of twenty-six having already studied with Kogetsu Zenzai in Kyushu and received his confirmation. On leaving Kogetsu’s temple, he and his brother monk Kaigan Kotetsu (who also became a Hakuin heir) traveled to the mountains of Kumano for a prolonged practice retreat to mature their attainment. At a temple on the way, they chanced to see an inscription hanging on the wall. It was a verse comment in Chinese on the koan, “Precept-breaking monks do not fall into hell; monks who rigorously uphold them do not enter Nirvana.” They were unable to make any sense of the verse at all, and decided it must be gibberish some foreigner had scribbled down. On learning it was the work of a priest named Hakuin, they changed their plans and proceeded directly to Shōin-ji. After personal interviews with Hakuin convinced them that they were no match for him, they decided to stay on, pledging that they would not

leave until they had completed the great matter of Zen practice. Later in life, Kaigan wrote that Daikyū was much superior to him in capacity. “Daikyū knew after once crossing lances with the master that he had lost. I was unaware that he had taken me alive and I’d used up all my arrows until my bow was broken” (*Stories from a Thicket of Thorn and Briar*, pp. 125–31).

124. THE BUDDHA DHARMA OF THE DEEP MOUNTAINS

This depiction of a retreat in the mountains contains echoes of the solitary life Hakuin led on Mount Iwataki in Mino province in his early thirties. He describes it in “Account of the Hermitage at Mount Iwataki” in #170 (see pp. 275–6) and in the autobiographies Wild Ivy and The Tale of My Childhood, which are the basis of the record in the Chronological Biography; these latter two works are translated in Precious Mirror Cave: A Zen Miscellany. An annotation praises the verse as “worthy of inclusion in the Ancestral Heroes Collection,” a book of verse by Hsueh-tou Ch’ung-hsien, one of the greatest Zen poets. Nowhere is it explained why it was included among Hakuin’s Verse Comments on Old Koans, but perhaps in this case the koan is the reclusive life itself?

Moonlight filtering through the trees,
A monkey hooting in the frigid cold.
An old nest is juddering in the wind,
Roosting cranes flutter and squawk.
Racks of cloud sweep mindlessly up,
Filling in the rifts along the cliffside.
Venturing out in search of firewood,
Embraced by hanging wisteria vines.

.....

Moonlight filtering . . . flutter and squawk. “The moonlight making its way down through the dense surrounding forest created a very lonely prospect for me. Into this the sad cries of monkeys carried far in the freezing cold. It was truly the loneliness of the deep mountains. Cranes were fluttering nervously about in an old nest that was perched in an ancient pine tree and being buffeted by strong winds” (annotation). Yoshizawa suggests that the lines were inspired by a long poem on reclusive mountain life by the 5th century poet K’ung Te-chang (*Wen Hsuan*, ch. 43).

Racks of cloud . . . wisteria vines. “Everything was enveloped in a thick mist that rolled in from the mountains. It was curious the way one bank of mist rose up only to have another one flow over it. Wisteria vines were hanging in tangles from the trees as far as I could see. I became captivated watching the monkeys reaching up and breaking off branches with their hands as they made their way up the withered trees” (annotation).

125. THE BUDDHA SUPREME, PERVADING AND SURPASSING WISDOM SAT ON THE BODHI SEAT DOING ZAZEN FOR TEN KALPAS

This verse was given at Sekirin-ji in Kai province where Hakuin was finishing up a series of lectures on the Lotus Sutra he had begun at other temples. According to the Chronological Biography the meeting took place in 1746, his sixty-second year.

Ta-t’ung practiced zazen on the Bodhi seat for over ten kalpas,
Like foreigners dozing off in the same bed with their boots on.

Nirvana and birth-and-death — snowflakes in a red-hot furnace;
Mind, Buddha, sentient beings — hoarfrost at the ocean bottom.
Great Absolute, face in a scowl, bolts away to a different land;
Great Void, tongue lolling out, canters off to other parts as well.
An aching tooth woke the lovely Lady Yang in the dead of night,
Throwing Hsieh San-lang into the most gut-wrenching anguish.

.....

Ta-t'ung . . . over ten kalpas. Ta-t'ung Chih-sheng is the Chinese for the Buddha Supreme, Pervading and Surpassing Wisdom who appears in the *Lotus Sutra*, “Phantom City” chapter: “The Buddha Supreme, Pervading and Surpassing Wisdom spent ten small kalpas before the doctrines of the Buddhas finally appeared to him and he was able to attain final supreme enlightenment.” However Hakuin’s direct reference is apparently to the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 9, entitled “Ta-t'ung Chih-sheng”: “Once a monk said to priest Ch'ing-jang of Hsing-yang, ‘The Buddha Ta-t'ung practiced zazen for ten kalpas seated on the Bodhi seat, but the Buddha Dharma did not manifest itself and he could not attain the Way. Why was that?’ ‘Your question is a good one, right to the point,’ Ch'ing-jang answered. ‘But why couldn't he attain the Buddha Way after sitting all that time?’ asked the monk. ‘Because he didn't,’ said Ch'ing-jang.” Wu-men’s (the author of the *Gateless Barrier*) comment: “Granting the old Indian has knowledge of this, I cannot allow that he fully understood it. An ordinary, unenlightened person who understands it is a sage. A sage who grasps it is an ordinary man.”

Like foreigners . . . with their boots on. “Dutchmen go into the house and sleep together in the same bed without even taking their shoes off.’ What a dopey remark. This isn’t something you can understand.

It can only be grasped by hearing the sound of one hand” (annotation).

The phrase “sleeping in the same bed” connotes attaining a close relationship with someone: “Unless you share the same sleeping mat, how will you know where the holes in the coverlet are?” (annotation). Here it perhaps alludes to the oneness suggested in the lines that follow.

Nirvana and birth-and-death . . . at the ocean bottom. That is, the trio of Nirvana, birth, and death, as well as the trio of mind, Buddha, and sentient beings, are illusions without any basis in reality. Two metaphors from the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.

Great Absolute . . . to other parts as well. Hakuin personifies two essential principles of Chinese thought: *T'ai-chi* (Great Absolute), the essential principle and source of *yin* and *yang* that embodies all things, including time and space; and its polar opposite *Hsu-k'ung* (Great Void), the limitless storehouse of nothingness that embraces all things while not impeding their existence. “No one knows where these are found” (annotation). A tongue popping out of one’s mouth signifies surprise and contrition.

An aching tooth woke the lovely Lady Yang . . . the most gut-wrenching anguish. “When you have the strength the Buddha acquired from ten kalpas of zazen, you’ll understand this” (annotation).

Yang Kuei-fei, one of the great beauties of ancient China and the beloved consort of Emperor Hsuan Tsung, was put to death at the insistence of the imperial guard. *Hsieh San-lang* is the name Zen master Hsuan-sha went by before entering the priesthood, when he lived as an illiterate fisherman. From this, perhaps, the name came to be used for someone who is an utter simpleton: “Hsieh San-lang can’t even read four words” (*Gateless Barrier*, Case 41).

An early painting entitled “Lady Yang’s Toothache” is known owing to verses written about it by Chinese poets. One of them, which Hakuin apparently alludes to here, appears in *Chin-hsiu tuan* (ch. 10), a collection of poetry avidly studied by Japanese Zen priests:

The pain from her aching gums was unbearable;

How deeply her suffering distressed San-lang.
As things fell out, she lost her lips as well,
Then was powerless to sway the Emperor's heart.

“Lost her lips” alludes to Yang Kuei-fei's death, as well as to an old saying: “Lose your lips and your teeth grow cold,” used to describe a causal relationship so clear as to be indisputable.

126. NAN-CH'UAN'S FLOWERING TREE

“While talking with Nan-ch'uan, High Commissioner Lu Hsuan remarked, ‘Master Seng-chao said, “Heaven and earth and I have the same root; the myriad things and I are one body.” I think those are remarkable words.’ Pointing to a flower blossoming on a tree in the garden, Nan-ch'uan said, ‘People these days see this flower as in a dream’” (Blue Cliff Record, Case 40). Hakuin comments on this in Hekiganshū Hishō: “The various ways people have interpreted this koan through the centuries are based on what I can only call iniquitous views, the kind that will send them into the tongue-pulling hell. A koan like this is the very bone and marrow of the patriarchs' teaching. Zen students must tackle it with great reverence and respect.”

Raising a red silk patch at the tip of a bamboo pole,
I address Uncle Chang and enquire about his teeth.
Do not tell me that you won't make any utterance,
If the mother leaves, the three children will freeze.

.....

Line 1: “A monk asked Zen master Yuan-lien, ‘What is the meaning of the First Patriarch's coming from the West?’ ‘Raising a red silk banner at the end of a bamboo pole’ he replied” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 11). “Goodness this is troublesome. But this explaining of riddles — it makes me want to spew” (annotation).

Line 2: “Uncle Chang,” indicating no one in particular, here alludes to Bodhidharma, who is sometimes called the “broken-toothed Indian” and depicted as such in paintings. According to an old story, a fellow priest struck Bodhidharma in anger, breaking two of his front teeth.

Lines 3–4: “Min Sun, a disciple of Confucius who is counted as one of the twenty-four paragons of filial piety, was treated badly by his stepmother. While dressing her own two sons in padded winter robes, she gave Min a garment made from rushes. One winter day Min was driving his father in a carriage without gloves because his stepmother had not given him any. His hands became so cold that he let the reins drop. On learning the reason for this lapse, Min’s father became so incensed that he was on the point of driving his wife from the house, but Min said, ‘If our mother stays, one child will be cold. But if she leaves, all three children will be lonely.’ On hearing what Min had said, the stepmother realized that she had been wrong to treat him so harshly” (*Records of the Grand Historian*, ch. 67).

Hakuin uses the words “Do not tell me that you won’t make any utterance; if the mother leaves, the three children will freeze” as a capping phrase in *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams* with a stated meaning of “both speaking and not speaking are wrong.”

127. LAYMAN P’ANG’S GOOD SNOWFLAKES, FALLING IN JUST THE RIGHT PLACE

The koan about Layman P’ang is found in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 42.

WHEN LAYMAN P’ANG took leave of master Yao-shan, Yao-shan ordered ten of his monks to escort the Layman to the gate. On the way, seeing snowflakes falling through the air, the Layman pointed to them and said, “A good snowfall — each flake falling in just the right

place.” A Zen monk named Ch’uan asked, “Where is the right place?” The Layman gave him a slap.

Hsueh-tou [in his comments in the *Blue Cliff Record*] said, “I’d have beaned the Layman with a snowball the minute he opened his trap.”

Hsueh-tou’s pit of black fire has a profundity beyond measure,
Who knows how many countless pilgrims have toppled into it?
First to fall was Librarian Ch’ing, a Szechwan monk, who said,
“How long must we wait till Hsueh-tou makes that snowball?”

.....

“I’d have beaned . . . he opened his trap.” In the *Blue Cliff Record* Yuan-wu reflects on Hsueh-tou’s comment as follows: “It was proper for Hsueh-tou not to have let that statement pass as he did, but he delivered his thrust too late. Librarian Ch’ing said, ‘Layman Pang’s Zen strikes like a lightning bolt. How long must we wait for Hsueh-tou to make his snowball? The only way to shut him up completely is to bean him while he’s still speaking.’”

Who knows . . . toppled into it? “No one can avoid being burnt to a crisp” (annotation). “If it was a blazing red fire, they would have seen it and might not have fallen in” (annotation).

“How long must we wait . . . that snowball?” “This question misses the mark by about thirty thousand miles” (annotation).

128. MEDICINE AND ILLNESS CURE EACH OTHER

This koan is found in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 87.

ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLY Yun-men said, “Medicine is a cure used according to the illness. Everywhere on the great earth is medicine. Where is the self that is this great earth?”

Who uses the medicine to cure the affliction?
Looking for fire is just like looking for water.
Bitter gourds are bitter; sweet gourds are sweet,
Yesterday misery was everywhere out on parade.

.....

“Medicine is a cure . . . the self that is this great earth?” Hakuin comments on this koan in *Hekiganshū Hishō*: “The illness is illusion, medicine is enlightenment. When enlightenment is attained, everything is the same one mind, with no duality between medicine and illness. The entire earth is medicine; medicine is the entire earth. When the entire earth is medicine, there is nothing you can point to as the self — there is nothing anywhere that is not the self” (*Hekiganshū Hishō*, Case 87).

Who uses the medicine to cure the affliction? “It’s because Yuan-wu’s [lengthy] comments on this koan in the *Blue Cliff Record* are dubious that Hsueh-tou, for the sake of later students, wrote such a verse. It’s not something that can be explained. You must examine it yourself by considering it in light of Yuan-wu’s comment” (annotation).

Looking for fire is just like looking for water. “Both fire and water are things that actually exist and are found right at hand” (annotation).

Bitter gourds are bitter . . . everywhere out on parade. “This is the way in which the self-nature or Buddha-nature exists” (*Kuzō Kattō-shō*). “A sweet gourd [or melon] is always sweet, a bitter gourd always bitter” (annotation). Yoshizawa, after calling these lines “very difficult to construe” (*nankai*), offers a tentative rendering: “A bitter gourd is invariably a bitter gourd. Such is the truth of the matter. But unless you grasp it for yourself, there is nothing but misery in store for you.”

129. HSUAN-SHA'S TRIPLE INVALID

This koan is found in Case 88 of the Blue Cliff Record (the koan is given in the fifth note to #42, p. 59). Hekiganshū Hishō quotes the verse below, followed by Hakuin's comments on the koan: "Everywhere veteran teachers speak of guiding students and working for the benefit of sentient beings. If one of them encountered these invalids, how would he teach them? If they raised their mallet or held up their hossu in front of a blind person, he wouldn't see it. No matter how eloquently they preached, a deaf person wouldn't hear it. No matter how avidly they pressed a mute person to make an utterance, he wouldn't be able to. How then do they teach such people? If they are unable to teach them, the Buddha's teaching must be deemed inadequate."

Mr. Hsieh sits in his fishing boat wringing water from his line,
Even the clearest-eyed monk is inwardly consumed by despair.
Heedlessly I wrote out six characters on a blank sheet of paper:
Just yesterday, this bonze breezed in from old Yen-t'ou's place.

.....

Mr. Hsieh sits . . . consumed by despair. Hsieh is the secular name Zen master Hsuan-sha used when he lived as a fisherman before entering religious life. Since a fishing line is always in the water, it is useless to wring it dry — it is senseless activity. The second line underscores the extreme difficulty of cracking this koan.

Heedlessly I wrote out six characters on a blank sheet of paper: Just yesterday . . . Yen-t'ou's place. The six words or Chinese characters that appear in Hsuan-sha's koan are "blind person, deaf person, mute person." "Heedlessly" implies that the most suitable statement on the koan would be a blank sheet of paper with nothing written on

it. The third line alludes to another Hsuan-sha koan: “One day Hsuan-sha sent a letter to his teacher Hsueh-feng. When Hsueh-feng opened it he found three sheets of blank paper. He asked a monk, ‘Do you understand?’ ‘No, I don’t,’ said the monk. ‘Don’t you see? He is saying: To a superior man the wind blows the same for a thousand leagues.’ The monk made a response, then Hsueh-feng said, ‘The old priest on the mountaintop doesn’t know he has already fallen off’” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7).

Yen-t’ou was an heir of master Te-shan, whose student Hsueh-feng was Hsuan-sha’s teacher. An annotation on the final line has: “What did he [Hakuin] write? ‘Just yesterday, this bonze breezed in from old Yen-t’ou’s place.’ But I don’t know what it means. He seems to speak in a kind of death rattle.”

130. CHAO-CHOU’S THREE TURNING WORDS

Addressing his assembly Chao-chou said, “A gold Buddha won’t pass through a forge; a wood Buddha won’t pass through a fire; a mud Buddha won’t pass through water” (Blue Cliff Record, Case 96).

A true Buddha undeniably sits inside the room.
A sick monkey is gnawing at his golden chains.
After hornswoggling golden-faced Mahakashapa,
He shared the teaching seat with him at the stupa.

.....

“Hakuin own comment on his verse: ‘I plucked this from a place Hsueh-tou’s verse [i.e., verse comment on Chao-chou’s koan] didn’t touch upon. As long as you talk about things like Buddhas sitting inside rooms, the sick monkey is going to gnaw at his chains’” (annotation).

A true Buddha undeniably sits . . . gnawing at his golden chains. The first line is based upon Yuan-wu's comments on Chao-chou's koan: "After speaking these words, Chao-chou said 'A true Buddha sits inside a room . . .'" The golden chains are those of enlightenment or satori (see the note on "golden fetters" in #95, p. 124). "A sick monkey is someone [whose mind is] still attached to the Dharma" (annotation). "Gold is indeed splendid, but it isn't good for chains. The golden chain metaphor appears in the *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra*" (annotation). "In the past, when my monkey mind was still untamed, I always kept it shackled uselessly in golden chains" (*Admonitions for Buddhists*, ch. 10).

After bamboozling . . . at the stupa. The bamboozled monk is Mahakashapa (the original has "yellow-faced monk"), a principal disciple of Buddha. "When the Buddha held up a lotus flower before the assembly, Mahakashapa expressed his understanding with a smile. The Buddha then shared the teaching seat with him before the Bahuputraka Stupa" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 1, section on Shakamuni).

131. TUNG-SHAN'S BUFFALO PASSES THROUGH THE WINDOW

Master Wu-tsu (Tung-shan) said, "It is like a buffalo going through a lattice window. Its head, horns, and four legs all pass through. Why can't its tail pass through too?" (Gateless Barrier, Case 38).

Hard for even the most clear-sighted Zen monks to crack,
A Buffalo Passing Through the Window trips them all up.
Four legs and both horns have little trouble passing
through,
But the tail, sad to say, is unable to gain admittance as
well.

A boundless empty void with neither too little nor too much,
An earthenware pony warms an egg and gallops into a gourd.
Winds rattling the old buildings infuriate the gods of poverty;
Trapped in his den by hard frost the fox whines and whimpers.

.....

Four legs and both horns have little trouble passing through. “The more you say about this, the worse it gets” (annotation).

Winds rattling the old buildings . . . the fox whines and whimpers. “This describes our life at Shōin-ji in winter” (annotation).

132. TUNG-SHAN’S WHO IS THAT OTHER?

Wu-tsu (Tung-shan) said, “Shakamuni and Maitreya are someone else’s servant. Tell me, who is that someone else?” (Gateless Barrier, Case 45).

Have I returned home now, or not?
If I’ve returned then I cannot be me.
If I still haven’t returned home yet,
Then I’m without doubt my real me.

.....

Have I returned home now, or not? “Returning back home” denotes returning to the true self, one’s native home in the Buddha-nature.

The annotations attached to this piece are only marginally instructive. One, inscribed in a copy of *Poison Blossoms*, reads: “It is written in a certain book, ‘There was once a foolish man who had too much to drink and lay down to sleep on the road. Deciding to play a trick on him, people shaved his head to make him look like a priest. When the man woke from his stupor, he was greatly perplexed by his lack of hair. “Perhaps I’m dead,” he thought. “If I’m alive, I don’t remember shaving my head. If I’m dead and have entered the Yellow Springs, I should be able to tell that, too, because the underworld is completely different from the world of the living.” Finally, still unable to decide where he was, he returned to his home. He asked his wife and daughter, “Did I return home just now? If I did, I’m not a ghost. If I didn’t return home just now, then I really am myself. Be sure that neither of you mistakes me for a ghost.”””

A related annotation occurs in a copy of *Sendai’s Comments on the Poems of Han-shan*, Hakuin’s commentary on Han-shan’s poetry (my collection): “Is Han-shan (Cold Mountain) the realm of the ordinary person or the enlightened? Is it relative or absolute, a Buddha realm or a Devil-realm? Am I myself? Is myself me?”

133. THE WOMAN CH’IEN AND HER SPIRIT SEPARATE

Wu-tsu asked a monk, “The woman Ch’ien and her spirit separated. Which is the true Ch’ien?” (Gateless Barrier, Case 35).

This koan derives from a well-known Chinese ghost story from the T’ang dynasty. The basic story is as follows: A young girl of great beauty and refinement named Ch’ien falls in love with a young man named Wang-chou. When Ch’ien’s father Chang-i refuses to approve the match, she runs away from the family home. Taking a boat upriver, she discovers Wang-chou also on board. They marry, move to a different province, and have a young child. Plagued with feelings of guilt toward her father, Ch’ien and her husband finally

decide to visit her home and beg her father's forgiveness. They arrive by boat, and Wang-chou goes to see the father while Ch'ien remains on board the boat with her child. Wang-chou explains to Chang-i about their marriage and attempts to apologize. The father is bewildered, and says that his daughter has been ill for several years and never once left the family home. Wang-chou returns to the boat and brings his wife Ch'ien and the young boy back to meet Chang-i. Meanwhile, the Ch'ien who has been at home all these years hears what has happened; she gets out of her sickbed and goes to meet the wife. She had been bedridden and spiritless ever since Wang-chou left the village, and the wife named Ch'ien who left the village had been completely unaware that her body was still in the house. The two Ch'iens meet and are united once again.

Wang-chou and wife have returned by boat to see Chang-i.

Chang's house is in an uproar, people rushing madly about.

One Ch'ien comes ashore, leading a little boy by the hand,

Another Ch'ien gussies up and dashes outside to greet her.

Woman and spirit are separated — which is the real Ch'ien?

A Dark Pearl in the Red Water belching out a purplish mist,

A gem is suddenly set out on a tray, ungettable, inescapable,

Many people draw swords and stand poised upon the stairs.

Ch'ien's old father is clad in tattered, threadbare garments,

Wang's mother has on a shabby skirt many sizes too small.

Everyone enjoys the rollicking at the autumn shrine festival,

By nightfall the befuddled celebrants are staggering
around.
Stirred by autumn breezes, bamboo leaves glitter in the
sun,
Under a new moon, dewdrops on the pines gleam like
gems.
One pilgrim, sad to find he's separated from his native
land,
Remembers a beautiful lady he has never entirely
forgotten.

.....

A Dark Pearl in the Red Water. “The Yellow Emperor went wandering north of the Red Water, ascended the slopes of K’un-lun, and gazed south. When he got home, he discovered he had lost his Dark Pearl. He sent Knowledge to look for it, but Knowledge couldn’t find it. He sent the keen-eyed Li Chu to look for it, but Li Chu couldn’t find it. He sent Wrangling Debate to look for it, but Wrangling Debate couldn’t find it. At last he tried employing Formless No-Mind, and Formless No-Mind found it” (*The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*; adapted from Watson, p. 129).

A gem is suddenly set out . . . stand poised upon the stairs. The first line is from a saying, “Offering something on a tray,” which means presenting and revealing everything, including the tray, and concealing nothing. It appears as a Zen phrase in various forms: a gem (the Buddha-mind) appears glowing in the night beyond the lattice blinds, frightening those who do not know what it is and causing them to act defensively.

Another capping phrase, which Hakuin uses in his commentary on the *Heart Sutra* (see “No Pain, Karma, Extinction, Way” in #391 on p. 609), is: “Gems shining in the dawn light beyond the bamboo blind. The blockhead goes at them with an upraised sword.”

Enjoys the rollicking . . . staggering around. These two lines allude to the final couplet in a poem by Wang-chia (9th–10th century) entitled “Autumn Festival Day”, included in the *San-t’i-shih* collection of T’ang poetry:

Below Gooselake Mountain the grain fields ripen,
Pig pens and chicken coops are securely fastened.
Shadows from a mulberry signal the festival's end,
Families appear to help drunken celebrants home.

134. CHAO-CHOU SEES THROUGH THE OLD WOMAN

“A monk asked an old woman, ‘Which is the way to Mount T’ai?’ ‘Right straight ahead,’ she replied. When the monk had taken a few steps, she said, ‘A fine, respectable-looking monk, yet he goes on just like the others.’ When Chao-chou heard about this, he said, ‘Let me go and investigate the old woman for you.’ The next day, he went and asked her the same question. She replied in the same way. He returned and announced to the assembly, ‘I investigated that old woman for you. I saw right through her.’” (Gateless Barrier, Case 31).

Mr. Chang’s daughter has a fine set of teeth, with healthy
gums,
She cracks open walnut shells as though she is chewing
parsley.
Mother Li next door marveled to see such magnificent
choppers,
Fed her a dish of salted wormwood and made her gums
swell up.

.....

The names *Mr. Chang* and *Mother Li* are used in Zen records as generic placeholders for unspecified persons, like “Tom, Dick, and Harry.”

Mother Li next door . . . made her gums swell up. “Putting salt on beach wormwood [shiro-yomogi] makes it toxic” (annotation).

EXAMINING OLD KOANS (KOKO)

Koko (literally, “I put this old koan before you”), like the previous Juko, are concerned with elucidating koans. In the Koko form the teacher focuses on points that he deems have been overlooked or are in error in the original koan or capping words.

135. CHAO-CHOU’S THE PERFECT WAY IS NOT DIFFICULT

The koan “The Perfect Way Is Not Difficult” (the words come at the beginning of Seng-ts’an’s Hsin-hsin ming, or Verses on Belief in Mind) is found in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 2.

“Chao-chou instructed the assembly, saying, ‘The Perfect Way is not difficult. Just avoid picking and choosing. As soon you open your mouth and speak a word, there is picking and choosing, distinctions are clearly defined. This old priest does not abide within such clarity. You monks, are you abiding within picking and choosing and clear defining?’ A monk asked, ‘If you do not abide within clear defining, master, where do you abide?’ Chao-chou said, ‘I do not know that myself.’ ‘If you don’t know, how can you say you aren’t abiding there?’ ‘I understand your question,’ replied Chao-chou, ‘Now make your bows and leave.’”

THIS KOAN IS a marvelous prescription that can transform someone to his marrow. It is a final, inescapable prison enclosure. Chao-chou without reservation exposes to you his heart, his liver, and all his other vital organs. At the time, Yuan-wu blundered and howled at the sky; endless numbers of people have appeared and squabbled over the fruit, totally unaware of Yuan-wu’s great blunder.

In his response “I don’t know that myself,” Chao-chou turns and pivots with total and unfettered freedom. How could anyone poke his beak into such unenlightened activity? You should know that the keys to this koan are solely in Chao-chou’s grasp. The monk may have stepped up and asked the question, but he could never, not even in his dreams, see old Chao-chou. Yuan-wu, however, commended the monk for coming forward. Can someone tell me: What was commendable about it?

Hsueh-tou, who knew perfectly well what Chao-chou was about, says in his verse comments, “The Perfect Way is not difficult. Speech itself is ultimate truth. Words themselves are ultimate truth.” With those four Chinese characters, Hsueh-tou consummates this koan. He catches Chao-chou’s essence with perfect clarity. Anyone trying to weigh the stature of these two old priests would surely see the balance arm snap in two. Yet if someone possesses the true Dharma eye, he will understand it immediately, like the exquisite taste of celestial nectar.

.....

At the time, Yuan-wu blundered and howled . . . unaware of Yuan-wu’s great blunder. “One dog howls at the sky and a thousand monkeys start squabbling over the fruit” (annotation).

With those four Chinese characters. “Speech itself is ultimate truth. Words themselves are ultimate truth.”

Anyone trying to weigh the stature . . . the balance arm snap in two. An annotation here reads “balance arm” to refer to a carrying pole (a yoke of wood or bamboo used to carry a load, often with bundles on either end of the pole that is balanced across the shoulders): “It is very, very difficult for anyone to see Hsueh-tou and Chao-chou. They have an imponderable weight. Put them at the ends of a carrying pole and try to lift them, and your pole will break in two.”

136. UNTITLED [TE-SHAN CARRYING HIS BUNDLE]

The koan about Te-shan carrying his bundle into the teaching hall and saying “Mu, Mu,” and Hsueh-tou’s brief comment on it, appear in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 4.

I PUT THIS before you:

When Te-shan arrived at Kuei-shan, he carried his bundle with him into the teaching hall. He paced from east to west and from west to east. He looked around and said, “Nothing. Nothing [*Mu. Mu.*]” Then he went out. Hsueh-tou’s comment on the koan is: “I’ve got him pegged.” It would be a mistake to interpret Hsueh-tou’s “I’ve got him pegged” to mean he had discerned that Te-shan, in uttering the words “Nothing, Nothing” in the Dharma hall, was sitting in the enlightened realm of his original nature. Hidden within Hsueh-tou’s “I’ve got him pegged” is a very important matter for the Yun-men school. It is extremely difficult. Years ago I added a capping phrase to Hsueh-tou’s comment: “A cry from a cat in a Pure Land of mice.” I see now that my words were far off the mark — as remote as heaven from earth — and I find my body has become drenched with sweat. Unless you men devote yourself to your practice with tireless effort, you will never be able to savor these words of Hsueh-tou.

.....

The following series of annotations, inscribed by different hands, on Hakuin’s capping words, “A cry from a cat in a Pure Land of mice,” were entered into the same copy of *Poison Blossoms*. They have an interest rivaling that of the text itself:

“This comment, ‘A cry from a cat in a Pure Land of mice,’ was added to *Poison Blossoms* based on oral teachings heard by the master’s attendants and other monks in the brotherhood. They were later noted down by Layman Tsūgen of Mino province, who read them in some borrowed transcripts. Comments our late master

originally delivered on this koan differ greatly from those he gave in his later years” (annotation).

“These capping words are based on a parable: A poor man encountered a foreigner on the road. The foreigner produced a letter and told the poor man, ‘In this county, at such and such a tree, if you clap your hands three times, a man will appear. You should give this letter to him.’ The poor man came to a place such as the foreigner had described and did as instructed. A large gate appeared. The poor man entered it and saw a great hall covered with silver and gold and embellished with precious gems. He saw young boys and temple maidens dancing to sacred music, and rare and delicious foods. On announcing that he had a letter to deliver, the poor man discovered that he had entered a Pure Land of mice and rats that was adorned with countless rare and precious jewels. His cupidity aroused, he decided to steal some of the jewels. Pinching his nose with his fingers, he imitated the sound of a screeching cat. Suddenly everything around him became impenetrably dark, then dazzlingly bright by turns. He found that he was underground, in what seemed to be a small hole. Just then, a man who lived nearby heard sounds in the earth beneath him. Taking them to be mice trying to gnaw their way out, he grabbed a mattock and began striking down into the earth with it. The poor man, though injured by the blows, managed to crawl out slowly, feeling very foolish” (annotation).

“These capping words [attributed to] our late teacher are based only on hearsay reports. Hsueh-tou’s phrase contains within it the vital function of master Lin-chi. It conceals Yun-men’s very essence. Coming up against such a phrase, even someone who has bored through to the wondrous meaning of the Buddha-patriarchs and attained a state of perfect freedom will be like the man imitating a cat screaming in the Pure Land of mice. Because of that, even monks who have served as the master’s secretary, or as his personal attendant, hold differing views as to the authenticity of these capping words. Among the comments on the *Blue Cliff Record* that have been recorded to be authentically those of the master, I have found numerous mistakes as well. I have corrected them, since they will be passed on to future generations” (annotation).

Inscribed after these comments is an annotation by Tōrei's disciple Karin: "These are Tōrei's notes" (annotation).

Following this is an annotation inscribed by Tōrei himself: "Layman Tsūgen saw only the surface of the matter and could not discern its full, inner meaning. In his old age my teacher became forgetful, and cases of this kind were not infrequent" (annotation).

137. UNTITLED [YUN-MEN'S EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY]

Hakuin comments on the koan "Yun-men said, 'Every day is a good day'" and more extensively on the lines of verse comment that Hsueh-tou attached to it (Blue Cliff Record, Case 6), which are:

He throws away one and he picks up seven,
Nothing like it above, below, in any direction.
Idly treading underfoot the voice of the stream,
His eyes discern freely the track of flying birds.
Grasses thick and wild, mist hanging over all,
Falling flowers a fearful blot on Subhuti's cliff.
I snap my fingers at Sunyata's wretched display,
Don't make a move; if you do, it's thirty blows.

I PUT THIS before you:

Yun-men taught his monks, saying, "I'm not going to ask you about before the fifteenth day. Try to say something about after the fifteenth day." Yun-men, answering in their place, said: "Every day is a good day."

Yun-men's words are exceedingly difficult to pass through. Be aware that they are endowed with arms and legs [i.e., they can forge genuine students], that they possess wondrous means [i.e., they can bring students to final attainment]. For that reason Hsueh-tou said, "I love the freshness of Yun-men's Zen working. He used it for an entire lifetime, pulling out pegs and knocking out wedges in people's

minds.” What are those wondrous means he possessed that enabled him to produce great students? Scrutinize and savor the taste of these words that Hsueh-tou has bequeathed to us.

[Hsueh-tou’s verse:]

He throws away one and he picks up seven,

These two phrases and Yun-men’s instructions to the assembly are like a piece of fine brocade wrought with such magnificent designs on both sides that there is no front or back. Holding up this one part, Hsueh-tou exhausts the entire subject.

[Hsueh-tou’s verse:]

Nothing like it above, below, in any direction.

Although this line seems to praise Yun-men’s teaching to the assembly, it also, by chance, ends up explaining it. There being “nothing like it in any direction” means being solitary, being uniquely itself. It is neither difference nor sameness, absolute nor relative, phenomenal nor universal; it is neither a goal to attain nor the natural state of original being. It is like a long sword resting against the heavens that cuts down people’s discriminations. It destroys old nests into which those discriminations like to hunker down. Faced with it, the mirror of wisdom is drained of light, words and language lose their power. As Hsueh-tou says, it is truly unique, something without compare in the ten directions.

Ever since the Buddha Dharma’s beginnings most people have found a place to dwell somewhere within it. Some who were not in their original state fell into a way of practice that led them to realization. Some didn’t proceed forward to a higher attainment and continued to sit in a lower realm. If they were not entering the phenomenal, they were returning to the universal. And those who were living amid silence were off busily doing something. In this way no one lacked a dwelling place or personal views and opinions.

It was to rescue them from these serious illnesses that the great teacher Yun-men gave his instruction to his assembly and asked for their response. Hsueh-tou was a descendant of the house of Yun-men and well acquainted with its inner secrets — which is why he was able to compose such a marvelous verse to clarify matters.

Even if you avoid all of the above errors — dwelling in either difference or sameness, the absolute or relative, the phenomenal or universal — you may in the end nonetheless find yourself squatting down amid the sublime working of non-doing and non-activity. But what is that sublime working?

[Hsueh-tou's verse:]

Idly treading underfoot the voice of the stream,
His eyes discern freely the track of flying birds.

Lovely the sound of a rushing stream — how do you silence it, treading it underfoot? You might reply — How do you depict the track of a bird flying high in the sky? This is not the deep realm where golden chains prevent your progress. But even if you attain such a realm, when you come face to face with master Yun-men, you will still not know what to do.

[Hsueh-tou's verse:]

Grasses thick and wild, mist hanging over all,

He's buried himself deep inside a thick patch of weeds. Even after shedding views and opinions, casting aside the marvelous function, still he unwittingly returns to his old home in formless, quiescent non-differentiation — the next comment speaks of this:

[Hsueh-tou's verse:]

Falling flowers a fearful blot on Subhuti's cliff.

No wonder! It was a hard task, overturning the old nest that had tormented him ever since he had first worked his way into the realm of enlightenment. Look closely and you see nothing but Sunyata, the god of empty space, clinging desperately to the state of empty quiescence. Hence Hsueh-tou says,

[Hsueh-tou's verse:]

I snap my fingers at Sunyata's wretched display,

You snap your fingers to rouse someone out of a state of somnolence, but no matter how many times Hsueh-tou snaps his fingers at Sunyata, the god of empty space won't wake up, and Hsueh-tou's brow furrows in sadness. A great many students

become like the god Sunyata, so besotted with quiescence and emptiness they no longer have the strength to break free of it. Being the great teacher of outstanding monks that he was, Hsueh-tou now shifts and darts off on a completely new tack, uttering a truly marvelous phrase. What is that new tack? He says:

[*Hsueh-tou's verse:*]

Don't make a move; if you do, it's thirty blows.

He's like a spoiled young child who won't stop crying. His mother does her best to soothe the boy and cajole him to stop, but he won't listen. Finally, she says, "All right, cry all you want. Cry all day, cry from morning until night. But if you stop crying for even a second, I'm going to throw you out of the house without any dinner." If you want to know the meaning of Hsueh-tou's thirty blows, go and ask the spoiled little brat's mother. *Hahhahhah!*

.....

"Tōrei said, 'These instructions to the assembly will never be grasped through a verbal approach. . . . The school of Yun-men is like a red silk banner flapping brightly in the wind. It is manifested there in all its wondrous beauty, but you can't get hold of it. That is what my old teacher Hakuin used to say' (annotation).

These two phrases [referring to the first line of Hsueh-tou's verse, "He throws away one and he picks up seven"]. An annotation here provides an interesting sidelight on the editorial process of *Poison Blossoms*: "Daishū Zenjo [the editor of *Poison Blossoms*] suggested that this should be 'one phrase,' but Hakuin refused to allow him to change it."

He unwittingly returns to . . . non-differentiation. "Tōrei says, 'These comments of Hakuin are not worth considering. Another case of the cat crying in a Pure Land of mice' (annotation). This is an allusion to Tōrei's own annotation on the previous piece (see #136, p. 179), which suggests that the comment by Hakuin may have been inaccurately reported but might also be due to the forgetfulness he was prone to as he got older. *Falling flowers a fearful blot on*

Subhuti's cliff [the sixth line of the verse]. When Subhuti, a disciple of the Buddha known for his profound grasp of Sunyata, the Void, was doing zazen on a high cliff, the deity Indra made flowers rain down on him from the sky. "However deeply you may penetrate the truth of emptiness, your attainment is still incomplete if Indra can see through you like he did. Never sink into a narrow, one-sided view of emptiness" (annotation).

138. UNTITLED [HUANG-PO'S GOBBLER OF DREGS]

The koan appears in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 11.

I PUT THIS before you:

Huang-po instructed the community, saying: "All of you here are gorging on the dregs of the wine. If you continue to practice in this way, when will you ever be ready to experience the great day of attainment? Are any of you aware that there is not a single Zen teacher in this great land of the T'ang?" A monk came forward and said, "But what about all those priests around the country supervising assemblies and endeavoring to straighten out their monks' minds?" Huang-po said, "I didn't say there is no Zen, only that there are no teachers."

Huang-po's instruction is as lethal as *Chen*-bird feathers. If a single feather from that bird falls into water, all who drink the water will die. It is said that a Zen master who deals with students of the very highest caliber can kill someone without even blinking an eye. That is indeed true.

This old monk had Huang-po's koan wrong for twenty years. You young monks should never think you can grasp it easily. A great Zen teacher in the land of the T'ang strolled the great universe alone in a state of total freedom, shorn of past and present. If you are able to witness this, I will allow that you are truly awakened.

You could also say that with this utterance the great teacher Huang-po has taken five stinking goat hides and transformed them into the softest fox pelts. Although this monk who came forward to ask the question had the same prowess as the outstanding heroes of antiquity, he was powerless in the face of these two utterances of Huang-po. What is my proof of this?

My strength plucked up the hills,
My spirit embraced the world.
But the times were against me,
And now Dapple runs no more.
What then can I do?
Ah, Yu. Ah, Yu.
What will your fate be?

.....

Chen-bird feathers. “*Chen* birds have a black body and red eyes. If a *Chen* bird’s feathers are dipped into wine, even a single sip will bring instant death” (*Book of the Han*, ch. 38).

A great Zen teacher in the land of the T’ang . . . shorn of past and present. An annotation in the *Kuzō Kattō-shō* book of Zen phrases has: “Those who truly see their own minds have no before and after. No past or present exists.”

My strength plucked up the hills . . . What will your fate be? Hakuin quotes a well-known verse from Hsiang Yu (232–202 B.C.), a famous warlord of the Warring States period who uttered these dying words after losing all his men in battle, to imply that the monk asking the question is in Hsiang Yu’s position. “Dapple” was Hsiang’s warhorse; “Yu” was his concubine (*Records of the Grand Historian*, ch. 7).

139. UNTITLED [TS’UI-WEI PASSES THE BACKREST]

This is the koan “Lung-ya’s Meaning of the Coming from the West,” which appears in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 20.

I PUT THIS before you:

Lung-ya asked Ts’ui-wei, “What is the meaning of the First Patriarch’s coming from the West?” Ts’ui-wei said, “Would you mind bringing me my meditation backrest?” Lung-ya gave him the backrest. Ts’ui-wei took it and immediately hit him with it. Lung-ya said, “If you want to hit me, go ahead. But in the end there is no meaning in the Patriarch’s coming from the West.” Lung-ya went to Lin-chi and asked the same question, “What is the meaning of the First Patriarch’s coming from the West?” Lin-chi said, “Would you take that zazen cushion over there and give it to me?” Lung-ya got the cushion and handed it to Lin-chi. Lin-chi took it and immediately hit him with it. Lung-ya said, “If you want to hit me, go ahead. But in the end there is still no meaning in the Patriarch’s coming from the West.”

The great teacher Hsueh-tou wrote in his second verse comment on this koan: “An eyeless dragon lives on Lung-ya mountain [Lung-ya means ‘dragon tooth’]. How could the old winds and traditions of our school ever rise up from a stagnant pool?” It is often said that the words “stagnant pool” and “eyeless dragon” imply a censure of Lung-ya. But that altogether fails to see that this is a case of Hsueh-tou extolling on the one hand, disparaging on the other. Why do I say that? Lung-ya was a true, genuinely craggy old dragon that had rid himself of the eyes he was born with. He didn’t see heaven or hell. He didn’t see the hills, streams, and great earth either. Even when he saw Lin-chi or Ts’ui-wei, they were like gossamer shimmering in the spring sun, like wild horses kicking up their heels in the field. Not even a Buddha or a patriarch could lay a hand on Lung-ya.

Yes, Lung-ya was all of that, but the sad fact remains that even this splendid blind dragon, with his magnificent pair of horns, has here disappeared beneath the surface of a stagnant pool.

Why is this? Using the genuine compassionate means passed down by the Buddha and patriarchs, those two suppurating old crocks [Ts’ui-wei and Lin-chi] held out both hands to Lung-ya — just like old mothers trying to squeeze a few drops from their wizened

paps for their child. It is a thousand pities that this sightless dragon, bobbing up and down in this stagnant pool, never once, even in his dreams, took any notice of this.

Whereupon Hsueh-tou made a second verse:

You waste such things on Lung-ya, why not give them to me?

I'll sit back and stop trying to pass along the patriarchal lamp.

I see beneath those sunset clouds darkening in the fading light,

Blue mountains rising in the distance in endless serried ranks.

These lines of Hsueh-tou's second verse are truly the proverbial "fine words of superlative beauty." They are the most wonderful of all the hundred marvelous verses Hsueh-tou wrote as comments on koans. Because of their marvelous nature, clear-eyed monks and veteran priests of peerless discernment are unable to crack their real meaning. For over thirty years I myself misunderstood them. Looking back on it now from the vantage of old age, the shame makes cold sweat run down both sides of my body and tears wet the collar of my robe. It is ridiculous. I go around the country lecturing on the *Blue Cliff Record*, delivering half-baked comments, and everyone seems satisfied with them. It's understandable. Even Yuan-wu, when he first approached this verse, was at a loss to say anything about it. If I were to make detailed comments on it today, even if I wrote fifty or sixty pages I wouldn't manage to say everything I want to say. You monks, if you are able to see through this verse and make it your own, I will affirm that you have met old Hsueh-tou face to face. If you cannot do that, you are good-for-nothings — traitors to the school of Zen. Why is that?

Fading sunset clouds have yet to disappear below the horizon,

Blue mountains in the distance, rising in endless serried ranks.

.....

Whereupon Hsueh-tou made a second verse. In the *Blue Cliff Record*, Hsueh-tou prefaces the verse with the words, “Since I still haven’t been able to get everything off my chest, I make this second verse.”

I see beneath those sunset clouds . . . serried ranks. “Trailing the evening clouds the sun is about to set into the western mountains, but daylight has still not yet completely disappeared. Underneath the clouds, waves of mountains extending far into the distance, is a landscape of limitless depth and profundity” (annotation). “Lung-ya is a dragon but he doesn’t know dragons are supposed to ride the clouds. He’s found a hole in one of them and is hunkering down inside” (annotation).

Hakuin’s subsequent praise of this second verse as “fine words of superlative beauty” alludes to a riddle found in a story from the *Records of the Grand Historian*. Ts’ao-ō was the daughter of a necromancer, and when he drowned she was so overcome with grief that she threw herself into the river as well. A stone stele to her was raised at the spot with these words engraved on it. Yang Hsiu, a secretary to the celebrated Ts’ao Ts’ao (a warlord who later founded the Wei dynasty) was riding past the stele with his master. Seeing the words Yang Hsiu immediately grasped their meaning. It took Ts’ao some time to figure them out, but when he did, his understanding matched Yan Hsiu’s perfectly. The saying came to be used for two understandings that are exactly the same.

“These final two lines of the verse express a state in which even Buddha and Dharma have fallen completely away, totally negated, leaving the person with ‘nothing to do’ but enjoy the evening clouds and blue mountains. Just as on a superficial level these lines may seem to evoke an infinite, oceanic vastness without any movement at all, they are liable to be misread as referring to the pool of stagnant water in which the dragon, Lung-ya, remains totally submerged. But that is simply because of the wonderfully deep flavor and subtle nuances of Hsueh-tou’s verse. These lines have been regarded as the finest in the entire *Blue Cliff* collection” (Osaka Kōryū in *Zenke-goroku II*, p. 208).

140. UNTITLED [ZEN MONK CHU-LIANG ASKS A QUESTION]

This koan is from the Blue Cliff Record, Case 56: Zen monk Chu-liang asked master Ch'in-shan, "What's it like when a single arrow breaks through three barriers?" Ch'in-shan said, "Give the host inside the barrier the sack." Then Chu-liang said, "If that's the case, I know what the mistake was, so I'm sure I can correct it." Ch'in-shan said, "Then what are you waiting for?" Chu-liang said, "The arrow was well shot, but you didn't know where it would strike," and started to leave. Ch'in-shan said, "Come back." Chu-liang turned his head. Ch'in-shan grabbed him and held him fast, saying "Forget for now the single arrow smashing three barriers. See if you can shoot off a single arrow for me." Chu-liang hesitated. Ch'in-shan hit him seven times and said, "I'll bet you'll be carrying this doubt around with you for thirty years."

I have inserted a few annotations into the dialogue; they are set in italics and brackets.

I PUT THIS before you:

Zen monk Chu-liang asked master Ch'in-shan, "What's it like when a single arrow breaks through three barriers?"

This single question is a gigantic bow weighing thirty thousand pounds. Anyone who is not a truly great teacher will find it difficult to answer. What did Ch'in-shan say?

Ch'in-shan said, "Give the host inside the barrier the sack."

Just as I expected.

Then Chu-liang said, "If that's the case, I know what the mistake was, so I'm sure I can correct it." [*He's grabbed Ch'in-shan by the balls and ripped the hair all off* (annotation).]

Chu-liang scared the daylights out of the monks in the assembly. These are the words of a great teacher who would be able to lead any number of students.

Ch'in-shan said, "Then what are you waiting for?"

Chu-liang's melody becomes loftier, Ch'in-shan's response ever weaker.

Chu-liang said, "The arrow was well shot, but you didn't know where it would strike," and started to leave.

This was expected. [*"He stopped him with that single arrow" (annotation).]* Well said, Chu-liang, well said!

Ch'in-shan said, "Come back."

Even if he did return, Ch'in-shan would be powerless to do anything with him.

Chu-liang turned his head.

That was well done too.

Ch'in-shan grabbed him and held him fast, saying, "Forget for now the single arrow smashing three barriers. See if you can shoot off a single arrow for me."

Ch'in-shan wasn't aware how deeply the first arrow was buried.

Chu-liang hesitated. [*"Magnificent hesitation" (annotation).]*

A man of great stature. "A few willow slips are caught on a railing where they were blown by the wind and unable to get free."

Ch'in-shan hit him seven times and said, "I'll bet you'll be carrying this doubt around with you for thirty years."

Seven futile blows, and totally undeserved.

[*Hsueh-tou's verse commentary on the koan:*]

For your sake he gave the host inside the barrier the sack.

A student who shoots off arrows can't afford to grow careless.

If you rely on your eyes alone, your ears are sure to go deaf;

If you abandon your ears, both your eyes will go blind as well.

How touching, a single arrow breaking through three barriers,

And the trail of the soaring arrow so perfectly clear and true.

Don't you see? It is just like Hsuan-sha said: "A man of great

Stature is the mind-patriarch that exists even prior to heaven."

This is a verse of the greatest difficulty. In the past my understanding of it was wrong. I was able to grasp it clearly for the first time only after becoming an old priest. This is what I have understood:

In the first line, "*For your sake he gave the host inside the barrier the sack,*" Hsueh-tou is praising Chu-liang's "If that's the case, I know what the mistake was, so I'm sure I can correct it." This is like being attacked by a sudden salvo of fire arrows, rendering all the stratagems you had worked out completely worthless. But Ch'in-shan didn't even have an inkling he had been struck by a poison arrow.

Regarding the second line, "*A student who shoots off arrows can't afford to grow careless*": When he heard Chu-liang say, "If that's the case, I know what the mistake was, so I'm sure I can correct it," Ch'in-shan may have put both his hands over his brow and glared at Chu-liang. Or perhaps he really exclaimed, "Heavens, heavens, woe is me!" In that case, what would Chu-liang say in return? But [before Chu-liang could speak], Ch'in-shan said, "Then what are you waiting for?" He didn't realize that his life had already been taken from him. That is why Hsueh-tou writes, "*A student who shoots off arrows can't afford to grow careless*" — it is because Ch'in-shan was truly irresponsible that Hsueh-tou said students who shoot arrows must never let down their guard. Hsueh-tou, the outstanding Zen teacher

of his time, praised Chu-liang's reply. How accurate and sure his focus was!

The third line of old Hsueh-tou's verse, "*If you rely on your eyes alone, your ears are sure to go deaf,*" is an utterance from the one and only path of total emancipation. Chu-liang is truly wonderful in his reply, worthy of our greatest praise.

The fourth line, "*If you abandon your ears, both your eyes will go blind as well,*" is uttered like the previous one from a path of total freedom. How remarkable that with these two phrases, even if Ch'in-shan was to keep struggling against Chu-liang, there's not much he could do.

The fifth line, "*How touching, a single arrow breaking through three barriers,*" praises Chu-liang's opening question, "How is it when a single arrow breaks through three barriers?"

The sixth line, "*And the trail of the soaring arrow so perfectly clear and true,*" points to Chu-liang's "If that's the case, I know what the mistake was, so I'm sure I can correct it." It reveals the point at which the arrow entered Ch'in-shan's hide. Moreover, even though Chu-liang turned his head and hesitated as well, those actions only throw his splendid character into greater relief.

The final lines are, "*Don't you see? It is just like Hsuan-sha said: 'A man of great stature is the mind-patriarch that exists even prior to heaven.'*" "Don't you see," though a phrase in common use, means here: "Look, everybody, isn't it just as Hsuan-sha said? A man of great stature becomes the mind-patriarch who exists prior to heaven."

Finally, Ch'in-shan hits Chu-liang seven times and says, "*I'll bet you'll be carrying this doubt around with you for thirty years.*" But even after Ch'in-shan struck those seven or eight blows, even if he had struck him a hundred and fifty blows for that matter, Chu-liang would still be firm as a rock, because that first question had already struck Ch'in-shan dead.

.....

"*A few willow slips . . . unable to get free.*" Hakuin quotes lines by the 10th century poet Hsu Chung-ya (*Shih-wen lei-chu hsu-chi*, ch. 5),

used in Zen as capping words. The poem, in paraphrase: “A court lady rising early in the morning hesitates to go outside because of the spring cold. On raising the blind partway to make sure the garden peonies are all right, [she notices] willow branches hanging over a railing where the wind had blown them.” Annotations indicate that the two lines Hakuin quotes are intended to reveal the true state of things in their primal suchness, as seen first in the turning of Chuliang’s head when he is called, and second in his hesitation when challenged by Ch’in-shan — to both of which actions Hakuin accords high praise.

The final lines are, “Don’t you see? Hsuan-sha had words for it: ‘A man . . . even prior to heaven.’” In the *Record of Hsuan-sha* these words appear in a verse Hsuan-sha quotes by master Kuei-tsung Chih-ch’ang:

One two three four five,
The sun at the zenith.
A charming man of great stature,
Existing even prior to heaven.

141. UNTITLED [TAN-HSIA EATS HIS RICE]

Hakuin treats this story from the Blue Cliff Record, Case 76, as a two-part koan, with Hsueh-tou’s verse comments as the second part — similar to his approach in #137 and #140.

I PUT THIS before you:

Tan-hsia asked a newly arrived monk, “Where have you come from?” “From the foot of the mountain,” replied the monk. Tan-hsia said, “Have you eaten yet?” “Yes, I have,” said the monk. Tan-hsia said, “Did the monk who brought you the food have eyes? Or was he sightless?” The new monk did not respond.

[A hundred years later] Ch'ang-ch'ing asked Pao-fu, "Providing food for the new monk to eat should have fulfilled the monk's obligation to him. Why wouldn't the one who provided the food have eyes?" Pao-fu said, "The giver and the receiver were both sightless." Ch'ang-ch'ing said, "Are you saying these men, who mustered their Zen activity to the full, were blind?" Pao-fu said, "Are you trying to say I'm blind?"

This is the most demanding koan in the entire *Blue Cliff Record* collection. The difficulty of penetrating and passing through it far surpasses that of the other koans. No one in the past or the present has truly understood the wonderful secret — the little something — that lies hidden in the complex connections that link the words and phrases of this dialogue. Ch'ang-ch'ing and Pao-fu were without any doubt great Zen heroes, unrivaled even among the eminent masters of the Yun-men school. In his verse Hsueh-tou succeeded in raising their vital secrets up in their entirety without even having to reveal the tip of his razor-sharp blade. Everyone else's comments and capping words are greatly inferior in comparison — as distant from them as is a gimp-legged tortoise clumping after a fleet horse. The vital relationships between the words and phrases in Hsueh-tou's verse are extremely subtle and profound. No one since the *Blue Cliff Record* first appeared has been able to avoid stumbling over them. Draw close to Hsueh-tou's verse and it will reflect your heart, your liver, and all your other vital organs, inspecting them unerringly one by one just like the mirror of karma. You must know that the great matter of the patriarchal teachers, the wonderful and intransmittable secret of the Buddhas themselves, is fully contained in this single verse.

[*Hsueh-tou's verse:*]

If their Zen spirit operates to the full, neither goes blind.
He is forcing down the ox's head to make it eat its grub.
The precious Dharma essence transmitted by thirty-four
Zen patriarchs in India and China is surely not mistaken.
His blunder is so profound it's totally beyond redeeming.
Gods and humans in the same boat sink into the dry land.

In the first line Hsueh-tou expresses his admiration for Ch'ang-ch'ing's words, "Are you saying these men, who mustered their Zen activity to the full, were blind?" He pushes the central exchange between Tan-hsia and the monk to the side, and there is a reason for doing so which cannot be overlooked.

Hsueh-tou's second line, "He is forcing down the ox's head to make it eat its grub," is another one that pitches students into a pit of black fire. But no one past or present has understood this. I myself think that it expresses definite approval of Pao-fu's "The giver and the receiver were both sightless." Why? Ch'ang-ch'ing and Pao-fu were Zen teachers of extraordinary capacity, but in the crucial matter of their weaknesses, those of Pao-fu were the more serious. If you examine the coarseness or fineness of the utterances that pass between these two priests, you will find that while Ch'ang-ch'ing's "Are you saying these men, who mustered their Zen activity to the full, were blind?" shows extraordinary care and judiciousness, Pao-fu's "Are you trying to say I'm blind?" displays extraordinary care and judiciousness as well.

Comments I have made on this verse in my past Zen lectures have all been greatly mistaken. *Sah!* Are my remarks in today's lecture mistaken too?

.....

The mirror of karma (gōkyō) refers to a mirror of pure crystal that hangs in the court of Emma, the Lord of Hell. Made to stand before it, the dead see reflected all the sins they have committed during their lifetime.

If their Zen spirit operates to the full, neither goes blind. "The second part of this two-part koan begins here with Hsueh-tou's verse. If the slightest discrepancy arises between the two parts, you are dragged into a pit of blazing fire. A ferocious two-horned tiger pounces out of the grass" (annotation).

He is forcing down the ox's head to make it eat its grub, the second line of Hsueh-tou's verse, is evidently a reference to Pao-fu and his assertion to Ch'ang-Ch'ing that "The giver and the receiver were both sightless."

142. CH'ANG-CH'ING'S THREE POISONS

“Ch’ang-ch’ing’s Three Poisons” is found in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 95. “These instructions penetrate the abyssal floors of Tathagata Zen and Patriarchal Zen and emerge, completely free, beyond them both. . . . The Buddha did not shoot from two different bows [all his preachings were of one accord], and when you discern that the Agama [Hinayana] sutras are in themselves the Mahayana teaching of sudden enlightenment, you will be able to understand what Ch’ang-ch’ing is teaching his students” (annotation).

I PUT THIS before you:

Ch’ang-ch’ing once said, “I would rather tell you about an Arhat having the three poisons than about a Tathagata’s two kinds of speech. I don’t say Tathagatas don’t speak, only that they don’t have two kinds of speech.”

Pao-fu said, “What are the two kinds of speech?”

Ch’ang-ch’ing said, “How can a deaf man hear it?”

Pao-fu said, “Just as I thought, you’re using the second kind of speech.”

Ch’ang-ch’ing said, “What is Tathagata speech?”

Pao-fu said, “Go drink your tea.”

The exchanges between these two Dharma elders remind you of a pair of great dragons struggling over a priceless pearl. No winner or loser. Neither of them is superior or inferior to the other. Ch’ang-ch’ing’s tune penetrates the very depths; how could he avoid a few minor discordancies? What I do regret very much is that he swallows the jujube whole. I want you monks to take things like comments and capping words, bundle them all up and store them away on a back shelf. If after I die you make an offering to me of the Tathagatas’ two kinds of non-speech, it will surpass by a million times any ordinary offering you could make. That is how great my reverence is for these words. Hsueh-tou loved them and used them in his verse. Even though Yuan-wu’s comments on this dialogue praise the words, “Go drink your tea” as having great value, I myself love the words, “I don’t

say Tathagatas don't speak, only that they don't have two kinds of speech."

.....

"I don't say Tathagatas don't speak . . . two kinds of speech." "The Tathagata preached with infinite variation, but they all return to the one truth" (annotation).

Ch'ang-ch'ing said, "How can a deaf man hear it?" "Do you hear it?" (annotation).

What I do regret very much is that he swallows the jujube whole. The saying "swallow a jujube whole" — that is, without chewing it and enjoying its flavor — is used for meekly accepting instruction without any understanding of its significance (e.g., *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 30).

143. TIAO-LUNG VISITS FENG CHI-CH'UAN

Nothing is known about Tiao-lung Ch'ang-lao; the term Ch'ang-lao, "venerable elder," suggests he was a temple priest. According to an account in Compendium of the Five Lamps (ch. 20), Layman Feng Chi-ch'uan (12th century) attained enlightenment while studying under Fo-yen Ch'ing-yuan (1067–1120). The dialogue given below appears in Ta-hui's Arsenal.

I PUT THIS before you:

Tiao-lung Ch'ang-lao and Layman Feng Chi-ch'uan were having a talk. The Layman said, "A government official once asked the Great Sage of Ssu-chou, 'What is your name?' 'My name is What,' he replied. The official asked, 'In what country do you live?' 'I live in What country,' replied the sage. How are we to understand this exchange?"

Tiao-lung said, “The Great Sage of Ssu-chou was not named What. He was not from What country. He merely adapted his answers to circumstances in order to teach and lead people to enlightenment.” Feng laughed and said, “Oh I’m sure the Great Sage was named What and I am sure he dwelled in What country.” After a few more inconclusive exchanges on the subject, they sent a letter to Zen master Ta-hui asking him to decide. Ta-hui said, “Sixty hard blows from my staff! Thirty of them for the Great Sage, for his lack of discretion in telling someone his name is What. The other thirty for Layman Feng, for saying ‘I’m sure he was named What.’ As for Tiao-lung Ch’ang-lao’s punishment, I’ll let him rule on that himself.”

I [Hakuin] have sixty blows of my own, thirty of them for Ta-hui and thirty for Tiao-lung. Why? The name “What” and the country “What” are exceedingly clear, exceedingly fresh and original. The Great Sage is like an old dragon that has placed a priceless gem beneath its jaws. Layman Feng is like a dragon pup that took the beautiful gem and played around with it. Ta-hui and Tiao-lung are like the foolish man who saw the gem shining outside in the moonlight, became suspicious, and charged it with an upraised sword. Very disappointing performances.

.....

The Great Sage of Ssu-chou is Ssu-chou Ta-sheng, or Seng-ch’ieh (628–710), who has an entry in *Sung kao-seng chuan*, ch. 18. He appears above (#45 and #46) and as the subject of a Zen dialogue Hakuin cites in *Talks Introductory to Lectures on the Record of Hsu-t’ang* (*Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 80–81).

Ta-hui and Tiao-lung are like the foolish man . . . with an upraised sword. “Gems shining in the dawn light beyond the bamboo blind. The blockhead goes at them with an upraised sword” (“No Pain, Karma, Extinction, Way” in Hakuin’s commentary on the *Heart Sutra* in #391, p. 609).

BOOK THREE

Oral Secrets of the Sōtō School's Five Ranks

Dharma Words (*Hōgo*)

Words at Minor Buddhist Observances (*Shōbutsuji*)

Book Three consists of two lengthy commentaries, one on Tung-shan's Five Ranks, the other on Tung-shan's Verses on the Five Ranks; three Dharma Words (Hōgo), including one that has remained unpublished until now; as well as twelve Words at Minor Buddhist Observances (Shōbutsuji), including seven remarks Hakuin delivered at consecration ceremonies for Buddhist images and five more (Hinko) delivered at funeral services.

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ORAL SECRETS OF THE SŌTŌ SCHOOL'S FIVE RANKS

The Five Ranks (Japanese: Go-i) are stages of realization in the course of Zen training, ending in final enlightenment. Hakuin's commentary on the Five Ranks given in #144 is followed in #145 by his commentary on Verses on the Five Ranks, five short poems generally attributed to Tung-shan Liang-chieh that attempt to state the essential doctrine of the various ranks. Translations of both these pieces appear in Zen Dust (Miura and Sasaki, pp. 63–72). Omitted from their translation of #144, however, is the passage where Hakuin interprets the Five Ranks in terms of hexagrams in the Book of Changes (I Ching). This passage is among the most difficult to understand, much less to translate, in all of Hakuin's writings. I can claim little merit for my own translation of this piece except that it is complete.

The Book of Changes is perhaps the most important of China's classic texts, based on the universal principles of yin and yang underlying all existence — the former passive and female, the latter active and male, with the basic formulation framed on the principle that the universe is in a condition of constant change and transformation, all things being produced by the Tao through the working of this universal interaction of passivity and activity.

Quotations from the Book of Changes appear from time to time in the classical Zen texts of China and Japan, and in Hakuin's day, as in Tung-shan's, these ideas were a standard element in the intellectual apparatus of well-educated Chinese and Japanese. Although references to the Book of Changes appear in Hakuin's published works, his use of the hexagrams to explain his Zen teaching is confined largely to this treatise on Tung-shan's Five Ranks and a few pages in Gudō's Lingering Radiance (Book Eleven, p. 691).

The Five Ranks are: 1. Phenomenal within Universal (Shōchūhen), 2. Universal within Phenomenal (Henchūshō), 3. Coming from within the Universal (Shōchūrai), 4. Arriving at Mutual Integration (Kenchūshi) and 5. Mutual Integration Attained (Kenchūtō). The first two Ranks try to show the relation between the perspectives of sameness or identity (Shō; Universal) and difference or particularity (Hen; Phenomenal), in terms of both the universality within the phenomena of the world and the sameness within their myriad differences. The third, fourth, and fifth Ranks attempt to clarify their essential oneness.

This is how a modern-day Rinzai Zen teacher has described the Five Ranks: “The Five Ranks has sometimes been called the philosophy of Zen. Intellectual ability has no part in the comprehension of the wisdom of the patriarchs. The study of the Five Ranks is more nearly like a severe and final examination, for he who undertakes this study will be called upon not only to review all that he has previously come to understand, but to clarify, correlate, and deepen still further the insight he has attained. He will have to polish again each facet of his spiritual jewel, which he has cut so laboriously and painstakingly. But, in doing so, he will see for the first time the total inclusiveness, perfect symmetry, and matchless beauty to which it has been brought under the training devised by the old masters” (Miura Isshū, Zen Dust, pp. 62–3).


The term “precious mirror” (Japanese hōkyō) appears here as a metaphor for the pure and clear mind or self-nature inherent in sentient beings, with Precious Mirror Samadhi referring to the highest stage of samadhi achieved in the practice of the Bodhisattva path. Hakuin explains it as follows in his work Horse Thistles: “On entering this samadhi the student, while constantly living and comporting himself within the realm of differentiation, sees phenomenal existence with all its myriad differences appear before his eyes — the old and the young, the high and low, halls and pavilions, verandas and corridors,

grasses and plants, mountains and rivers, hillocks and worthless rubble — and he realizes that they are all the pure self-nature inherent within himself. It seems to him as though he is regarding his face reflected in a bright mirror. If over a period of months and years his mind continues at all times to reflect things in this same way, the things reflected of themselves become the precious mirror of his own house; and the student, being reflected in them, becomes the precious mirror of their houses as well. It is like two mirrors each constantly reflecting each other, reciprocally interpenetrating each other, yet not a single image is reflected on either of the mirrors. When a thing reflects on my mirror, both myself and the thing reflected immediately vanish — like snowflakes disappearing into a red-hot furnace — leaving nothing but a vast open void of perfect serenity — the perfect serenity of nonduality” (HHZ2, pp. 300–1).

Hakuin’s own long struggle with the Five Ranks continued for years after he had embarked on his teaching career. The most complete account of his personal struggle to grasp the Five Ranks is found in the Chronological Biography, where he states that he began to study them under Shōju Rōjin in 1708, at the age of twenty-four (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 172–77). Hakuin’s student Tōrei confirms this in his A Detailed Study of the Fundamental Principles of the Five Houses of Zen, stating that although Hakuin attained a deep grasp of the Five Ranks in his mid-twenties, his final decisive understanding of them did not come until forty years later: “In spring of the third year of the Kan’en era [1750], my late master Hakuin delivered formal lectures on the Blue Cliff Record at Daijō-ji at Ihara in Suruga province. He summoned me one morning during the meeting and said, ‘The farther you penetrate into the Dharma, the deeper it becomes. I devoted a lot of time and effort studying it long ago in Shōju’s chambers. I asked Sōkaku, my fellow student at Shōju’s temple, to thoroughly investigate under the master’s guidance the important matter of [the Five Ranks’ assertion that] ‘when their permutations end, they are five.’ But for more than thirty

years after that, whether I was active or at rest, I was unable to feel truly at ease. Today, I have for the first time penetrated its secret mysteries completely. In comparison to this, everything I previously understood was no more than a shadow or an echo. I intend to write this down and present it to the assembly” (Goke sanshō yōro-mon, ch. 3).

144. THE FIVE RANKS OF PHENOMENAL AND UNIVERSAL, A SECRET ORAL TRANSMISSION OF THE SŌTŌ TRADITION

The Double Li hexagram  which Precious Mirror Samadhi cites and Hakuin discusses in this commentary on the Five Ranks is #30 in the Book of Changes. It consists of the Li trigram surmounted by a second Li trigram — a double sign. The Li trigram means “to cling to something” and also “brightness.” The traditional explanation of the Double Li hexagram, itself called Li, is that in each trigram, a broken yin line clings to two unbroken yang lines, one above and one below — the image of an empty space between two strong lines whereby the two strong lines are made “bright.” As a double image of Li, the hexagram means “fire.” Fire has no definite form but clings to the burning object and thus is bright; just as water pours down from heaven, so fire flames up from the earth. Li is therefore a symbol of nature in its radiance.

THE PRECIOUS MIRROR Samadhi states:

In the six lines of the Double *Li* hexagram
Phenomenal and Universal are interdependent;
When they are folded, they become three,
When the permutations end, they are five.

The author of the *Precious Mirror Samadhi* is unknown. The work was transmitted from Shih-t'ou to Yueh-shan, and then to Yun-yen. It has been handed down in the inner room from one master to another, and to this day it has never been readily divulged to others. The Five Ranks were first clearly formulated when the transmission reached Priest Tung-shan, who composed for each of the Ranks a verse to elucidate its fundamental working. The Five Ranks are truly like a bright torch obtained on a midnight path, like a ferry encountered at a difficult river crossing.

Sad to say, the Zen gardens have gone to seed in recent times and have now become utterly barren. Today, many Zen people refer to a state of half-witted ignorance as the "ultimate Zen of direct pointing," regarding such supreme Dharma assets as the *Precious Mirror Samadhi* and the Five Ranks of Phenomenal and Universal as outworn, unnecessary tools. They give them no more notice than they would a shard lying forgotten in the back room of a dilapidated old house. They are like blind men who fling away their walking sticks, thinking they no longer need them. But because of that they are destined to stumble and fall into the deep muck of the Two Vehicles' partial attainment, from which until their dying day they will be unable to get free. They are above all ignorant of the fact that the Five Ranks is a vessel that can carry them across the poisonous seas to enlightenment, a precious Dharma wheel that can crush to smithereens the indestructible prison house of the two voids. Ignorant of this vital means of practice that can take them steadily deeper into enlightenment, they end up drowning in the stagnant waters of the Shravaka and Pratyeka-buddhas, perishing down in a black pit with other blasted sprouts and dried-up seeds.¹ In the end, not even the hand of a Buddha can save them.

I was entrusted with a matter forty years ago in Shōju Rōjin's chambers that I now want to give you as a Dharma offering. It can only be transmitted secretly from master to student, and only to students of superior capacity, those true patricians of the secret depths who have once experienced the Great Death and been reborn into life anew. It is not for students of lesser or mediocre ability. It must be treated with great care, and its importance must never be underestimated.

The ocean of the Buddhist teaching is limitlessly vast, with Dharma gates beyond count. There are secret oral transmissions that have been passed down in each of the Five Houses and Seven Schools of Chinese Zen. Yet for sheer perversity and complexity, I have never yet come across any teaching comparable to the Five Ranks — perplexing comments about the Double *Li* hexagram, torturous interpretations of “Folding and Transforming.” One branch is attached to another branch, one entanglement piled on the other. If there was some Dharma principle from which they had been propounded, I was unable to discern it. It seemed to me that such a teaching could only mislead Zen students and compound the difficulty of their quest. How could even a Shariputra or an Ananda possibly grasp it? I couldn’t for the life of me understand how patriarchs of the Zen school could propagate irresponsible nonsense of this kind and recklessly perplex later generations of students. These doubts stayed with me for a long time.

However, once I went to Iiyama and began practicing under Shōju Rōjin, the rhinoceros of these doubts suddenly fell down dead. I now know with certainty that if a student continues his practice using these Five Ranks, he will achieve favorable results. You need have no reservations about using the Five Ranks because Shōju did not receive them in oral transmission from a Sōtō teacher. Shōju clarified the Five Ranks on his own, through intense, singleminded effort that enabled him to penetrate the verses Tung-shan composed on the Five Ranks. Do not despise or belittle his teaching because he did not receive it from a Sōtō priest.

Various interpretations have been proposed about the meaning of “reciprocal interpenetration, folding and transforming.” Two explanations often cited are those by the Ming teacher Yung-chueh and the Ching teacher Hsing-ts’e.² Doubling the *Li* trigram (unbroken, broken, unbroken lines) produces the Double *Li* hexagram. Taking the second, third, and fourth lines of the Double *Li* hexagram — the *Hsun* trigram (broken, unbroken, unbroken lines)³ — produces the Rank of Phenomenal within Universal [*Shōchūhen*]. Taking the third, fourth, and fifth lines — the *Tui* trigram (unbroken, unbroken, broken lines) — produces the Rank of Universal within Phenomenal [*Henchūshō*]. Combining these two configurations —

the *Tui* and *Hsun* trigrams — yields the *Ta Kuo* hexagram. Taking the second, third, and fourth lines of the *Ta Kuo* hexagram — the *Ch'ien* trigram — produces the Rank of Coming from within the Universal [*Shōchūrai*].⁴

These explanations enabled me to grasp the idea of “folding, they become three” — “folding” the lines of the Double *Li* hexagram to obtain the Ranks of Phenomenal within Universal, Universal within Phenomenal, and Coming from within the Universal. But their explanation of “Reaching completion, it becomes five” was not at all convincing. I was not able to understand that to my satisfaction until I began my study under Shōju Rōjin. Even then, “the interpenetration of Phenomenal and Universal” remained frustratingly unclear. It was as if the word “interpenetration” had been completely ignored. The rhinoceros of doubt raised its head once again.

Then, in the summer of the first year of the Kan'en era [1748], while I was doing zazen, the hidden secret of the reciprocal interpenetration of Phenomenal and Universal suddenly became perfectly clear. It was as though I was looking at it in the palm of my hand. The rhinoceros of doubt instantly fell down dead. Beside myself with joy, I wanted to take the understanding I had grasped and immediately pass it on to others. I am ashamed to say that I even considered defiling my monks' mouths by squeezing that stinking milk out for them from my old teats — however, I held back from doing that.

Young men, if you want to penetrate this deep and fundamental source, you must investigate it in secret with your whole body. I myself have worked at it laboriously for some thirty years now, so you should not think it is an easy matter! Never suppose that it will be enough for you just to “break up the family and scatter the household.”⁵ You must vow to bore your way through seven, eight, even nine thickets of thorn and briar, and still you must not think that is enough, for now you must vow to penetrate the secrets of the Five Ranks.

For the past eight or nine years I have been encouraging you men who share the daily gruel with me to investigate the secrets of the Five Ranks, but you have turned your backs on it as the doctrine of a different school of Zen. I am deeply saddened that so few of you

have undertaken to investigate the Five Ranks. Recall your Bodhisattva vows: “The Dharma gates are endless, I vow to study them all.” And this Dharma gate is one that leads to the fundamental source of the Buddha Way, the vital path of Zen practice.

Shōju Rōjin said: “The teaching of the Five Ranks issues from the great compassion of the Zen patriarchs who devised it by skillfully employing their superior expedient means. Their main purpose in doing this was to provide a method that would enable students to directly realize the Four Wisdoms.” This is altogether different from the debates and contentions found in the Teaching Schools. By Four Wisdoms is meant the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Wisdom of Sameness, the Wisdom of Marvelous Observation, and the Wisdom of Benefiting Others.

Followers of the Way, even should you continue to refine your study of the three learnings [precepts, meditation, and *prajna*] for endless kalpas, if you have not realized the Four Wisdoms you cannot consider yourself true sons of Buddha. Followers of the Way, if engaging in genuine practice you bore through and smash open the dark cave of the eighth, or *alaya*, consciousness, at that moment the precious radiance of the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom will suddenly shine forth. You will be astonished to discover that the light of the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom is as dark as pitch-black lacquer. This is called the rank of “Phenomenal within Universal.”

Once you realize this Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom, you will enter the rank of “Universal within Phenomenal” and begin practicing the Precious Mirror Samadhi. When you have practiced the Precious Mirror Samadhi for a considerable length of time, you will realize the Wisdom of Sameness, and you will enter and for the first time savor the taste of the realm in which there is unobstructed interpenetration of the ultimate principle and phenomena. However, you must not remain satisfied with that attainment. You will then enter into the rank of “Coming from within the Universal” and after that, by means of the rank of “Arriving at Mutual Integration,” you will in clarifying the Wisdom of Marvelous Observation and the Wisdom of Benefiting Others have perfectly realized all the Four Wisdoms. Finally, you will reach the rank of “Mutual Integration Attained.” You will have come

to terms with all the Five Ranks and returned home “to sit among the coals and ashes.” What does that mean?

It is said that once pure gold is produced after endless smelting, it cannot become ore once again. Your greatest fear should be the satisfaction of achieving a minor attainment. How priceless the merit gained through the practice of the Five Ranks of Phenomenal and Universal! It allows you not only to realize the Four Wisdoms but also bring to perfection the Three Buddha-bodies within you. Does it not say in the preface to the *Treatise on the Adornments of the Mahayana*: “Inverted, the eight consciousnesses become the Four Wisdoms; when the Four Wisdoms are brought together, the Three Buddha-bodies come with them”? Hence this verse by the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng:

The self-nature contains in itself the three Buddha-bodies,
When it shines forth, the four Buddha-wisdoms are yours.

Hui-neng also said: “The pure Dharma-body is your own nature; the perfect reward-body is your wisdom; the untold millions of transformation-bodies are your activities.”

145. PRIEST TUNG-SHAN LIANG-CHIEH’S VERSES ON THE FIVE RANKS

Each of these four short verses, traditionally ascribed to Tung-shan Liang-chieh, deals with one the Five Ranks: 1. Phenomenal within Universal, 2. Universal within Phenomenal, 3. Coming from within the Universal, 4. Arriving at Mutual Integration, and 5. Mutual Integration Attained.

1. PHENOMENAL WITHIN UNIVERSAL

Tung-shan’s verse:

At the third watch of the night, before the moon comes
up,
Not surprising if we don't know each other when we meet;
Hidden deep within our hearts, old suspicions still remain.

The rank of Phenomenal [within Universal] is the Great Death, the shout of *Ka!* It indicates that you have entered the profound principle and discerned the Way. When a genuine student, one whose accumulated achievements have filled him with the strength that is gained through hidden practice, suddenly bursts forth into enlightenment, the empty sky disappears and the iron mountains crumble. Above there is not a tile to cover his head, below he has not an inch of ground to stand on.

There are neither delusive passions nor enlightenment, neither samsara nor Nirvana. Everything is a single, solid mass of emptiness, lacking any sound or odor. It is like a clear pool that has no bottom, like a boundless sky free of even a trace of cloud.

A student who experiences an initial attainment often tends to believe that he has concluded the great matter, that he has mastered the Buddha Way. He clings fast to his attainment with a death-like grip, refusing to let go. This is called "stagnant pool Zen" and its followers, "spirits who stand guard over a corpse in a coffin." But even if the student clings to his attainment steadfastly for thirty or even forty years, he will never be able to emerge from the cave of the Pratyeka-buddhas' small and self-confirmed attainment. Hence it is said, "A person whose Zen activity is not free of attachment to enlightenment will sink back into the poisonous seas." These are what the Buddha referred to as "great fools doggedly attached to their first realization." Even though the student may have clearly grasped the genuine wisdom of absolute identity, he is still unable to fully manifest the marvelous wisdom in which all things are perfectly free and unrestricted. So long as he remains seated quietly, passively ensconced within this state of emptiness, all things within and without are utterly transparent and his understanding is perfectly and unmistakably clear. But with the wisdom he has attained, the moment his mind comes into the slightest contact with the world of differentiation and its defiled circumstances of turmoil and confusion, agitation and vexation, love and hate, he finds himself utterly

helpless, and all the miseries of existence press in upon him. It was in order to save students from this serious illness that the rank of Universal within Phenomenal was provisionally established.

.....

Ka! is a spontaneous cry; said to emerge at the attainment of enlightenment.

2. UNIVERSAL WITHIN PHENOMENAL

Tung-shan's verse:

A bleary-eyed old granny, stumbling upon an ancient mirror,
Peered directly into it, but she couldn't see any likeness at all.
A shame the old muttonhead attempted to find an image there.

As long as a student remains ensconced in the rank of Phenomenal within Universal, the wisdom that transcends likes and dislikes will always be hidden from him, and all his views will be distorted and sterile. Hence Bodhisattvas of superior capacity dwell in the dusty realm of differentiation, constantly carrying out their practice amid an infinite variety of distinctions. They grasp all the myriad phenomena before their eyes — the old and the young, the high and low, halls and pavilions, verandas and corridors, grasses and plants, mountains and rivers — as the true and pure face of their original self. It is just as though they are seeing their faces in a bright mirror. As they continue to experience things in this way over the months and years, at all times and in all places, they will as a matter of course become the precious mirror in the house of the Bodhisattvas, and the Bodhisattvas will become the precious mirror in their houses as well.

Zen master Dōgen wrote: “For the self to contrive to realize the myriad things is delusion; for the myriad things to come forward and realize the self is satori.” This is precisely what I have been saying. It

is Dōgen's "mind and body fallen away, fallen away mind and body." It is like two mirrors reflecting one another, without there being even the shadow of an image between them. Mind and surrounding environment are one and the same; things and oneself are not two. "A white horse enters the white reed flowers." "Snow heaped up in a silver bowl." This is the Precious Mirror Samadhi. It is what the Nirvana Sutra means when it says: "The Buddha sees Buddha-nature in his own eye."

Once you have entered this samadhi, however much you push and shove the great White Ox, he doesn't go away; the wisdom of your true nature reveals itself before your very eyes. This is the meaning of the expressions: "There exists only one Vehicle," "the Middle Path," "the True Form," and "Supreme Truth."

But if the student on reaching this ground takes it into his head that he has achieved full attainment, he will fall, as before, into the deep pit of attachment to an only partially achieved Bodhisattvahood. Why does this happen? Because the student is ignorant of the Bodhisattvas' practice and because he is not aware of the causal conditions for creating a Buddha-land on earth. It was in order to save him from this misfortune that the patriarchs devised the rank of "Coming from within the Universal."

.....

If the student remains ensconced in the rank of Phenomenal within Universal. . . . "It does no good only to realize that all phenomena exist within enlightenment, you must also know that enlightenment exists within all phenomena" (annotation).

Zen master Dōgen wrote: "For the self . . . the self is satori." Words from the *Genjōkōan* fascicle of *Shōbōgenzō*. In *Hōkyō-ki*, the practice diary he kept while studying as a young monk in China, Dōgen wrote that he uttered the words "mind and body falling off . . ." upon achieving enlightenment.

"A white horse enters the white reed flowers" first appears in a comment to the koan "Pa-ling's Snow in a Silver Bowl", Case 13 in the *Blue Cliff Record*. "Snow heaped up in a silver bowl" appears in

that koan itself. In both cases it is a question of whiteness, but of whiteness in which difference exists within that sameness.

3. COMING FROM WITHIN THE UNIVERSAL

Tung-shan's verse:

Within nothingness there is a way beyond the worldly dust.

If you don't break the taboo of uttering unspeakable names,

Your eloquence exceeds he whose father pierced his tongue.

In this rank, the Mahayana Bodhisattva does not dwell within the realization he has attained. His great compassion shines forth unconditionally as he is carried forward on the four great and pure vows into the ocean of free and unrestricted activity, where he whips the Dharma wheel forward and seeks deeper attainment above for himself while helping other sentient beings below. This is called the return that is at the same time progression; progression that is at the same time a return. You must know, moreover, that the moment will come when bright and dark meet. It is for the purpose of reaching that moment that the expedient device of the rank of Arriving at Mutual Integration was devised.

.....

Unspeakable names are *imina*, the personal names of a respected person such as the emperor, or one's father, the use of which was taboo and scrupulously avoided. Annotations stress that "Dharma," "mind," and all words relating to the true self are to be carefully avoided as well.

Your eloquence exceeds he whose father pierced his tongue. The third line of the verse refers to Ho-jo Pi (544–607), a celebrated general who served under the Emperor of Sui. When he was a young boy his father, a high official, was sentenced to death for using a taboo name. His final words to his son were, "You must fulfill

my aspirations. My tongue has cost me my life. You must never forget that.” To underscore his stern warning, the father took an awl and stuck it into his son’s tongue, drawing blood (*Annals of the Sui Dynasty, Sui Shu*, ch. 52).

4. ARRIVING AT MUTUAL INTEGRATION

Tung-shan’s verse:

The two blades cross — no need for either to draw back.
Experts here are rarer than the lotus flowering in a fire.
Their *ki* soars upward, escalades into the very heavens.

In this rank, a Bodhisattva of great capacity turns forward the wheel of Dharma where bright and dark are not-two. Buried in the world’s defilements, his head is covered with dust, his face streaked with dirt; within a welter of sounds and sensory perceptions, buffeted this way and that, he is like a lotus flower blossoming amid a blazing fire, its color and fragrance growing fresher and brighter as it encounters the flames. He enters the marketplace with empty hands and benefits others with free and unrestricted activity, always on the road yet never leaving his home, leaving home yet never on the road. Is such a person an ordinary man? Is he a sage? The evil ones and heretics could not possibly discern him. Even Buddhas and Patriarchs cannot lay a hand on him. Were you to attempt to describe his mind, rabbit horns and tortoise hair would immediately shoot out beyond the farthest mountain. Nor is he allowed to rest in this place as a final goal. Which is why it is said, “His *ki* soars up as before, escalading into the very heavens.” What, after all, is he to do? He is to know there is one more rank: “Mutual Integration Attained.”

.....

The two blades cross . . . to draw back. “Self and others benefit equally. There can be neither advance nor retreat. Two experts in martial arts face each other. If either makes the slightest move, his head is forfeit” (annotation).

Their ki soars upward . . . the very heavens. “He doesn’t accept even this as sufficient, but continues to strive forward” (annotation).

In this rank, a Bodhisattva. . . . “Arriving at Mutual Integration, the dark integrates into the light, the light into the dark; silence integrates into speech, and speech into silence. . . . Because total ripeness is not yet achieved in this rank, the word ‘arriving’ is used” (annotation).

Always on the road . . . yet never on the road. “‘On the road’ means working to save others. ‘At home’ means pursuing deeper realization within oneself” (annotation).

Is such a person an ordinary man? . . . shoot out beyond the farthest mountain. “If your mind makes the slightest move to see this fellow, he will no longer be there” (annotation). “Rabbit horns and tortoise hair,” things that do not exist, are used here as metaphors for attachment to the ungraspable reality of the Buddha-nature.

5. MUTUAL INTEGRATION ATTAINED

Tung-shan’s verse:

Who can unite being and nonbeing without falling into either?
Everyone desires to go beyond the habitual flow of human life,
But in the end winds up seated back inside the cinders and ash.

To this Hsueh-tou appended these capping words:

Te-yun, you useless old gimlet, how often
Will you leave the summit of Wonder Peak,
Enlist other foolish saints and work together
With them to fill in the well with snow?

A student who wishes to penetrate Tung-shan’s rank of “Mutual Integration Attained” should start by tackling this verse.

.....

Mutual Integration Attained. “Now mutual integration is perfectly achieved, with no opposition between Phenomenal and Universal” (annotation).

But in the end winds up . . . cinders and ash. “Bundling up the four previous ranks, he tosses them in the fire and takes a good firm seat” (annotation). “A place of absolute darkness where there’s no light or darkness, being or emptiness, a place where you know absolutely nothing” (annotation).

To this Hsueh-tou appended. . . . Hakuin uses for his final comment a verse by Hsueh-tou Ch’ung-hsien (*Ancestral Heroes Collection*). Te-yun appears in the *Flower Garland Sutra* as one of the teachers visited by the student Sudhana on his pilgrimage. Long years of rigorous practice have made him like a gimlet whose sharp point has become blunt through constant use. Living atop the peak of supreme enlightenment, he descends into the world and, working together with others, attempts “to fill the well with snow” — a metaphor for the Bodhisattva’s unending and purposeless activity of teaching others. In *Goke sanshō yōro-mon*, Tōrei says that Hakuin wrote this verse in the third year of Kan’en, his sixty-sixth year.

DHARMA WORDS (HŌGO)

Hōgo are instructions for religious practice that a teacher generally writes to give to a specific student.

146. FOR SENIOR MONK SŌJITSU

Not much is known about Senior Monk Sōjitsu, or Sōjitsu Shuso. Akiyama Kanji identifies him as Genshitsu Sōjitsu (d. 1782), a student and successor of Nanryō Jiban (n.d.) of Daijō-ji in Ihara village, some twenty miles west of Hara (SH, p. 220).

IN ACCORDANCE WITH instructions left by Nanryō Osho of Daijō-ji, my longtime student Sōjitsu Shuso was installed as his successor at that temple. His brother monk Chūi Shuso has assisted him from the start, and served him as devotedly as he would his own parents. When the two men visited my temple yesterday to pay their respects, I joyfully congratulated Sōjitsu on the appointment.

My attendant Eisan was unhappy, however, and voiced the following complaint: “Sōjitsu Shuso is a true Zen hero. Everyone in the brotherhood at Shōin-ji was sure that before long he would receive a post at some great monastery, where he would make his mark in the world, greatly benefiting the Zen school. How disappointed we all were to learn that he was going to take up residence in that old temple. It is so impoverished it would pinch Fan Jan’s forehead in dismay, bow Yuan Hsien’s head in sorrow. What a waste to throw a man of such talent into a weed patch like that. It’s worse than sending an innocent man into exile on a remote island. It will bring tears to the eyes of all who hear about it, furrow the brows of all who see it taking place. This has greatly dispirited the monks in the brotherhood. ‘The master is wasting this monk’s talents,’ they are saying. ‘Might as well toss him onto a rubbish pile.’ Some are angry. Some saddened. Master, you alone seem to rejoice in this

appointment. I cannot for the life of me understand why. Do you really think it is a good thing?"

I replied, "Ah, I wasn't aware you all felt that way. The happiness I feel is totally unconnected with any of the reasons you mentioned. When Nanryō Oshō passed away last summer, he left final instructions that Sōjitsu was to succeed him at Daijō-ji. He asked me to make sure they were implemented. I sensed from the start that there might be problems. If Sōjitsu refused to go along with the plan, I would be unable to carry out Nanryō's dying wishes, and the Dharma lineage at the temple would be in jeopardy.

"It was with some apprehension that I brought the matter up with Sōjitsu. His reply was: 'I have always given the deepest consideration to the debt I owe my teacher for the great compassion and kindness he bestowed on me. If he had told me to go live among the barbarous tribes beyond the southern ocean, even to reside in the land of the man-eating *raksha* demons, how could I have refused him? And this is merely a question of serving in the nearby Daijō-ji.' My palms of their own accord pressed together in *gasshō*.

"You see," I said to Eisan, "that is the reason for my great happiness. How could considerations of prestige or lack of it, wealth or poverty, have any place in such a matter?"

Long ago, at his teacher Ma-tsu's bidding, Zen master Ling-yu went to Mount Ta-kuei. He lived there thirty years. Conditions were so difficult, the temple so poor, it was said no smoke was seen from the cooking fire for days on end. In time, however, a large brotherhood of some fifteen hundred monks gathered there to receive Ling-yu's instruction.

After the death of his teacher Shih-shuang, Zen master Fang-hui went to Mount Yang-ch'i and lived there alone for twenty years. He said, "Living here at Mount Yang-ch'i, my dwelling is of the poorest sort. The floor is constantly scattered with pearls of snow. As I sit sighing in the frigid darkness with the collar of my thin robe pulled up around my neck, I recall the ancient teachers who lived out in the open, with nothing but trees for shelter." In time, the Dharma flourished greatly at Mount Yang-ch'i.

While I certainly do not mean to compare myself to these ancient worthies, when I first came to reside here at Shōin-ji, the buildings

were crumbling away. We endured great privation for almost twenty years. Constantly leaking roofs. Sodden floors. At night the gods of poverty howled away. Temple rats were so hungry they were reduced to gnawing at their own entrails. My liver quails even now when I recall those years.

When the great teacher Bodhidharma, who was born a royal prince in the land of Kōshi in India, journeyed all the way to China and took up residence at Mount Shao-shih, he had a mere handful of disciples. It is not hard to imagine the hunger and cold they experienced there. In later years Bodhidharma is said to have traveled all the way to Japan, secluding himself on Mount Kataoka in Yamato province. When Prince Shōtoku went there to visit him, he found Bodhidharma living as a beggar in a state of near starvation, clothed in a ragged old straw raincoat and battered rush hat.

It is for this reason Zen master Hsi-sou praised Bodhidharma as “a model for all the Zen students of India and China.” It was no doubt the extreme poverty of his life, the cold and hunger he endured, that made Hsi-sou hold him up as an example like this.

Today everyone hankers after wealth and prestige and because of that they usually bring ruin on themselves, destroying their virtue in the bargain. But there are people, even among the lay community, who take no notice of such things.

To celebrate Sōjitsu Shuso’s installment as head priest at Daijō-ji, I have drawn a picture showing Bodhidharma at Mount Kataoka.

.....

Fan Jan or *Fan Tan* (d. 185) rose from the humblest circumstances to become a minister of state; *Yuan Hsien* was a disciple of Confucius. Both overcame obstacles of great poverty and privation.

Zen master Fang-hui went to Mount Yang-ch’i. “Wu-tsu Fa-yen said, ‘When my teacher Fang-hui first began living at Mount Yang-ch’i, the old buildings with their broken beams afforded little shelter from the wind and rain. One night with winter approaching and his bench covered with snow and sleet, the master could not even find a place to sit. The monks begged to be allowed to make repairs but Fang-hu’i rebuffed them. “Buddha said, ‘At a time when the Dharma is in

decline and even high cliffs and deep valleys are inconstant and ever changing, how can I expect to seek satisfaction for myself and have everything just as I wish?” . . . You monks are already in your forties and fifties — how can you afford to waste your time worrying about comfortable room furnishings?’ The following day he [Fang-hui] ascended to the hall and said, ‘I live in a room with gaps in the walls and benches covered with pearls of snow. I just sigh in the darkness and hunch my neck down into my robe, recalling the ancients who spent their lives living outdoors under the trees” (*Precious Lessons of the Zen School*, ch. 1).

The following *waka* (Japanese poem), which Hakuin wrote describing Fang-hui’s life at Mount Yang-ch’i, appears frequently in his writings:

Forget the thought
“How cold it is!”
There once was a man
too busy to sweep
the snow from the floor.

In *Moshio*, a collection of Hakuin’s Japanese verse, the following headnote is attached to this verse: “Snow fell constantly, blowing into my room. Cold winds from the mountain peaks also found their way through chinks I had made in the reed fence to let the moonlight in, chilling me to the bone. I shrunk down inside my paper robe, pulling the thin lapels up around my eyes” (*Moshio-shū*, HHZ13, p. 324).

Bodhidharma is said to have . . . secluding himself on Mount Kataoka. In *Genkō Shakusho (Chronicle of Buddhism of the Genkō Era)*, the earliest comprehensive history of Japanese Buddhism, compiled by the Rinzai priest Kokan Shiren and published in 1322, the story is told of Bodhidharma leaving China after teaching there for some years and returning to his home in Kōshi in eastern India (Orissa?). Then, at the age of eighty-six, Bodhidharma visited Japan: “As Prince Shōtoku, who was entrusted by Empress Suiko with the reins of government, was riding past Mount Kataoka in Yamato province, he encountered Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma was living as a beggar, clad in tattered rags and lying at the side of the road. He had an uncanny glint in his eyes and a rare fragrance seemed to

emanate from his body. When Prince Shōtoku asked his name, Bodhidharma made no reply, but when the Prince posed his question in the form of a Japanese verse, Bodhidharma responded with one of his own.”

“A model for all the Zen students of India and China.” This saying by Hsi-sou Shao-t’an (n.d.), author of *Praise of the True School*, is said to have been a favorite of Hakuin’s teacher Shōju Rōjin.

A picture showing Bodhidharma at Mount Kataoka. Two of Hakuin’s paintings of this subject are reproduced in HZB, Zenga-hen #236–7.

147. IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FROM TENRYŪ CHŌRŌ

Although nothing is known about Tenryū Chōrō (Chōrō is a term of respect used for a senior priest), not even his dates, an annotation identifies his temple as Saihō-ji, which was apparently located in Matsuzaki village near the tip of the Izu province, a spot Hakuin visited on a number of occasions. This undated piece can be regarded as more or less typical of the inscriptions Hakuin wrote in response to the many requests he was receiving.

ALL THINGS HAVE a beginning and an end, but few end with any real achievement. Students of Zen begin with an aspiration we cannot but love and cherish, a spirit and enthusiasm we can only honor. However, once they take their places in the world as temple priests, where they are free to deal with the heat and the cold according to their own personal whims, fame and profit become sweeter to them than sugar candy, and Zen practice becomes more distasteful to them than medicine from the bitterest roots. Their life grows more relaxed by the day, they weaken and degenerate by the month, but eventually they become teachers charged with an assembly of their own students. As the years pass they are plagued by ever-deepening worries and fears. Thinking back, I can recall at most only

five priests whose careers were satisfactory from beginning to end. I myself am one who belongs to this fraternity of failures. Becoming a temple priest is indeed a most formidable, most perilous undertaking, something you can only approach with extreme care and trepidation.

When I heard recently you had returned to become a temple priest in Matsuzaki, I was pleased, but my pleasure was mixed with an equal measure of regret. The necessity for training does not cease once satori is attained. That is not the moment to relax your efforts. The more you attain, the greater you must strive. The deeper you enter, the greater must be your devotion to your practice. Such is the meaning of “the koan that is never completed” [*miryō kōan*].

Do not allow your quest to falter or cease because you get caught up in the endless entanglements of secular affairs. Nor should you acquire a liking for quiet spots where you can retire to sit until you shrivel away. You must apply yourself steadily and singlemindedly, whether you are walking, sitting, standing, or lying down, whether you are in a place bustling with activity or a place of great tranquility. Keep asking yourself, “Where have I made mistakes? Where have I not made mistakes?” Such is the example we see in the lives of our illustrious Zen predecessors.

In speaking to you in this way, I am like a defeated general exhorting his troops, a person who should feel a certain shame. Yet is it not said that when you see the carriage in front of you overturn, you are able to avoid the same mistake yourself?

.....

*All things have a beginning and an end . . . real achievement is a well-known saying from the *Book of Odes (Shih-ching)*.*

Plagued by ever-deepening worries and fears. “Fearing the possibility they might fall into hell” (annotation).

“Where have I made mistakes? Where have I not made mistakes?”

“Once you resolve to concentrate on your training, you must constantly explore and examine yourself from hour to hour as you spur yourself forward. ‘Where was it I was able to gain spiritual strength?’ ‘Where was it I failed to gain strength?’ ‘Where was it I made mistakes?’ ‘Where was it I made no mistakes?’” This passage

is found in “Zen Master Fa-yen’s Instructions for Students Leaving on Pilgrimage” in *Spurring Students Through the Zen Barriers*, pp. 42–4.

When you see the carriage . . . the same mistake yourself? Hakuin refers to a proverb, *Zensha no kutsugaeru wa kōsha no imashime*, “When the leading carriage overturns, it serves as a warning to the carriage that follows behind” (*Han-shu, Book of the Han*).

* DHARMA WORDS WRITTEN FOR BONJI

These Dharma Words (Hōgo) are translated from the manuscript texts of *Poison Blossoms*. They were omitted from the printed edition.

In the Chronological Biography for 1742, Hakuin’s fifty-eighth year, we read: “In spring a Zen monk named Bonji came and requested an interview. He asked the master for a religious name and underwent the ceremony making him a disciple” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 207). Nothing more is said about this monk, nor does he appear elsewhere in Hakuin’s records, leaving one puzzled as to why he is mentioned at all. I think the information provided in this piece helps explain Hakuin’s sympathy with Bonji’s case, as well as his original intention of having it included in Poison Blossoms.

A text similar to these Dharma Words is found in Sendai’s Comments on the Poems of Han-shan as an extended comment on the following poem by Han-shan’s companion Shih-te:

I sigh when I see the know-it-alls
Exercising their minds uselessly all day long,
Standing at the crossroads mouthing plausible words,
Confusing and deceiving men and women of all kinds.
They only create bad karma for themselves — tickets to
hell,
Never acts of the kind that would bring a favorable
rebirth.

Should the demon of impermanence suddenly appear,
Their minds would surely be at sixes and sevens.

(Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan,
vol. 3. p. 59r, 1746 woodblock edition)

ZEN MAN BONJI began his Buddhist training studying scripture and practicing the Tendai sect's Threefold Contemplation.⁶ Becoming dissatisfied with this, one morning he got up and left. He plunged immediately into the stormy seas of the Zen ocean. Not long after, when he began encountering Zen's difficulties and experiencing some of their bitter taste, a feeling of pride and arrogance emerged within him, welling up like an incoming tide, rising up like a towering peak. He put on a ragged sedge hat, grabbed his walking stick, and set out on a hunt through the patriarchs' tiger caves, an exploration of the demons' palaces. He combed the western provinces of Chōshū, Iwami, Hizen, and Chikuzen, and the northern provinces of Shinano, Echizen, Nōtō, and Kaga as well, visiting every Zen teacher he could find. Barging into their temples, he conducted himself in a totally ungoverned manner, spouting scurrilous abuse, committing outrageous acts, insulting veteran senior priests, treating younger monks with contempt, slandering and reviling teachers and patriarchs of the past. The Zen teachers at the temples he visited, knowing they would be unable to control him, adopted a wise and safe course. They just let him vent all his spleen, doing and saying what he pleased, and then sent him on his way.

He went around telling his friends, "I used to spend my time in Tendai temples, until I realized how worthless those people are. I entered the poisonous groves of Zen, thinking that by nourishing myself on its bitter leaves and villainous fruits I could become a celebrated teacher. I traveled all over the country looking for a genuine master, but since I never found a single one worth his salt, I just went around exposing their incompetence. I was even ready to buy a boat and sail to China so I could look for someone there. But I gave that up when I realized the Chinese priests would be no different from the ones I encountered here."

Bonji's travels brought him here to Suruga. He tramped all through the province, passing Shōin-ji's gates on more than one

occasion, ignoring us as completely beneath his notice. When someone mentioned my teaching, Bonji dismissed me with a few choice verbal assaults.

In spring of this year [1742], karmic winds blew Bonji my way again, as he strayed by mistake into the Dharma reprobate's cave [*Sendai-kutsu*; one of Hakuin's sobriquets]. Holding a steel rod in one hand and a colorfully decorated fan in the other, he looked like a ferocious tiger peering down a fox's den, or a hungry falcon taking a bead on a limping hare. He eyed me as though I was someone who had just murdered his parents. He was obviously all fired up, ready to start as much commotion as he could.

There was no way to confront a fiery spirit like that head-on, so I started out easily. By engaging him in one or two Zen exchanges, I was able to drive him into some tight corners. I deflated his overweening pride with some stiff doses of my staff. In further encounters, including some vigorous give-and-take, I was able to test his mettle more thoroughly. Finally, Bonji ran out of arguments and exhausted all his verbal resources. His pride was completely crushed. He thereupon knocked his head to the floor, performing the bows that made him my disciple. He requested a Zen name, which I gave him: Bonji.

Bonji, I said, you're going to have to be extremely careful. Someone with a mind as prideful as yours can never complete Zen training. His resolve to pursue the Way will weaken. He will engage in all sorts of ugly behavior; commit cruel, inhuman acts. Such a person may even beat his parents or violate his sister. I suspect that those Zen teachers you reviled and humiliated around the country had a hard time suppressing the delusory thoughts that arose in their minds. They probably lost their appetites and had difficulty eating for days on end. Their followers were also surely saddened, and are still seething with resentment. For those evil acts, who is responsible? Men who harm people with weapons injure their bodies. Those who harm them with words usually not only forfeit any reputation they may have acquired, they also incur the wrath of the gods of heaven and earth and are shunned with loathing by other human beings.

There was an evil demon many years ago that possessed a glittering golden body and yet lived in a state of great and perpetual

hunger. Loathsome maggots constantly poured from its mouth, creating a terrible stench. The demon was originally a Buddhist priest who had rigorously observed the precepts. According to the Buddha, he had become a demon because he was unable to refrain from speaking ill of others.⁷

Another monk fell into hell for reviling and insulting an elder priest. He was later reborn into a family of the lowest *candala* caste, but while he was still in his mother's womb he emitted a foul odor that filled the entire room. He was committing various small, disgusting acts as soon as he was born, not to mention startling people with the terrible stench he emitted. He was constantly going to the privy, scooping up handfuls of dung and wolfing them down with relish. The virtuous priest who related his story also explained the evil karma that had brought about such a retribution.

Attendant P'ing of Mount Ta-yang, a leading student of Zen master Ming-an, mastered the inner secrets of the Sōtō school, its Five Ranks and Three Fundamentals,⁸ and was regarded as the finest of the monks at Ta-yang. He became one of the foremost Sōtō priests of his time, later residing at the Mount Ta-yang monastery, but he was never able to overcome a propensity to be prideful and arrogant. He could never tolerate having others surpass him in any way.

Before Zen master Ming-an passed away, he announced to his followers, "Leave my tomb undisturbed for ten years. Then I want you to open it and perform services for me once again." Attendant P'ing, feeling envious of his teacher's final words, opened the tomb after only three years. He found Ming-an's body completely unchanged, just as it had been in life. This angered him. He gathered some brushwood, placed his teacher's corpse on it, and set fire to it. After three days, the corpse remained completely unscathed by the flames. Ming-an's followers prostrated themselves before it in reverence. Some of them sat before the pyre wailing in grief. This further enraged Attendant P'ing, who grabbed a mattock and with loud shouts began striking furiously at the corpse and chopping it into small pieces. He then poured oil over the remains and set fire to them again.

When government officials learned of P'ing's actions, they divested him of his priest's robe and begging bowl and made him return to lay status. P'ing started calling himself by the secular name Huang Hsiu-ts'ai, but no matter where he went people would drive him away. Not even his former friends would have anything to do with him. He ended up living as a beggar until one day he was attacked and mauled to death by wild dogs.⁹

Ah, do you see what pride can do to a man's life? Here was a valiant hero, an imposing presence in the groves of Zen, but his mind became so crippled by pride that he ended up without a single place in the vast universe to rest his head. It was all the result of his self-pride. This is a demon that is always seeking out those who are clever and sagacious. He enters them through any one of a thousand openings, finally insinuating himself deep into their vitals. You should emulate the great ocean, which is superior to the tributary streams that flow into it because it remains beneath them.¹⁰ Students engaged in religious training must likewise maintain an attitude of humility.

Long ago, when a priest of the Onjō-ji in Ōmi province encountered the god of plague and pestilence, he asked the god, "Which do you fear most, *dharanis* and secret charms, monks and diviners, weapons, or fragrant incense?" The god replied, "As we can spread disease at Heaven's command, we have nothing to fear at all. However when we come upon a humble, compassionate man who is always surrounded by countless guardian gods, there is no opening through which to enter and perform our work. A humble person who always keeps his thoughts under control has greater merit and good fortune than the earth itself. We can do nothing against him. The virtue of his compassion is vaster than the sky. Minor gods can find nowhere to attach to him.

"Now a prideful person, someone whose self-esteem makes him contemptuous of other people, is always surrounded by great hordes of demons and devils spurring him on to ever greater acts of arrogance. Taking hold of a person like that is as easy as entering our own home. The demons and devils that surround him will even lend us a hand and help us to achieve our ends. So the arrogant and prideful all fall into our clutches. Since we are now in the latter day

with the Dharma growing steadily weaker, with more and more people relying on their own feeble understanding, pride and arrogance flourish. Pride stems from a lack of wisdom. No wonder we are so busy these days! Even I find it truly frightening.”

There was a monk of this type named Batsu Jōza at Eigan-ji in Echigo province when I was staying there many years ago.¹¹ When he referred to Zen masters around the country and to his comrades as well, he wouldn't even accord them the respect of using their full names.¹² Once he got started criticizing people, he never stopped. At the time, I thought to myself, “Someone like this will sooner or later lose his appetite for the Way.”

Three or four years later I was on retreat on Mount Iwataki in eastern Mino province. The spring rains had continued for days on end, so I had secured the door and settled down to some concentrated practice. Someone rapped at the door. When I didn't respond, he rapped again. I opened the door a crack and asked who it was. He said he was a monk on his way from Owari province to northern Mino, and he begged a night's lodging at my hut. I opened the door and let him in. I gave him some tea and food, which he immediately devoured on his hands and knees like a dog. Unimaginably filthy and giving off a terrible stink, he had a long scar that extended from his brow all the way to his ear, and on his face I noticed several clots of fresh blood. On examining him more closely, I realized to my astonishment that he was Batsu Jōza! But now he was a miserable outcast, a mere shadow of his former self. There was no trace of the former spiritual resolve. What had happened to all that knowledge and eloquence? He had been reduced to the level of an out-and-out beggar. Feeling pity for him, I said, “I allowed you in because I thought you were a traveling monk. Now I see that you are seriously wounded and your life may be in danger. If you died here, people might think I was the one who gave you that sword scar. There's a shrine building at the foot of the mountain. Go and sleep there. I'll bring you more food tomorrow.” I took off my monk's robe and put it around him. Batsu left in tears. I was weeping too.

A month or so later, I heard that three bandits apprehended in northern Mino had been executed at Kahara village, one of whom was a priest from Owari province. What a sad and miserable end.

Batsu had a friend from Shimotsuke province named Mō Jōza. Mō Jōza had a sharp and nasty tongue that was in no way inferior to Batsu's own. He too had committed some serious transgression and been returned to lay status. He worked as a sweeper and dishwasher at a small theater in Edo, but I heard that he too ended up as a beggar, and that he died in the streets like a dog.

In Harima province there was once a priest gifted with such great intelligence and insight that people stood in awe of him. He made a trip to Kyoto to procure a large donation to replace an image in the main hall of his temple. He also acquired a beautiful woman while he was there. He dressed her as a nun and brought her back to Harima with him, where they set up house just like a married couple.

The priest placed a large closed wooden case on the altar of the main hall. "Before long," he announced, "we will have a wonderful new image to put here, and we will conduct a splendid enshrinement ceremony for it." He had in fact already sold the Buddhist image that had originally been enshrined in the hall. No one knew that inside the wooden case he had placed a cheap, gaudy-colored clay image.

One morning eruptions began appearing all over the priest's body. When they festered he became so foul and filthy that he was forced to sleep in the stable with the horses. Mosquitoes and horseflies swarmed over him. His whole body was blanketed with a thick black covering of flies. Before long, he ceased to respond to people, and finally, weeping sorrowfully, passed away.

Then there was a veteran Sōtō Zen teacher in Dairyū-ji in Shimofusa province. He was another one given to expounding his half-baked views unreservedly as though he was the wisest of men. Late one night in the winter of the twelfth year of Kambun [1672], he had a score of the hundred monks in his assembly in to share tea and cakes. They talked deep into the night. The priest was holding forth on the Zen teaching, appraising the merits of teachers past and present and uttering criticisms and disparagements of various kinds, when suddenly he began screaming.

"I want all of you to look at my face! The trees and plants around this temple all belong to my brothers the *tengu* demons. They are waving their feathered fans and summoning me. How can I refuse to go? Do not weep or feel sad when I have gone. I will return before

long and invite you all to join us.” With a final shriek of “Farewell!” he got up and started to dash out of the hall. His mouth was gaping from ear to ear, his eyeballs were streaming blood and goggling from their sockets.

Seven or eight of the strongest monks grabbed him and tried to hold him down. A pitched battle ensued. He dragged young monks around the room, fighting with the strength of a bull elephant, and lunging out with the ferocity of a hungry tiger. The members of the brotherhood gathered, formed a ring around him, and began chanting sutras and *dharanis*. They continued with great concentration until they were all drenched with sweat. The priest cursed and reviled them and kept trying to tear the sutras from their hands.

Then an elderly priest took a volume of the *Rishubon* and forced it into the teacher’s mouth to silence him.¹³ Unable to cry out, he continued to issue muffled groans. Just at that moment there was a deafening noise and the surrounding forests and hills began to quake and shudder.

From the forest a loud voice was heard. “Is he in there? Is he in there? We were not able to get him tonight, but we will come again. We will surely take him with us.” The voice then called out all their names, gave an angry shout, and vanished.

Soon after, priests and lay people came hurrying from villages all around, filling the temple precincts. On someone asking why they had come, they shouted, “A great fire is raging in the hills! Everywhere is bright red with flames! We have come to fight it.”

For seven straight days, the monks in the assembly continued to recite the sutra singlemindedly, and the crazed priest returned to normal. If it hadn’t been for the great power of the Buddha’s sutras, how could he ever have regained his former self?

Another priest in north-central Wakasa province also strayed from the Buddha Way as a result of his superior intellect. Although he raised his younger brother’s daughter, when she came of age they began sharing the same bed. The priest already had a “hidden wife,” and when she saw how infatuated he was with the young girl, she became insanely jealous. Because of this, the priest ended up killing the woman and throwing her body into a nearby lake. The woman’s

children went to the magistrate's office and filed a complaint against the priest. He was arrested, lashed to a roadside post, and then executed with a lance thrust.

A person named Bunshū, who lived years ago in a small hermitage at Ikeda in Mino province, is yet another priest who lost his desire to pursue the Way. He invoked a magic charm against a man and woman who had revealed a secret he had entrusted to them, and within a week they were both dead. Not long after, the priest became deranged. Everything he saw seemed to be a razor-sharp leaf — the kind that grows on the trees in hell. He died an agonizing death, wailing and moaning to the end.

I could provide other examples as well — the senior priest who incurred divine wrath by killing a horse; the priest who was executed for killing an elder monk who had criticized him; the Zen priest who fell seriously ill after throwing out a Buddhist image. The stories are countless, and the people in them were all like you, Bonji. They were wise and learned, but prideful and arrogant. Unfortunately, circumstances do not allow me to speak of them.

It is indeed unfortunate that these people forfeited their lives because of a single mistaken thought and fell into Hell's eternal torments. A great pity, since they had no doubt endured many privations at the beginning of their religious training. They had probably peered through the fences into the patriarchal gardens, and they may have had talent of the kind that could serve as a foundation to turn them into the ridgepoles of our school. There were men and women who respected them, who feared them, who followed them, and who loved them. They could have been heroes of the Zen groves, superior teachers of the Dharma caves. Who could have foreseen that because they were unable to control their prideful thoughts they would die more miserable deaths than dogs or wild beasts? Careful examination shows that their downfall began by disparaging and reviling others in order to gain greater reputation for themselves. What a grave mistake that was! Not only did they lose the human body on which they had hung their Buddhist surplice, but they fell into hell and its tortures for endless kalpas.

[I have omitted a passage here in which Hakuin relates the story of Gedatsu Shōnin. It is given below in Book Eleven, pp. 695–6. See

also Wild Ivy, pp. 39–44.]

When I entered the realm of enlightenment for the first time, I myself became prideful, more arrogant than you are, Bonji. Then I heard an old, true story from a venerable priest that drenched me in a thick and shameful sweat and etched itself deep in my vitals. My pride and arrogance melted completely away. If I hadn't heard that story, I would no doubt have ended up like one of the evil priests I've been telling you about — more miserable than either Batsu Jōza or Mō Jōza. I have little wisdom that I can use to help others. No virtue for them to place their trust in. But because that old priest reproached me for my arrogance, I am able to doze away peacefully in this tiny temple of mine.

Bonji, pledge to me that from now you will undertake the practice of never disparaging others.¹⁴ In doing that you will cancel out all the bad karma you have piled up so far. When the World-Honored One walked along a path, it is said that the trees and plants all bent down to honor him, that everyone he passed prostrated himself in reverence, and everyone he approached welcomed him in a similar manner. When Ananda asked the Buddha about this, he replied, “Ultimately, it is because I have never disparaged anyone.”

Someone once asked the prelate Soshō Hosshi, “Why is it that everyone feels happy gazing at your face? Whether lay or cleric, young or old, they all feel as though they are looking at their father or mother.” Soshō replied, “Whenever I look at people, deep in my heart I feel that they are to be revered and respected as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. How could they feel enmity towards me?”

A person whose benevolence makes people yield to him with respect is like the phoenix among birds. A person whose august bearing makes people yield to him is like a tiger or wolf in the animal world. When the phoenix soars up into the heavens, the other birds all look up to him with reverence. But when the tiger or wolf emerges from the forest, the other animals run off, cringing with fear, bitter and resentful. An arrogant person who behaves in a haughty manner will have no friends; neither the king and his ministers, nor any other upstanding person. Not even his family or acquaintances in his native place will associate with him. His friends will not love him. The gods and demons will have no sympathy for him, either. People who

pride themselves on their cleverness are usually regarded by others as lacking in intelligence and common sense. An arrogant man, certain that he is competent in all things and being held back by others, usually ends up losing everything he has. Hence it is said that arrogance is a storehouse of calamities; humility a storehouse of good fortune.

Bonji, so far you have spoken and acted as you pleased. You have run roughshod over the whole world, your strong spirit refusing to yield to anyone. Your sharp tongue has enabled you to better others in argument. But don't say, "I have never even caught a cold. Why should I circumscribe my behavior?" The true way of Zen is like felling one of the giants of the forest. The task isn't accomplished with one stroke of the axe. But keep chopping away, steadily and without stopping, and the tree will eventually topple over. When the time comes for it to fall, it will fall no matter how many people try to prevent it. Committing a single bad act will not destroy you. But if you keep on committing them, you will one day, suddenly, be destroyed. When that happens, no matter how fervently you pray to the gods or Buddhas, it will do you no good. As the *Book of Changes* says, "Unless you perform repeated acts of benevolence, you will be unable to make a name for yourself; unless you perform repeated acts of evil, you will not be ruined."

It is a truly perilous position that you are in. Observing your antics yesterday, I felt as though I was watching a small child toddling towards an open well. You seem at least to have understood to some extent the error of your ways. I am very pleased that a monk with true Zen mettle has returned to life. This is no doubt the result of wisdom you acquired through practice in your former lives, which you have not yet completely exhausted. If you were not a true Dharma vessel and I did not admire your discernment, do you suppose that I would take the time to go on scribbling down page after page like this, using up good ink and paper, and rubbing my tired old eyes? There is an old saying, "A woman paints herself for those who love her; a samurai dies for someone who understands his worth." I am not asking you to die for someone who admires you, only to change your mistaken ways.

Be very careful and prudent in your conduct, Bonji. For the next twenty or thirty years you should become an ignorant dolt, a blockheaded simpleton, nourishing your virtue and avoiding all trouble and misfortune. Remaining in such a state of mind will enable you to put an end to your bad behavior just as surely as water slakes thirst. After a tree receives good nourishment for many years, it can serve as a ridgepole. When water is preserved carefully in coffered ponds, it can save farmers from the misfortune of severe drought. Didn't National Master Hui-chung of Nan-yang stay quietly at his mountain temple doing zazen for forty years? Didn't National Master Daitō live with beggars under the Gojō Bridge for twenty years? Their Zen has been passed down by their descendants and now it has spread beyond the seas and to the ends of the universe.

It is because of this that Ming-chiao Ta-shih said, "Students, you should worry about your lack of virtue. You shouldn't be concerned about not receiving a position of authority."¹⁵ These words are a model to be held up for all time. You should use them as a mirror to examine yourself. If rice plants do not mature into ripeness, they are no different from barnyard grass. Pine trees can be used for ridgepoles, but until they have grown and matured a great many years, they will be of no more use than an ordinary twig or branch.

Observing your arrogant behavior yesterday, Bonji, I couldn't help recalling Senior Priests Batsu and Mō. As the karmic winds have blown us together and placed us, if even for a few days, in a position of teacher and student, I cannot just watch you act this way and do nothing. I spoke a few words to you yesterday, but afterwards it seemed to me that they were insufficient. So when night came, I hung up the lamp and with tears in my eyes began writing this down. Then I waited for you to come around again. Still, I didn't write it for your eyes alone. I want other students engaged in Zen practice to read it as well.

I recalled various times in my own life when I had committed acts of arrogance, so I wrote them down too in hopes they might serve as a caution to younger students. I am embarrassed to say that even now, gasping out my final breaths and for all intents as good as dead, I still not only lack the requisite inner virtues, but I have not engaged in much Zen practice of the "secret application, private

diligence” type, either. The reason my students have not cast my unworthiness aside but rather have come to regard me as a teacher or parent can only be the consequence of some measure of favorable karma lingering from the past.

However, even someone as ignoble as me is not entirely devoid of parental affection, the kind that makes me want to pass some sweets along to you. Do you find these words of mine sweet? Or are they bitter? If you find among them something you think is worth keeping, then roll it up, stick it into your robe, and read it from time to time. If you decide that it is a tissue of nonsense not worth your consideration, then you have my permission to toss it into the fire. But the stories I have related here are all of them true. I have not made them up.

WORDS AT MINOR BUDDHIST OBSERVANCES (SHŌBUTSUJI)

Items #148 thru #154 in this section were delivered at services for sacred Buddhist images, all but two of them “eye-opening” (tengan) ceremonies to consecrate a carved or painted Buddhist images. Items #155 thru #159 are hinko, words Hakuin spoke at funeral services.

148. ON THE PROTECTIVE DEITY BENZAITEN OF THE SEIKŌ-IN IN INATORI

Seikō-in temple is located in the fishing village of Inatori, a few miles north of Shimoda on the eastern side of the Izu peninsula. Hakuin’s visit coincided with a lecture trip he made in the area: “In spring, the master lectured on the Blue Cliff Record at the request of Rinzai-ji in Izu. This marked the first time he responded to such an invitation from another temple. Over two hundred people attended” (Chronological Biography, age 53, 1737; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 204).

In Japan, the goddess Benzaiten (Sanskrit, Sarasvati-devi) is usually shown in the form of a young woman holding a biwa or Japanese lute. In addition to being a guardian deity, she is also a goddess of water, speech, eloquence, music, knowledge, beauty, and good fortune. Her connection with dragons and snakes (usually white snakes) comes from her association with water, which also explains why her places of worship are usually located near water. Often represented standing or sitting on a dragon or serpent, sometimes assuming their shapes, she may be accompanied by fifteen youthful male attendants (jūgo or dōji), each of whom possesses his own magic charms and powers.

ZEN HAS BEEN taught in Seikō-in, at the summit of Mount Gekkei, by men who achieved awakening after untold hardships and arrived at the position of head priest, where they “commanded the silence of the deep pools.” One head priest saw a white snake in several dreams. A certain man applauded this in the tenth year of Kyōhō [1725], saying “It is of great significance, a sign that you will fulfill all your vows. As your dreams were undoubtedly an auspicious omen, you should enshrine the white snake as a guardian of the temple, and call it Benzaiten.” Clerics and lay people alike rejoiced to hear this. They began working together to achieve this goal. A site was chosen to the left of the temple and there was built a shrine to Benzaiten.

This year temples in eastern Izu issued strict orders that I was to proceed to Rinzai-ji and conduct lectures on the *Blue Cliff Record*. During the meeting, on a day when no lectures were scheduled, I was asked to write a verse to commemorate the event. On the twelfth day of the fourth month, I took up my brush and celebrated it with these words: “I fervently hope that the priests of Seikō-in will join with the guardian deity Benzaiten and her fifteen wise attendants and strive relentlessly to ban misfortune from this temple, keeping it safe from harm forever, and that those who reside here will live long and happy lives. I also pray that all families belonging to this temple will flourish far into the future.”

.....

Zen has been taught in Seikō-in . . . where they “commanded the silence of the deep pools.” Seikō-in’s “mountain name” is Gekkeisan, “Mount Gekkei.” “Commanded the silence of the deep pools” alludes to a phrase in the *Chuang Tzu*: “If a gentleman can in truth keep from rending apart his vital organs, from tearing out his eyesight and hearing, then he will command a corpse-like stillness and dragon vision, the silence of deep pools and the voice of thunder” (*Chuang Tzu*, Watson, p. 116).

“I fervently hope that the priests of Seikō-in. . . .” “The head priest at Seikō-in at this time was Ichigai (n.d.), of the same generation as Hakuin, though junior to him” (annotation).

149. WORDS AT AN EYE-OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE BODHISATTVA KANNON

This is an early piece, written when Hakuin was thirty-two. In conducting an “eye-opening” (tengan) ceremony to consecrate a carved or painted Buddhist image, a priest is said to impart life to it. It has been compared to an artist bringing a figure he has painted to life by dotting in the pupils of its eyes with a final touch of his brush.

TEMPLE PATRON YAGI Matazaemon Mitsusuke is an amiable man whose religious aspiration is pure and unadorned. He treats his family and relations with affection, and he has formed an excellent relationship with the villagers around him.

During a trip Mr. Yagi made in autumn of this year, the second of the Kyōhō era [1717], he stopped at the Okabe post station at the house of a gentleman named Furui. There were enshrined in Furui’s residence two statues of Kannon Bodhisattva, both exquisitely carved, with unusually beautiful features. Yagi regarded them with great veneration. He worshipped them over and over, unable to dispel them from his thoughts.

Mr. Furui said, “I see many people travel along the Tōkaidō. Although most of them set out early in the morning, even if they walk at a constant pace they do not reach the next stopover until darkness has set in. They are so intent on reaching their destination that they fail to take notice of the great scenic spots they pass — the pine forest on Miho peninsula, even Mount Fuji itself, not to mention temples and shrines and other places of lesser interest. How unusual it is to find someone such as you who, amid the dust of this mundane world, possesses such deep faith in the Three Treasures [Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha].”

Mitsusuke said, “I’m only an ignorant countryman. I do not possess the inner wisdom that would enable me to grasp the Buddhist teachings, and few relationships in the outside world that might bring me closer to them. Still I would, if possible, like to have

one of your images. I could pick it up on my return trip. I would promise to treat it with the greatest reverence, to hold regular services for it, provide offerings, and have religious verses written to praise its virtues. It would help later generations turn to the path of Buddha and keep them from falling into the terrible ways of suffering that otherwise lie waiting for them.”

Mr. Furui said, “I will give it to you. I have heard that it is only when devotions such as you have proposed are made before an image that it truly becomes a Bodhisattva possessed of all the countless virtues. Now it is enshrined like a figurine at a gravesite, just standing there enduring the stares of the vulgar, no different from a useless stick of old wood. Isn’t it said, ‘There are not two suns in the universe’? Why should there be two Bodhisattvas standing side by side?” He thereupon took one of the images and gave it to Mitsusuke. Mitsusuke was dancing with joy, just like a person who had obtained the precious night-shining gem or wrested the priceless pearl from under the dragon’s jaws.

Mitsusuke came to me and asked that I perform an enshrinement ceremony for it and open its eyes. I thus offer incense, make my bows before this truly beautiful image of Kannon, and read out the following verse of praise to celebrate the Bodhisattva’s lofty, far-reaching vows:

What need is there for me to open up the Great Being’s
thousand eyes?
Outside the hall misty rain; beyond the lattice, the cold
plum blossoms.

.....

‘There are not two suns in the universe.’ “There aren’t two suns in the universe; there is only one man in heaven and earth” (*Zenrinkushū*). “One moon and one sun are enough” (annotation).

Two Bodhisattvas standing side by side. “Manjusri said, ‘When I desire to manifest the Buddha-body, I don’t manifest two of them side by side’” (annotation). “A world where there are two kings or two generals will know no peace” (annotation).

The precious night-shining gem is a fabulous pearl said to glow in the dark (*T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, ch. 494). In the *Chuang Tzu* a pearl of incalculable worth is described that had to be procured from under the jaws of a dragon at the bottom of the sea.

The Great Being's thousand eyes. One of Kannon's countless manifestations is the Thousand-Armed, Thousand-Eyed Kannon of Great Compassion (*Daihi Senju Sengan Kannon*); there is an eye in the palm of the hand of each of its thousand arms.

150. WORDS AT AN EYE-OPENING CEREMONY FOR SHAKAMUNI BUDDHA

Hakuin delivered this piece at a lecture meeting at the age of fifty-five, one year before the great lecture meeting on the Record of Hsi-keng that established his reputation throughout the country. The lecture meeting described here is mentioned in the Chronological Biography, 1739: "Autumn. In the eighth month the master acceded to a request from his lay student Akiyama Michitomo and gave talks at the Akiyama residence on Ta-hui's Letters. Tetsu of Kai, Jun of Izumo, and Kō of Bitchū served as attendants at the meeting, and Kyū of Rinsen-an, Chū of Bizen, Sha of Bungo, Ro of Kai, Totsu, and other monks arrived to take part. More than thirty people attended the meeting, which continued for over a month" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 204). Ta-hui's Letters, containing detailed instructions for Zen practice, was one of Hakuin's favorite texts. He had used it for his first lecture meeting at Shōin-ji. Ta-hui wrote the letters specifically for his lay followers, which may explain why Hakuin chose them for this meeting at the Akiyama residence, which seems to have included a large contingent of lay people.

Akiyama Michitomo (1682–1750) was a long-time Hakuin student and a great patron of Shōin-ji. A lengthy piece Hakuin wrote on awarding Akiyama a lay Buddhist name is translated below (Book Five, #185).

Hakuin first explains how the meeting came about, then delivers a long verse that he wrote for a ceremony, held during the meeting, to enshrine a statue of Shakamuni Buddha, probably in the shrine room of Mr. Akiyama's home.

IN SPRING OF the second year of the Gembun era [1737], after responding to a teaching request at Rinzaï-ji in Itadori village in southern Izu province, I stopped in northern Izu on my way home to spend the night at the residence of Mr. Akiyama Michitomo in Yasuhisa village. Mr. Akiyama and his family received me with the warmest cordiality, and asked me with great earnestness to conduct a Buddhist meeting at his home. As I was exhausted from all the traveling I had been doing, I had to refuse his request. Although sympathetic to my condition, Mr. Akiyama was not ready to take that for a final answer, so I made him a promise. "I will return for an extended stay this coming autumn or winter, and then I will do my best to fulfill the wishes of you and your friends."

After that, between autumn and winter of the second year [1737] and the beginning of autumn of the fourth year of Gembun [1739], letters and emissaries arrived from Mr. Akiyama urging me to carry out my promise. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, Mr. Akiyama's son Tomoshige came to my temple in person and repeated his father's invitation three times. No longer able to shirk my responsibility, at midnight I climbed into a bamboo palanquin and slipped quietly away from Shōin-ji, heading southeast. I traveled at night to avoid a hot and onerous daytime journey. Three monks accompanied me: Brother Tetsu, who trotted along in the vanguard, and Brothers Jun and Kō, who took up the rear. They hurried right along with their bowl pouches clutched tightly to their chests. After a journey of three or four leagues, I got down from the palanquin and walked through the gate of Mr. Akiyama's residence. The topmost branches of the trees were tinged with the first rays of dawn.

The entire family had been awaiting my arrival. They immediately rushed out and greeted me with faces wreathed in joyous smiles. Brother Kyū, who had been engaged in a retreat at a spot about a league distant, was also there, though no one had been sent to tell him about the meeting. Other unbidden participants who were

waiting for us were monks Chū, Sha, Ro, and Totsu. They were standing around calling out to one another, creating a commotion. By the time the morning meal was ready, the number of visiting monks had increased to a dozen or so. They stood around laughing together with Mr. Akiyama's children. Finally, they lined up in front of me, performed deep bows, and formally asked me to deliver Zen lectures on the *Letters of Zen Master Ta-hui*.

I was once again unable to refuse. I proceeded to jabber away at them twice a day, morning and night. The rest of my time I spent in my bed, sleeping soundly, snorting out thunderous volleys of snores that reverberated through the house.

Each day Michitomo would quietly practice zazen with the monks and engage them in pure talk about the Way. He was so unobtrusive that he almost seemed not to be there. At his father's wish, son Tomoshige assumed command of the family servants during the serving of the morning rice gruel and midday meals. Relatives and friends supplied the kitchen with the fruits of earth, stream, and ocean. Voices both young and old praised the assembly; their sighs of admiration echoed throughout the room. The meeting was an unexpectedly great success, of the kind that is rarely to be encountered in this defiled latter day world. Without my even realizing it, the meeting continued for an entire month. As the final day approached, Tomoshige produced a beautifully adorned golden statue of Shakamuni Buddha. At the final vegetarian feast, he asked me to "open its eyes." I placed my palms together in *gasshō*, and composed this verse:

I arrived the 15th of the eighth month, fourth year of
Gembun,
Responding to a request I received from Akiyama
Michitomo.

Many Zen monks with great iron traveling staffs came as
well,
Stealing stealthily in, all sworn to protect the Dharma
fortress.

"There are letters by the master of Yun-men yuan," they
said,

Bowing twice, and they formally requested detailed comments.

Mustering my strength, for three or four sessions I ranted away,

A room filled with priests and laymen hung on my every word.

Such earnest faces, how could I declaim in a slapdash manner?

I extended my stay and went on lecturing for the entire month.

Friends and relations came with bamboo mats under their arms,

High and low, young and old, sitting and standing side by side.

Akiyama's mother and wife dashed gaily about in tireless toil.

Eldest son Tomoshige deftly carried out a father's commands.

One day the host appeared holding a gilt figure of Shakamuni.

Bowing before it, I noted its fine features and exquisite form.

He asked if I would conduct an eye-opening ceremony for it,

I did as requested, not by painting in eyes or chanting a sutra,

But by reciting a marvelous *dharani*, powerful and profound,

Directly to the Buddha's face, for the salvation of all beings:

"A cool, refreshing breeze passes faintly through the room,

After an autumn rain the water in the pond is pure and clear."

The endless kindness since I came disturbing the household,

Isn't that itself the true opening of Shakamuni's Dharma eye?

I earnestly hope Buddha's profound merit and endless virtue

Gives this family, branches and leaves, continuing prosperity.

.....

Brother Tetsu, who trotted . . . and Brothers Jun and Kō, who took up the rear. Tetsu is Kaigan Kotetsu (also Chitetsu); Jun is Enkei Sojun; Kō is Daikyū Ebō.

Brother Kyū . . . monks Chū, Sha, Ro, and Totsu. Brother Kyū is Ekyū (n.d.), who along with Ryōsai was one of the senior priests in the early period of Hakuin's residence at Shōin-ji. The other monks were all students of Hakuin who were, or had formerly been, at the temple.

"There are letters by the master of Yun-men yuan." Yun-men yuan is a temple where Ta-hui, the author of the *Letters*, resided.

"A cool, refreshing breeze . . . the pond is pure and clear." Based on lines by Yuan-wu that are said to have brought his student Ta-hui to a satori (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 19). See below, #189, Supplementary Note 2, p. 344.

The endless kindness since I came . . . the true opening of Shakamuni's Dharma eye? "All the disturbance the meeting has brought, and the endless kindness too, are the true and original face of the Buddha Shakamuni" (annotation). "In gathering here, you priests and lay people are Shakamuni's eye. And this is not only the Buddha's eye; it is also the Pure Land of all your self-natures" (annotation).

151. VERSE AT AN EYE-OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE TEN KINGS AT THE

NEWLY REBUILT JISSŌ-AN

This verse was written the second year of Kampō (1742), Hakuin's fifty-eighth year, probably during the visit to Ryōtan-ji in Hamamatsu, Tōtōmi province, described in #63. In that piece, he mentions a temple named Jissō-ji, which is probably the Jissō-an that appears here.

To make sure we would all seek heaven's endless pleasures,

Lord Emma fitted out his underworld with numerous Hells.

This same Lord, sitting on the central golden Lotus Throne,

Is really Jizō Bodhisattva, who saves beings from suffering.

First and second of Hell's Ten Kings are Shinkō and Shokō,

Known likewise by the names Fudō Myō-ō and Shakamuni.

There are counterparts for each of the other eight kings too,

One and all they are manifestations of deepest compassion.

The Ten Kings' Mirror of Karma reflects your earthly deeds,

Most who gaze into it feel profound, though belated, regret.

That mirror is no other than your own *alaya* consciousness,

When you realize it, the Great Mirror Wisdom blazes forth.

Images of the Ten Kings are enshrined here at the Jissō-an,

A present bequeathed to the temple by the nun Yōjushin-ni.

I earnestly hope the redolence from this praiseworthy deed

Will liberate all those beings suffering in the nether regions,

Bring peace to the living, keep them from sickness and harm,

Enabling them to dwell in undisturbed harmony; I also pray

That all who come here to venerate these Ten Kings of Hell

Will finally reach the goal of supreme, eternal enlightenment.

.....

Hell's Ten Kings. According to the *honji-suijaku* theory widely accepted in pre-modern Japan, the indigenous Japanese *kami* were regarded as manifestations of the Indian and Chinese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The Ten Kings (*Jū-ō*) — Shinkō-ō, Shokō-ō, Sōtei-ō, Gokan-ō, Emma-ō, Henjō-ō, Taizan-ō, Byōdō-ō, Toshi-ō, and Gotōtenrin-ō — thus have Buddhist counterparts: Fudō Myō-ō, Shakamuni Buddha, Manjusri Bodhisattva, Fugen Bodhisattva, Jizō Bodhisattva, Maitreya Bodhisattva, Yakushi Buddha, Kannon Bodhisattva, Seishi Bodhisattva, and Amida Buddha.

The Ten Kings' Mirror of Karma . . . profound, though belated, regret. The soul of the deceased appears before each of the Ten Kings and his Underworld courts on specified days following death. In each court, after the record of the good and bad deeds engaged in during one's lifetime is examined, the soul is condemned to one of the Hells or assigned to one of the six paths of rebirth.

That mirror is no other than . . . blazes forth. "On hearing the sound of one hand, this eighth consciousness is the Great Mirror Wisdom" (annotation).

A present bequeathed to the temple by the nun Yōjushin-ni. Aside from an annotation describing her as “the resident of Jissō-an” (Jissō Anjū), nothing is known about this nun.

152. VERSE AT AN EYE-OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE BODHISATTVA KOKŪZŌ

“This was delivered at Konryū-ji in Ōno, a village at the foot of Mount Ashitaka in Suruga province, during ceremonies held to commemorate the re-consecration of the statue of Kokūzō that served as the temple’s main object of worship” (annotation). Until its disestablishment in the Meiji period, Konryū-ji was a branch temple of Shōin-ji. The Bodhisattva Kokūzō (Sanskrit, Ākāśagarbha; the Sino-Japanese is literally “Storehouse of Empty Space”) is said to represent the virtues and merits of Buddha-wisdom.

Transforming his treasure storehouse of empty space at
will,
He shines the great light of Buddha-wisdom in untold
lands.
Under the cliffs, shadows of pine trees are wreathed in
mist,
Above the hedge, the celestial fragrance of last year’s
plum.

.....

Transforming his treasure storehouse . . . untold lands. “This is known to those who are able to move empty space, and to those who can grab empty space and throw it out the door. Today, right here and now, such people will unfold for you a great and perfect light invested with every possible treasure” (annotation).

Under the cliffs . . . last year's plum. “If you want to know what Buddha-wisdom’s great and perfect light is, it is the pine trees wreathed in mist, the heavenly fragrance of last year’s plum” (annotation). “Hearing these two lines, Empty Space opened his eyes; he was very pleased” (annotation). “The body of the Buddhas in its entirety” (annotation).

153. WORDS AT COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES FOR THE REBUILDING OF THE SHRINE FOR SHŌIN-JI’S GUARDIAN DEITIES

The new shrine at Shōin-ji housed the three deities Benzaiten, Akiba Daigongen, and Tenjin.

WORSHIPPERS AT SHŌIN-JI have prayed for many years to the three protective deities Benten, Tenjin, and Akiba. The small building in which they were enshrined has now collapsed to the ground and lays in ruins in a small, useless mound. For the past twenty years we have continuously venerated the site. Now, in autumn of the fifth year of Gembun [1740], Mr. Watanabe has built a new shrine, sending two fine workmen to us from a distant district. Mr. Uematsu, delighted by the project, has provided a vegetarian meal for the assembly. I was asked to write a verse.

We pray to the three deities and we venerate three men. Working as one, they have each performed splendid deeds. Here is my verse:

Golden autumn leaves, a plum more precious than jade,
Are joined here by the worthy deity of Chikubu Island.
Three shrines in one, three *kami* sharing a single shrine,
Mustering their divine power to protect this sacred site.

.....

Mr. Watanabe. Watanabe Sukefusa (n.d.) was the wealthy operator of the main *honjin* inn at the Hara post station and an important patron of Shōin-ji, providing funds for Hakuin’s building and publishing projects. A long letter Hakuin wrote remonstrating with Sukefusa when he was a young man for unfilial behavior is translated in *Beating the Cloth Drum*, pp. 1–14.

Mr. Uematsu. Uematsu Yozaemon (1660–1743), head of the wealthy Uematsu family of Hara, whose large residence was located close to Shōin-ji.

We venerate three men. “Watanabe, Uematsu, and me” (Hakuin’s annotation).

Golden autumn leaves . . . worthy deity of Chikubu Island. Akiba Daigongen is the principal deity of the Akiba (“Autumn Leaves”) shrines, the largest of which was on Mount Akiba in Tōtōmi province. A woodblock print Hakuin made of Akiba Daigongen and letters he wrote about it are found in *Beating the Cloth Drum*, pp. 109–17. The plum tree is the symbol of Tenjin, the deity of the main Kitano Tenmangu Shrine in Kyoto. The deity Benzaiten is enshrined at Hōgon-ji, a temple-shrine on Chikubu Island in Lake Biwa.

154. VERSE AT AN EYE-OPENING CEREMONY FOR JIZŌ BODHISATTVA

This verse was delivered at the Konryū-ji in Ōno village (see above, #152). An identical inscription Hakuin wrote on a large painting of Jizō Bodhisattva, dated the sixth year of Hōreki (1756), is reproduced in HZB, Zenga-hen #215.

His monks’ staff grasped in his right hand
Annuls suffering in the six ways of rebirth.
The wish-fulfilling gem he holds in his left
Illuminates the crossing into the three paths.

Perfect love, compassion, equanimity, joy
Manifested in unending shapes and forms.

.....

His monks' staff . . . rebirth. Jizō's Bodhisattva Vow is to help beings suffering in the six worlds of rebirth. He is commonly depicted as a young monk carrying a monks' staff.

The wish-fulfilling gem . . . into the three paths (sanzu). The mani jewel (*nyoi hōju*) or Wish-fulfilling Gem enables the possessor to attain his every wish. "What does he illuminate? He illuminates this room in which we now sit as the Pure Land of the Buddhas" (annotation). "When beings are reborn into the three paths of hell, fighting spirits, and animals, he illuminates the crossing for them [showing them the reason for their rebirth and the way to rescue themselves from it]" (annotation).

Perfect love, compassion, equanimity, joy. The enlightened mind is said to appear in these four immeasurable states (*shi-muryō-shin*) as it tries to help sentient beings rid themselves of suffering and attain awakening.

Hinko

Included under the Shōbutsuji rubric are five hinko, literally, “grasping the torch [that lights the funeral pyre],” words Hakuin spoke as officiating priest at funeral services. Most were verses for monks who had trained at Shōin-ji. The cemetery at Shōin-ji is filled with gravestones of young monks who died while training there under conditions of great privation; these first two examples are no doubt typical of many such obsequies Hakuin must have been obliged to conduct.

155. VERSE AT THE FUNERAL OF ZENSHU DŌSHAKU JŌZA

Nothing is known of this person. The posthumous name Zenshu Dōshaku means “Sowing good seeds, amassing good merit.” Jōza, which has a meaning of senior priest, is also commonly used for posthumous (male) names. An inscription identical to this one, attributed to Hakuin’s disciple and Dharma heir Enkei Sojun, is found among Enkei’s records (HOZ8, p. 325).

You can’t acquire a good name without amassing good deeds;

You can’t become a virtuous person without cultivating virtue.

And yet you can’t cultivate virtue or amass good deeds either.

A lady carved out of wood is breaking dry sticks for firewood.

I found Zenshu Dōshaku Jōza a pure, simple-hearted man whose unassuming appearance reflected a native humility. His steadfast devotion made him seem like one of the faithful and upright men who lived in the times of Emperor Fu Hsi, or inhabited Emperor Wu Huai's legendary kingdom. I am eighty-four now and have for many years heard people speak of him as one of our province's most virtuous men. The success he has had in clarifying the great Dharma and assuming the great burden of its teachings can only be the result of some excellent karma from the past.

With a single hand old Sendai [Hakuin] now offers a stick of incense to his memory. Years ago he received the Dharma name Zenshu Dōshaku from the priest of Daikō-ji. Today, in the final part of the eighth month, I destroy the cycle tying him to birth and death, yank up the roots linking him to enlightenment and send him off with these words:

Raindrops pattering over fallen autumn leaves, although
sobering to the soul,
Can't compare to the intimacy of glorious sunset clouds
over yellowing fields of grain.

.....

You can't acquire a good name . . . without cultivating virtue. The first line occurs in the *Book of Changes*: "Good acts, if not accumulated, will not be sufficient to gain a reputation; evil acts, if not accumulated, will not be sufficient to destroy a life. The small man, thinking small acts of goodness bring no benefit, does not perform them; and thinking small deeds of evil cause no harm, does not refrain from committing them." "Virtue bruited throughout the world is not attainable. Try to attain it and you only regress. It won't benefit you, and won't benefit others either" (annotation). The second line is adapted from *The Great Learning*.

And yet you can't . . . good deeds either. "Seen by the enlightened eye, there is no amassing of good deeds or cultivating of virtue. Words spoken from the ultimate reaches of Zen activity" (annotation).

Emperor Fu Hsi is a hero of Chinese legend and mythology who discovered the famous Chinese trigrams used in divination that were later incorporated into the *Books of Changes*.

Emperor Wu Huai is a legendary emperor said to have ruled using the high moral standards of his own life. “Admired by all, he controlled the world by means of the Tao, dealt with transgression by means of morality. Under his reign people lived peacefully, respecting his way of life . . . they were happy, with neither good nor evil in their hearts” (*Lu-shih, The History of Lu*; accounts of legendary, pre-historic China published in the Sung dynasty).

Raindrops pattering . . . yellowing fields of grain. Hakuin used these lines frequently as capping words; e.g., #34 on p. 53. An annotator said of them: “This is old Hakuin’s highest mantra.”

156. VERSE AT THE FUNERAL OF SENIOR MONK GENSHITSU SOMON

Although Genshitsu Somon (n.d.) was evidently a monk in training at Shōin-ji and, judging from the final two lines of Hakuin’s verse, a quite advanced student, nothing else is known about him. An annotation says he came to Shōin-ji from a temple named Dairyū-ji in nearby Yanagisawa.

Brother So, have you shut your brushwood gate for
good?

You have rent this old priest’s heart with the deepest
grief.

Prying open the lock on the great matter is incredibly
hard,

You showed you were a true son of the Buddha-
patriarchs.

Prying open . . . the Buddha-patriarchs. Evidently Brother So had attained enlightenment.

157. VERSE AT THE FUNERAL OF SENIOR MONK SHIGAN SŌKATSU

Shigan Sōkatsu (Shigan Sōkatsu Jōza, n.d.) was from Sōgen-ji, an important provincial Zen temple in Harima, Bizen province (part of present Hyōgo prefecture). Sōkatsu was one of several monks from that temple known to have studied with Hakuin, the most prominent of whom, Kōsei Egyō (d. 1776), was one of Hakuin’s main Dharma heirs.

After gulping down the deadly springs at the Zen source,
You came to me and began gnawing on my old green rug.
Shoved out of your cave, tumbling over, being born anew,
You manifested a million lion hairs — lacking half a pound.

.....

Lines 1–2: As is usual in these addresses, Hakuin plays on the Chinese characters of the monk’s name and home temple, not all of which can be reflected in the translation. The name Shigan Sōkatsu is literally, “lion cliff that gives life to the Zen source.” Sōgen-ji, where he served, is “temple of the Sixth Patriarch’s fountain source,” or more simply, “the Zen source.” “Green rug” is a metaphor for Hakuin’s Zen essence, his most prized possession (see the explanation in the fourth note to #191 on p. 351).

Lines 3–4: A lion is said to test the mettle of its cubs by pushing them off the cliff where they were raised; those that have what it takes to be proper lions perform a somersault in midair and fly back

to the cave. One hair of the lion king is said to manifest a hundred million lion hairs. There are references in Hua-yen literature to hundreds and millions of golden lions appearing in each of the hairs of the lion king, each of which manifests countless lions in their turn, in a never-ending progression. Hakuin uses this expression in *Dream Words from a Land of Dreams*, ch. 4.

The final “lacking half a pound” is unclear. It may allude to the need for continued post-satori training. Tōrei, calling the expression beyond the reach of intellectual understanding, links it to Case 45 of the *Blue Cliff Record* (“A monk asked Chao-chou, ‘All things return to the One. Where does the One return to?’ Chao-chou said, ‘When I was in Ch’ing-chou, I made a robe that weighed seven pounds’”) by saying, “What does this mean? It means you cannot hope to grasp this half pound until you can grasp Chao-chou’s seven-pound robe” (annotation).

158. VERSE AT THE FUNERAL OF JISSAI EISHIN DAISHI

Jissai Eishin Daishi is the posthumous name of the wife of Watanabe Heizaemon (n.d.), proprietor of the main honjin inn at the Hara post station, used by daimyō and other travelers of high rank. Watanabe’s son Sukefusa (n.d.) was a childhood friend of Hakuin.

Hakuin wrote an inscription bestowing a Dharma name on Jissai Eishin (Book Five, #182), in which he praises her for her deep devotion to Buddhist practice and for raising her son Sukefusa to be a splendid gentleman. The wealthy Watanabe family was an important patron of Shōin-ji. The difference is striking between this verse and ones that Hakuin delivered at funeral services for his monks. Compared to the latter, written in the style of his teaching verses, this one, even as it conveys implications of Zen doctrine, is very direct and poignant.

Dewdrops beneath a sickle moon, a million points of light.
Camellia flowers drop at the window, the softest of
voices.

A splendid life of eighty years, brief as a dream in the
night,
Listening to the shrilling crickets, I see that dawn has
come.

159. SENDING OFF THE PALANQUIN CARRYING DAICHI-IN'S REMAINS TO KYŪSHŪ

This piece was written in the twelfth month of the second year of Kan'en (1749), Hakuin's sixty-fifth year. Daichi-in is the posthumous name of Hakuin's friend and student Nabeshima Naotsune (1701–49), Sesshū no kami, the Lord of Hasuike Castle in Hizen province. He had died earlier that year at the age of forty-nine at the clan's Edo residence, following a long illness. His retainers had stopped at Shōin-ji as they were carrying their lord's remains back to his native Hizen province in Kyushū. Oradegama, one of the most important and lengthiest of Hakuin's Japanese works, was originally written as a letter of religious instruction for Naotsune, evidence of a close master-disciple relationship between the two men.

I CAN REMEMBER when Lord Nabeshima's splendid palanquin arrived here at the gates on each of the three visits he made to Shōin-ji. How could I have known that this time I would be going out to greet the sacred palanquin carrying his mortal remains? Do not say his native Hizen province is far distant from here. The hills and rivers and the great earth itself are all Lord Nabeshima's true Dharma-body.

Lord Daichi-in Dōzen Genmyō Dai-koji was a quiet, humble man who always showed the greatest consideration for others. His

ancestors performed many glorious exploits during the Korean campaigns. His descendants commanding the castle at Hasuike in the present day are men of outstanding wisdom, whose benevolence will continue to spread through the world long into the future. It is just as the old adages say: “where the source is deep, the stream flows far; where the father is stern, the son is inevitably wise.”

Lord Nabeshima spent much time beating at the barrier-gate of Chao-chou’s “Mu” koan. Then, suddenly, he swallowed dry all the waters of the West River. We talked and laughed together when he visited my humble dwelling at Shōin-ji. He inquired into the teachings that were transmitted at Eastern Mountain. It seems it was just yesterday I stood at the temple gate to greet his palanquin and welcome him to a tea gathering we had arranged. Today, the incense I offer to him is dampened with an old monk’s tears. I am however glad he left behind a wonderful son and heir in his native province, a young man whose splendid capacity and skills will enable him to administer the clan’s affairs, not to mention gain unswerving loyalty from the excellent chief retainers who serve at his side.

I now offer some words to send him on his way:

Turning my head, a soaring Mount Fuji capped with snow,
Its lower half flushed in the crimson glow of the rising sun.

.....

I can remember when Lord Nabeshima’s . . . Shōin-ji. “Once during the Enkyō period [1744–47], when he stopped over on the *sankin kōtai* [a daimyō’s obligatory sojourn in Edo]; once when he escorted the Korean embassy to Edo; and one other time as well” (annotation).

The hills . . . Dharma-body. “In the Buddha-nature there is no living and dying” (annotation).

Lord Daichi-in Dōzen Genmyō Dai-koji is Naotsune’s full posthumous name.

Korean campaigns. Warriors from the Nabeshima clan led by Lord Naoshige and his son Katsushige took part in Hideyoshi’s ill-fated invasion of Korea in the later 16th century.

“Where the source is deep, the stream flows far” is a saying in Chih-i’s *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*, ch. 3, which appears in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 53.

Chao-chou’s “Mu” koan. *The Gateless Barrier*, Case 1; see #82, first note, p. 104.

Swallowed dry all the waters of the West River is an allusion to a famous dialogue between Ma-tsu and Layman P’ang. The Layman asked, “What kind of man is he who has no companion among all the myriad things?” “When you’ve swallowed all the water in the West River in one gulp, I’ll tell you.” At this Layman P’ang achieved realization (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 8). “In other words, Lord Nabeshima was like Layman P’ang” (annotation).

The teachings . . . at Eastern Mountain refers to the teaching of Wu-tsu Fa-yen, who lived at Eastern Mountain (Mount Tung-shan), and to the style of Zen taught in his lineage.

Turning my head . . . crimson glow of the rising sun. “This too is the Zen style of Eastern Mountain, a vital resource for priests in Hakuin’s line. These are lines whose point is grasped after you have died two or three times. No doubt about it, these two lines brought Lord Nabeshima back to life” (annotation).

BOOK FOUR

Explications (*Ben*)

Hakuin uses this Chinese literary form, in which the writer assesses a matter to determine its authenticity, validity, or true meaning, to deal with a variety of terms and passages from sutras and Zen records which he felt the traditional commentaries had mistakenly or inadequately explained. His own explications, which he says he arrived at in the course of his practice, give us what is perhaps the best example of his unique Zen understanding of the principal Buddhist sutra texts. Most of the terms and passages in the ten Explications that make up Book Four are from the Vimalakirti and Lotus sutras, and much of the material is concerned with the eight consciousnesses posited in the Yogacara or Consciousness Only school.

An annotation made by one of Hakuin's students suggests that the Explications were written down and posted in the temple for monks to study. Portions of the text take on a question and answer format, which suggests that some were inspired by questions his monks brought to him, although it is equally possible that Hakuin himself assumed the role of questioner. In any case, in their present form some of them read rather like essays, even though the sometimes elliptical, disjointed manner of their exposition makes it difficult at times to grasp Hakuin's reasoning.

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160. ENTERING A LOTUS THREAD

Here Hakuin takes up a passage from the Record of Lin-chi that is based on a passage in the Flower Garland Sutra, “Fugen Bodhisattva” chapter: “Followers of the Way, make no mistake. When the asuras fight against the god Indra and are defeated in battle, they lead their host of eighty-four thousand followers and all of them hide in a hollow filament of a lotus. Is this not miraculous?” (Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi, pp. 48–9). It should be noted that the final sentence of the passage Hakuin quotes below (“Indra, unable to attack them there, withdrew”) is not found in the printed editions of the Record of Lin-chi. He is quoting from memory, or he has simply added the additional words himself.

Lotus threads are very fine, delicate filaments produced from viscous fluid that exudes from the root of the lotus plant when it is cut. These filaments were dried and woven into a cloth that was used for garments and as canvas for religious paintings. In Buddhist literature they are used as a metaphor for something extremely small and fine.

This piece also appears in Sendai’s Comments on the Poems of Han-shan (kan 2), compiled in 1741, in Hakuin’s mid-fifties.

ZEN MASTER LIN-CHI said, “When the asuras fought against the god Indra and were defeated in battle, they led their host of eighty-four thousand and hid together with them in a hollow lotus filament. Indra, unable to attack them there, withdrew.” His words are based on a passage in the *Flower Garland Sutra*.

I always found it strange that after their defeat the asuras chose to conceal themselves inside a lotus filament. Asuras possess extraordinary supernatural powers. They could have easily crowded their evil host of eighty-four thousand inside an infinitely smaller place — in the eye of a mite that makes its nest in the eyebrow of a mosquito, in a mosquito’s nose, in a mote of dust, or on the tip of a

needle. Why did they choose a lotus filament as a place of concealment?

On achieving victory over the asuras, Indra and the Four Heavenly Kings under his command would have moved with the fleetness of the wind. In no time at all they would have searched the lotus ponds, found the lotus stalks, and extracted the lotus filaments. The asura forces would have little hope of escaping them. Even if they were able to hide, Indra and the other gods all possess the heavenly eye, which takes in at a single glance all existence without exception, as though gazing at a crystal in the palm of the hand. They would have immediately discovered the asura forces. If it were winter or early spring, when the buds had not yet appeared on the lotus roots and everything is bare, they would have apprehended them with even greater ease.

My doubts about this remained for many years. Then, while I was doing zazen recently, it all suddenly became clear to me. Elated, I have written down what I discovered for the benefit of my Zen students. It is a subtle example of the manner in which sutras employ metaphor, and I think it can be of great use to someone engaged in practicing the Way. Let me now try to explain it for you.

Suppose a superior religious seeker engaged in practicing the Way continues to sit quietly with his backbone perfectly straight until body and mind disappear and he becomes one with all things, as tranquil as a perfectly clear body of water or a portion of the vast empty sky. If even a slight flicker of thought arises, though, the firmament fills with mist and fog, waves swell up that can swallow ranges upon ranges of towering peaks. Valleys and mountains howl in raging fury, noisome vapors spit forth ice and hail, and lightning and thunder dart from deadly all-encompassing clouds.

Repercussions of this magnitude occur when the asuras, enjoying a great victory, reveal the immensity of their bodies, making vast oceans seem shallow, boundless skies seem narrow, and they shake the sacred halls and pavilions with their horrendous roaring. The human mind quails before this; even the cinnabar field may break and crumble.

But if at such a time the student bores into his koan, or concentrates singlemindedly on his own original self, then everything

— the ocean of the Dharmakaya and the fundamental source of his own mind — will suddenly become calm and tranquil, like when a great dipper of cold water is poured into a seething cauldron. Such conditions prevailed when Indra achieved his great victory.

Each of the Four Heavenly Kings has now secured his quarter; the other heavenly deities are rejoicing and congratulating one another. In the Dharma Hall, each of the mani gems in Indra's Net is reflecting a million other mani gems, endlessly manifesting a realm where all phenomenal existences, in an ever-changing lord-and-vassal relation, are interfused while at the same time remaining mutually unhindered.

At such a time, the devil legions, eighty-four thousand strong, without a single place to hide, vanish without leaving a single trace behind. No matter where you search in any of the ten directions, no matter what means you use, you cannot discover a single one.

At this point, the student is waltzing about in a rapture of delight, thinking, "Everything has now been settled!" But he must wait, for he is unaware that those devil legions are at that very moment insinuating their way into those subtle thoughts of joy, and will lie waiting doggo inside them.

What do I mean by subtle thoughts of joy? Minute flows of delusive thought that are difficult to completely cut off and are constantly trickling out, like water, from the eighth consciousness. Is this not the meaning of those hosts of afflicting demons — delusive thoughts that are difficult to cut off — concealing themselves inside a lotus root? Once they have insinuated themselves with great subtlety into the holes in the lotus root, where it is impossible to attack them, one has no recourse but to retreat.

Yang-shan asked Kuei-shan, "Those subtle flowings from your mind — how many years since you've been rid of them?" "Seven years," Kuei-shan replied. This too refers to rooting out the devil hosts hidden inside the hollow filaments of the lotus root. How do you accomplish it? The patriarchal teachers contrived an expedient device for severing, as if with a fine sword, the fundamental source of delusive thoughts. It is far more effective than trying to smash the thoughts themselves — even if you took a ten-thousand-ton hammer to them!

A monk asked Chao-chou, “Does a dog have the Buddha-nature, or not?” Chao-chou said, “Mu.”

If you concentrate on this koan, you will find that it has extraordinary efficacy. If you really want to attain the realm of peace and repose, you should work on this koan. If you continue attacking it from the top, from the bottom, and from every other possible angle, and you suddenly die the great death and are born anew, you will find that you will blush as you recall all these stories.

Strive hard, and do it now. Don’t wait until you’ve grown old and find tears running down your withered cheeks. Then it will be too late! It is my sincerest hope that you will succeed!

.....

The Four Heavenly Kings (Shi-tennō), who appear in the Lotus Sutra, are guardians of the world, each of them protecting one of the four directions, and of the Buddhist teachings, punishing evil and helping those who the aspire to enlightenment.

Yang-shan asked Kuei-shan. . . . From the Record of Hsu-t’ang, ch. 1.

161. THE BUDDHA SUMERU LAMP KING

Here Hakuin explains the alaya, or eighth, consciousness (ālaya-vijnāna), also called the storehouse consciousness, a key concept in the Mahayana Yogacara tradition that often appears in his writings. The Buddha Sumeru Lamp King, a Buddha who appears in the Vimalakirti Sutra, dwells in the universe called Merudhvaja located northwest of Mount Sumeru.

THE “**BEYOND COMPREHENSION**” chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* says:

At that time Vimalakirti said to Manjusri, “You have visited countless thousands, tens of thousands, billions of *asamkhyas* [an uncountably large number] of countries.

What Buddha-lands have the best lion thrones endowed with the finest qualities?”

Manjusri replied, “Layman, to the east, beyond countries numerous as the sands of thirty-six Ganges, lies a universe called Merudhvaja [‘Sumeru Shape’]. Its Buddha is called Sumeru Lamp King, and he is there now. This Buddha’s body is eighty-four thousand *yojanas* in height and the lion throne he sits on is eighty-four thousand *yojanas* high and adorned in the finest fashion.”¹⁶

This passage contains the finest parable in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, one that expresses the scripture’s deep and boundless meaning. One can understand why teachers in the past in commenting on it have sometimes been mistaken. Here we encounter not only the marrow of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* but the very core of the ancients’ teaching. It expresses the profound truth of nonduality, which transcends by far the realm of human comprehension. A practitioner of Zen who reads this sutra and continues to study it with care will before long suddenly open the true eye of ultimate nondiscriminatory wisdom.

When I first read the *Vimalakirti Sutra* in my youth, I had considerable doubts about it. Where it said, “to the east, beyond countries numerous as the sands of thirty-six Ganges, lies a universe called Sumeru Shape,” I thought to myself, “That sounds strange. It would be billions upon billions of countries. I’ve read that the Ganges River is huge, over forty leagues across.¹⁷ Who could determine how many particles of sand it contains? Each particle is no larger than a grain of finest wheat flour. Even if you put a few bushels of them into a container, it would still be exceedingly difficult to count them all. And we are talking of sand in a river forty leagues in width! Not even the gods and demons would be able to count them. Moreover, we are talking not of one or two Ganges, but thirty-six! It stands to reason that no one could count all that sand. No doubt it is to be understood as an amount totally beyond calculation. But if that is so, why use a fantastic number like thirty-six Ganges in the first place? Could it be designed to confuse students engaged in Buddhist practice? The Bodhisattva Manjusri was the teacher of all

seven Buddhas of the past; surely he would not want to befuddle people like me with such senseless numbers. Doesn't the irresponsible use of fantastically large numbers invite criticism from Neo-Confucians like Chu Hsi who disparaged Buddhism for "teaching ideas that sound loftier than *The Great Learning* but are in fact groundless illusions?"¹⁸ Or could it be a profound principle is at work here? But if that is the case, why has no one ever pointed it out?

Ever since the *Vimalakirti Sutra* arrived in China it has been read by countless people of great wisdom. The men who translated sutras into Chinese were extraordinarily talented scholars too — Yen-fo Cheng in the Latter Han dynasty, Chih-ch'ien in the Wu dynasty, Shu Fa-hu and Shu Shu-lan in the western Chin, and Hsuan-chuang in the T'ang. In the Sui dynasty the great teacher T'ien-t'ai Chih-i lectured on the *Vimalakirti Sutra* each year during the summer retreat, inspiring the Indian priests who heard him. In the eastern Chin dynasty there was a priest named Gitamitra. In the Latter Chin there were eight hundred outstanding scholars working at Kumarajiva's translation center in the Hsiao-yao Gardens. Kumarajiva's vast learning enabled him to penetrate the works of all three divisions of the Tripitaka — sutras, precepts, and commentaries — with a discernment that was acclaimed throughout India. Among his students were men of superior wisdom such as Tao-sheng and Seng-chao, clerics of great erudition such as Seng-jui and Seng-jung. These people investigated in minute detail not only all the major doctrinal points set forth in the sutra, but minor points, even down to the most insignificant, as well. They left virtually nothing untouched.

Then why on earth have all these men remained completely silent about the sutra's most essential teaching? Ch'ang-shui Tzu-hsuan of the Sung dynasty is the only person who has ventured an opinion on this point.¹⁹ In his *General Commentary* on the sutra, he wrote, "The Buddha-body's height of eighty-four thousand *yojanas* expresses the perfect and complete Recompense Body he attained by means of the eighty-four thousand *paramitas*. The lion seat, eighty-four thousand *yojanas* high, expresses his utter fearlessness amid the eighty-four thousand forms of absolute emptiness."

However, I do not think his comments are sufficient to explain the matter. The *Vimalakirti Sutra's* fundamental principle is set forth in the "Beyond Comprehension" chapter. Its very life and essence is revealed in this phrase about the sands in thirty-six Ganges. The deep doubts this raised in my mind remained with me for many years — it felt as though I always had something lodged between my teeth. Then one night recently when I was doing zazen, the sutra's subtle and profound meaning suddenly became clear to me. There it was, revealed right before my eyes! Overjoyed, I waited until dawn and then I called you all into my chambers to tell you about it. I am writing it down as well, because some of you seemed to respond to my oral teaching as though you were deaf and dumb.

My sole wish is for you to experience a joy equal to my own. If you closely peruse the idle thoughts I have set forth here, I have no doubt whatever that you will share my joy. If you experience it just once, all the inner subtleties of the sutra will suddenly appear to you as clearly and distinctly as a fruit lying in the palm of your hand. While I am the first to admit that my ideas lack depth and discernment, I beg you not to fling them aside with contempt. I wrote them down reluctantly, against my better judgment. But it makes no difference to me if people want to say that old Hakuin in his dotage has begun chewing food making it soft before feeding it to his children.

If a student wants to fully grasp my meaning, he must first strike his mattock down squarely into the field of the eighth consciousness. If he does that, he will encounter the Buddha Sumeru Lamp King face to face. If he doesn't, he will never, until the day he dies, achieve any true resolution.

The words "pass beyond" in the sentence "passing beyond countries as numerous as the sands of thirty-six Ganges" is similar to the "passing across" of the six *paramitas*. It means emancipation, "reaching the opposite shore [of enlightenment]." "Thirty-six" [written with the numbers "three-six" in Chinese] refers to the three subtle and six coarse mental states. What are the three subtle mental states? Ignorance [the unenlightened condition], the perceptive faculty, and the objects perceived. They express the Dharma of the eighth, or storehouse, consciousness. Once you fully grasp this

point, you know the eighth consciousness for what it is, no more than a flower in the air. What are the six coarse states? Consciousness of likes and dislikes, consciousness of pleasure and pain, attachment resulting from such consciousness, assigning names to things, karmic acts resulting from the previous states, and suffering resulting from those acts. All of these are dependent on the seventh consciousness. Once you fully grasp this, you know that the seventh consciousness is also a flower in the air.

As a practitioner intent on pursuing the Way continues to perform zazen assiduously, he finds that delusive thoughts gradually diminish the deeper he returns into the fundamental source of his mind. This is what the sutra refers to as “passing to the east.” It corresponds to the Thunder trigram [two broken lines over one unbroken] in the *Book of Changes*, and to the element Wood. In seasonal terms it is spring, the time when all things begin to emerge. As such, it is the fundamental source of all phenomena.

It is clear from this that the sixth and seventh consciousnesses are both contained within the eighth consciousness, their fundamental source. Once the sixth consciousness returns to its basic ground in the eighth consciousness, it abruptly transcends the confines of the evil passions as found in the three subtle and six coarse mental states; delusions vanish, passion-ridden thoughts subside, and emptiness and tranquility free of all illusion emerge.

This, in itself, is the return to the matrix of Buddhahood that is within you, to the stillness of the immovable and unwavering source of mind; it is crossing worlds as numerous as the sand in thirty-six Ganges and reaching the universe where the Buddha Sumeru Lamp King dwells. People today often refer to this mistakenly as the dwelling place of the self’s intrinsic nature, thinking that it is perfect realization of the universally endowed Buddha-mind. Ch’ang-sha called this the great and unmistakable sign that you are still enmeshed in the endless transmigratory cycle. Lin-chi called it a pit of abyssal darkness beyond all discrimination.

If, upon reaching this point, superior seekers engaged in the authentic practice of the Way do not become content with it and regard it as final satori, and if they keep boring on straight ahead without backsliding, they will before long experience a sudden and

profound insight. This is the moment described above when the mattock strikes down into the field of the eighth consciousness, the moment the eighth, or storehouse, consciousness, without design or plan, suddenly inverts, transforming into the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom. The seventh consciousness transforming into the Wisdom of Sameness, the sixth consciousness into the Wisdom of Marvelous Observation, and the first five consciousnesses — seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling, thinking — into the Wisdom of Benefiting Others. You are then for the first time able to believe without any doubt that the three Buddha-bodies, in all their perfection, are intrinsically included within the Four Wisdoms. For a being blessed with the great good fortune of being reborn in the human or deva realms there is nothing to surpass this, for at that moment trees and grasses, countries and lands, sentient and non-sentient beings, heavens and hells, and Buddha realms and demon realms all become a single mass of ineffable divine light within the Great and Perfect Mirror Wisdom. This, in and of itself, is the Buddha Sumeru Lamp King.

In the radiance of the Buddha Sumeru Lamp King's illumination, the karmic suffering caused by the eighty-four thousand passions becomes at once the Buddha Sumeru Lamp King's marvelously subtle form. He and his precious throne rise up eighty-four thousand *yojanas*, as does his universe, the white hair between his eyebrows, and the offerings that are made to him.

[QUESTION:] You say that within the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom the afflicting passions and the Bodhisattvas, the Pure Land, and the impure world all achieve oneness with the Buddha-body. Having actually experienced this for myself, I have no doubt it is true. Still, what reason can you give for holding up the eighty-four thousand evil passions alone as the Buddha-body?

[ANSWER:] The Buddha's body is the ultimate in beauty, the evil passions the ultimate in wretched ugliness. The *Vimalakirti Sutra* sets forth nondiscriminatory Buddha-wisdom as the fundamental principle of nonduality. The lowest and most despicable evil passions are viewed as manifestations of the highest, most sublime Buddha-body. The sutra says, "Shariputra declared to Vimalakirti, 'The

Buddha's precious throne is so wide and lofty, I am unable to ascend it." Once Shravakas and Pratyeka-buddhas of the Two Vehicles have extinguished their evil passions, they attempt to see the Buddha's body. How can they know that the eighty-four thousand evil passions themselves, in their entirety, are the true purplish-gold body of the Buddhas, that these passions are the Buddhas' "precious thrones adorned in the finest fashion"? Since those of limited attainment cannot know this, it is quite understandable that Shariputra was unable to climb upon the throne.

Vimalakirti said, "Yes, yes, Shariputra. I understand very well. One who pays obeisance to the Buddha Sumeru Lamp King will be able to ascend the Buddha's throne." Does not the sutra also say that the Buddha is manifesting himself right now? If so, where is he at this very moment? You must not make the mistake of setting out to the east to look for him, thus cutting yourself off from him by thirty-six *yojanas* of Buddha-lands. He is the Buddha-mind itself, possessed from birth in all its perfection by each and every person; he is the completely emancipated wayfarer listening right at this very moment to the Dharma. In other words, the Buddha that Manjusri is referring to is present right here at this very moment.

If you can catch even a single glance of him, you will also be able to grasp his countless millions of Dharma thrones, even if they were to manifest themselves in a single mote of dust. You yourself would be able to take them and put them inside a mote of dust as well.

Whether the practitioner believes in this or not is determined solely by the weakness or strength of his attainment and the shallowness or depth of his wisdom. When the Buddha is distant, he is all too distant and the practitioner, his vigor exhausted, becomes drained of spirit and resolve. When the Buddha is close, he is exceedingly close, and duality of subject and object ceases to exist.

The *Lotus Sutra* says, "Buddhas take their seat within the Dharma's absolute emptiness." In the *Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom* it is said, "Wherever a Buddha sits, whether on a chair or on the ground, is called his lion throne. It is like the lion, king of four-legged beasts, who fearlessly stalks the world alone, making all other beasts submit to him." The "Buddha-lands" chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* has, "The Buddhas' various countries are like

empty space.” In other words, these thrones exist within the absolute emptiness of all things. How can they be compared to thrones in the worldly realm, prized for their carved and polished gems? The sutra states, “Bodhisattvas immediately change their shape and seat themselves on a lion throne forty-two-thousand *yojanas* high.” The *General Commentary* declares, “This clarifies the height, eighty-four thousand *yojanas*, of Buddha’s body. At this point Bodhisattvas are at the stage of practice where they have deferred their final attainment. They are thus diminished to half the size of a Buddha.”

I do not believe this explains the sutra’s meaning satisfactorily either. The eighty-four thousand passions that afflict sentient beings are in and of themselves the Buddhas’ true and real Dharma-body. Well aware of this, Bodhisattvas place their trust for the time being in the practice of the four universal vows and the twofold effort of benefiting themselves and benefiting others. This is why the sutra says they are forty-two thousand *yojanas* in height.²⁰

I have not set my worthless views before you like this because of a fondness for idle speculation. The great master Hui-neng stated long ago, “Amida’s Pure Land lies one hundred and eight thousand leagues from here, a distance created by the ten evils and eight false practices in ourselves.”²¹ Lin-chi explained the phrase in the *Lotus Sutra*, “sitting for ten kalpas in a place of practice,” as an allusion to the ten perfections or *paramitas*.²²

Another of the ancient worthies explained a statement in the *Nirvana Sutra* about carrying a load of cooking oil to a person twenty-five leagues distant as a reference to the twenty-five states of unenlightened existence.²³ Now I have no intention of assuming a sober, wrinkle-browed countenance and emulating any of these great sages. I am merely offering a suggestion or two that I think may help explain some of the deficiencies in the *General Commentary*.

[QUESTION:] Wouldn’t what you have been saying imply arbitrary attachment to the ultimate principle alone, which would negate phenomenal existence altogether?

[ANSWER:] No, it would not. Apart from the fundamental principle there are no phenomena. Apart from phenomena there is no fundamental

principle. Remember what Eshin Sōzu²⁴ said: “Nondiscrimination without discrimination does not conform to the Buddhist teaching. It is evil and pernicious nondiscrimination. Discrimination alone without nondiscrimination does not conform with the Buddhist teaching either. It is evil and pernicious discrimination.”

Although you may wonder why this is so, you should rather experience for yourselves the great joy I have described to you. Since I have that joy right here within me now, it is impossible for me to resist offering it to you.

162. THE BUDDHA FRAGRANCE ACCUMULATED CHAPTER

IN THE “**BUDDHA** Fragrance Accumulated” chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, it says, “High above, in a region beyond Buddha-lands as numerous as the sands of forty-two Ganges, there is a land called Many Fragrances.”

The sutra also makes references to two Ganges, even thirty-six Ganges and forty-two Ganges. As these numbers are incomprehensibly large, there must be some reason for the sutra specifically referring to the sand in thirty-six or forty-two Ganges. In hopes of finding that reason, I consulted several commentaries on the sutra. In none of them, however, was I able to find a single note or comment on these numbers. Or perhaps the authors of these commentaries had doubts about the numbers but had no plausible solutions to suggest. Just then, a monk who was seated next to me showed me a small piece of paper and said, “Zen master Yung-ming has explained it.” Inscribed on the slip were words from fascicle twenty-five of Yung-ming’s *Records of the Essential Mirror*: “The words ‘There is a land called Fragrance Accumulated far distant from here, beyond Buddha-lands as numerous as the sand in forty-two Ganges’ allude to the mind passing through the forty-two stages of practice and reaching final enlightenment.”

I knew that Yung-ming was a Zen master of great sagacity and vast wisdom, and that someone of my meager talents should not take exception to a statement by such a great scholar, yet I still could not help being somewhat doubtful when I read this explanation. I have heard that there are four kinds of Buddha-lands: the *Jōe-dōgodo*, or Land of the Pure and Impure, inhabited by saints and ordinary mortals; the *Hōben-uyodo*, or Land Established as a Temporary Expedient, inhabited by members of the Two Vehicles; the *Jippō-jōgondo*, or Adorned Land of True Recompense, inhabited by Bodhisattvas; and the *Jōjakkōdo*, or Land of Eternal, Tranquil Light, inhabited only by true Buddhas. The words written on that slip of paper about lying beyond Buddha-lands as numerous as the sand in forty-two Ganges refer to the Hua-yen teaching of the forty-two stages, the process in which the student cuts off forty-two kinds of ignorance as he progresses to final Buddhahood. It does not refer to the *Jōjakkōdo* inhabited by the Buddhas. It says at the beginning of the “Fragrance Accumulated” chapter, “At this time, the Buddha and the various Bodhisattvas were just sitting down together to eat, and there were various heavenly offspring, all named Fragrant Garland.” Inasmuch as Bodhisattvas and heavenly beings were present at this time, it is clear that this was not *Jōjakkōdo*, the Land of Eternal, Tranquil Light, which is inhabited by Buddhas alone.

From first to last the *Vimalakirti Sutra* extolls the path of the Mahayana Bodhisattva while criticizing as partial and minor the teaching of the Two Vehicles. In view of that, the words “distant beyond Buddha-lands as numerous as the sand in forty-two Ganges” must signify the Four Noble Truths and the Twelve-linked Chain of Causation, and going beyond the *Hōben uyodo* or Land Established as a Temporary Expedient, where members of the Two Vehicles dwell. It suggests the *Jippō-jōgondo*, or Adorned Land of True Recompense, where Bodhisattvas dwell. Why is that? It says in the “Buddha Fragrance Accumulated” chapter, “This land is not for the Shravakas and Pratyeka-buddhas, only for the great Bodhisattvas with their pure and undefiled minds. It is for their sakes that the Buddha preached the Dharma.” In other words, “as numerous as the sand in forty-two Ganges” refers to the Four Noble Truths and the Twelve-linked Chain of Causation.

What do you say to that, learned ones?

.....

Yung-ming's Records of the Essential Mirror. Tsung-ching lu, compiled in one hundred fascicles by Yung-ming Yen-shou (905–75). This passage appears in ch. 25.

Four kinds of Buddha-lands (shido). The Land of the Pure and Impure is inhabited by both ordinary people and saints; the Land Established as a Temporary Expedient is inhabited by followers of the Two Vehicles, who have freed themselves from transmigration but whose attainment is still incomplete; the Adorned Land of True Recompense is inhabited by Bodhisattvas of the higher stages and reigned over by a Buddha; and the Land of Eternal, Tranquil Light is inhabited only by full-fledged Buddhas.

The Hua-yen teaching of the forty-two stages . . . progresses to final Buddhahood. The *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra (Ta-chih-tu-lun)* teaches that a student passes through forty-two stages on his way to full enlightenment: ten stages residing in attainment (*jūjū*), ten stages transferring merit (*jū-ekō*), ten stages realizing sagehood (*jūchi*), and two final stages in which Buddha is attained.

The Twelve-linked Chain of Causation is a Buddhist doctrine explaining the causal relation between ignorance and suffering as a sequence of twelve causes or conditions, beginning with ignorance as the first link and each subsequent link depending on the preceding one.

163. DWELLING IN THE SEVEN CONSCIOUSNESSES

Here Hakuin explicates a sentence from the Vimalakirti Sutra. The Seven Consciousnesses (shichi-shiki) are usually explained as referring to the seven categories of living beings: beings who differ

physically and intellectually; beings who differ physically but are similar intellectually; beings who are similar physically but differ intellectually; beings who are similar physically and intellectually; and three types of immaterial beings. These beings consist of humans, gods of the various realms of form, and beings in the realm of formlessness. It should be noted that the phrase “the Seven Abodes of Consciousness,” which occurs in the text, is another possible translation of the title “Dwelling in the Seven Consciousnesses.”

A more complete form of the text Hakuin quotes from the “Buddha Way” chapter of the Vimalakirti Sutra is as follows:

Vimalakirti addressed Manjusri and said, “By going to places that are the opposite of the Way in this fashion, the Bodhisattva is able to master the Buddha Way.” He then asked Manjusri, “What may act as the seeds that lead to enlightenment or Buddhahood?”

Manjusri said, “The body is the seed, ignorance and partiality are the seeds, greed, anger, and stupidity are the seeds. The four topsy-turvy views are the seeds, the five obscurations are the seeds, the six sense-media are the seeds, the seven abodes of consciousness are the seeds, the eight errors are the seeds, the nine sources of anxiety are the seeds, the ten evil actions are the seeds. To sum it up, the sixty-two erroneous views and all the different kinds of earthly desires are all the seeds of the Buddha.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Vimalakirti.

Manjusri replied, “A person who has perceived the uncreated nature of reality and entered into correct understanding cannot again set his mind on attaining highest Enlightenment. The lotus does not grow on the upland plain; the lotus grows in the mud and mire of a damp low-lying place. In the same way, the Buddha Dharma can never grow in a person who has perceived the uncreated nature of reality and entered into correct understanding. It is only when living beings are in the midst of the mire of earthly desires that they turn to the Buddha Dharma.”

(Adapted from *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, Watson, p. 95)

IN THE “**BUDDHA Way**” chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* it speaks of “turning the seven abodes of consciousness into the seeds [of Buddhahood].” Kumarajiva says in his gloss on this phrase in Sengchao’s *Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra*: “In the first meditation heaven [the lowest of the four meditation heavens in the realm of form, where Brahma, the highest god, rules], you sweep away Brahma and the various lesser gods existing since the creation of the world, and from then on you dwell in the first of the abodes of consciousness.”

On reading this I thought to myself that Kumarajiva had altogether failed to adequately explain the sutra’s meaning. Could this perhaps be a level of attainment that Kumarajiva had not yet experienced? Where in the sutras is there any mention of achieving the seven consciousnesses by sweeping away Brahma and the lesser gods existing since the creation of the world? Judging from another comment Kumarajiva makes later in this same gloss — “Another meaning of this is, Turn the seven abodes of consciousness into the seven afflicting passions [desire, anger, attachment, pride, ignorance, false views, doubts]” — it is obvious that his statement has no source in the sutras. He doesn’t adequately explain the meaning of “seven consciousnesses” either. His understanding of the word “abodes” is unconvincing as well. For this reason, as a Dharma offering to the monks in the assembly, I am going to give my own humble explanation of these words. It is entirely up to you whether to accept them or not.

Are not these “seven abodes of consciousness” the non-Buddhists’ meditation on emptiness, and the Two Vehicles’ meditation on Nirvana? In seeking to enter these meditative states, Non-Buddhists and followers of the Two Vehicles try to return to the eighth, *alaya* consciousness, the consciousness of primal ignorance, but they are liable to be deluded and swept away by the operation of the six consciousnesses (sight, sound, smell, and so on). Even if they succeed in completely extinguishing the six consciousnesses and entering those meditative states, they have still not attained their

goal of enlightenment. They merely remain eternally within the seventh consciousness as before. This is the meaning of Dwelling in the Seventh Consciousness.

[QUESTION:] Because both the meditation on emptiness and the meditation on Nirvana are ultimately mistaken forms of meditation, the *Vimalakirti Sutra* goes on to say, “The lotus does not grow in the upland plain; the lotus grows in the mud and mire of a damp low-lying place. In the same way, the Buddha Dharma can never grow in someone who has perceived the uncreated nature of reality and entered into correct understanding. It is only when living beings are in the midst of the mire of earthly desires that they turn to the Buddha Dharma.” If that is so, then what *is* the seed that brings about Buddhahood?”

[ANSWER:] When the light of wisdom suddenly illuminates the mind of a student practicing the Way, it is like splitting open a mote of dust and seeing the universal body of Vairocana Buddha in its entirety. Since devils and Buddhas are one, wrong and right are identical, all living things and all sentient beings themselves become the seeds for attaining Buddhahood.

The fundamental spirit of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* is nonduality, and the censure of students who would reconcile themselves to a small, partial understanding. It uses the metaphor of the mountain uplands as an expedient means to turn them in the direction of a broader and loftier way of seeing. Since all sentient beings without exception possess the Buddha-nature, they must all of them possess the seed of Buddhahood. *Hahahahahaha!*

.....

Seng-chao's Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chu Wei-mo ching.

This is the meaning of . . . Seventh Consciousness. Here Hakuin reads the words “Seven Consciousnesses” that appear in the title to mean the “Seventh Consciousness.”

[Question:] *Because both. . . .* [Answer:] *When the light. . . .* “Hakuin answers his own question: Wouldn’t the quiet tranquility of deep emptiness [*kūkū metsujaku*] be a mistaken meditation?” (annotation). *Since devils and Buddhas . . . for attaining Buddhahood.* “In nonduality there is no dichotomy of devil and Buddha, wrong and right” (annotation).

164. THE BODHISATTVA DIRECT SEEING SAYS EXHAUSTIBLE AND INEXHAUSTIBLE

SEE *THE VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA*, Watson, p. 106, for the passage explicated by Hakuin.

IN THE EIGHTH chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, entitled “Entering Nonduality,” we read, “The Bodhisattva Direct Seeing said, ‘The exhaustible and the inexhaustible form a dualism. But whether things are ultimately exhaustible or inexhaustible, they are all in any case without any marks of exhaustibility.’” In a comment on the meaning of this, Kumarajiva tells us that exhaustibility refers to the misleading views of the Two Vehicles about the cutting off of all delusions, and that inexhaustibility refers to the difficulty of cutting off all views and speculations. Seng-chao, in his comments on this, states that exhaustibility refers to the false reality of forms and phenomena, and inexhaustibility to the true reality of the uncreated.

On examining these comments, however, neither of them seems to me to hit the mark. Could we not say that exhaustibility is the Bodhisattva’s empty and formless intellect, and inexhaustibility is either the Two Vehicles’ partial truth of the self’s emptiness or a merely plausible Nirvana? Would that not pierce through to the true meaning of the sutra when it speaks of being “ultimately exhaustible”?

.....

Seng-chao, in his comments on this . . . refers to his Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra (Chu Wei-mo ching).

A merely plausible Nirvana (uyosōji Nehan) means a version of Nirvana in which the passions are extinguished but final true enlightenment is still not attained.

165. THE EIGHTH CONSCIOUSNESS

EACH PERSON IS endowed with eight consciousnesses. The first five consciousnesses, the so-called five roots or sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body as the organ of touch), are those that receive stimuli — form and color, sound, smells, and so forth — from the external world. But they are unable to distinguish good and bad, beauty and ugliness in people and things.

The sixth consciousness is also called samsaric consciousness. Whenever it appears, it is always in the vanguard. Whenever it leaves, it always takes up the rear. Because of this, its arising invariably occurs in consort with the three subtle mental states and the six coarse mental states. It moves in and out of the first five consciousnesses and it hides inside the eighth consciousness. The sixth consciousness moves in all ways and directions, sometimes concealed and sometimes manifested, entering and exiting, extending and drawing back. Not even a Buddha's hand is capable of controlling it. Hence it is said that whether one is reborn as an animal or one attains Buddhahood is equally contingent on the sixth consciousness.

The seventh, "thought-transmitting" consciousness lies hidden in the dark areas between the sixth and eighth consciousnesses.

The eighth, *alaya*, or storehouse consciousness, also called the nondiscriminating consciousness, exists in a passive state, blurred and indistinct. It is an utter blankness, as dull and unknowing as a vast pool of still, limpid water with no trace of movement whatever. Within it is stored each of the passions you have ever experienced in the past — sadness and compassion, love and hate — without

exception. Joy and anger, suffering and pleasure, purities and impurities of various kinds are all stored here, never to be lost.

If a Zen student who keeps pressing steadily forward in his practice suddenly smashes open this dark cavern, the light of the Great Perfect Mirror immediately shines forth with blinding brilliance. At that instant he realizes the four Buddha Wisdoms and makes the three Buddha-bodies his own. For this reason the eighth consciousness is sometimes called the Buddha-store consciousness. In King Emma's court in the realm of the dead, it is called the Pure Crystal Mirror.

On entering this nondiscriminating consciousness, the Zen student must not retreat even a hairsbreadth, but bore steadily on seeking the great transformation. Arousing a great mass of doubt, he must probe the question: at this very moment, having become one with the nondiscriminating *alaya* consciousness, utterly free of thought and emotion, where does life come from, where does death go? If a thought should suddenly appear, he must take it and proceed straightaway to determine the place whence it arose. Or he can take up Chao-chou's "Mu" and work on it, or Tung-shan's "Three Pounds of Hemp", or some other koan, and concentrate on boring assiduously into it.

As his concentration gradually begins to mature, he will find that when he walks he is unaware he is walking, when he sits he is unaware he is sitting. It will seem to him as though he is in the midst of a vast emptiness, perfectly clear and open; that he is encased in a thick sheet of ice extending out for ten thousand leagues; or as though he is sitting inside a perfectly transparent jar of immaculate crystal.

If he keeps pressing forward without fear or hesitation, he will before long find that the ice sheet suddenly shatters into oblivion, that the great pavilion towering above him topples over. The entire universe in all ten directions and all the heavens and hells will become one with his mind and body, and will then, all at once, disappear without a trace.

This is the occasion that I mentioned when the student strikes his mattock down into the ground of the eighth consciousness. At that moment, no empty space exists in the ten directions; not an inch of

ground exists anywhere on earth. The radiant light of his Great Perfect Mirror suddenly shines forth with such purity and clarity and brightness that there is absolutely nothing whatever to compare it to. This state of attainment is sometimes referred to as the ninth, or immaculate, consciousness.

However, if the student clings doggedly to this light, thinking it is sufficient, his attainment will always remain small and partial, like those of the Two Vehicles, the Shravakas and Pratyeka-buddhas. The old den they nestle comfortably down into is a truly terrifying place, an empty and incomplete Nirvana.

But the student who refuses to accept this as an ultimate attainment and goes on whipping forward the wheel of the four universal vows for endless kalpas without ever backsliding, bringing benefit to countless sentient beings, confirming the four Buddha Wisdoms and cultivating the three Buddha-bodies, until he finally clarifies the one great matter of human life — such a person is a fully realized Bodhisattva, a true and authentic child of the Buddha.

.....

Its arising invariably occurs . . . the six coarse mental states. See #161 above, pp. 245–6.

The Pure Crystal Mirror. Also called the Mirror of Karma. It hangs in Emma's court in Hell, and after his death a person is made to stand before it and see reflected all the sins he has committed in his life.

Or he can take up Chao-chou's "Mu" and work on it, or Tung-shan's "Three Pounds of Hemp." Both koans are included in the *Gateless Barrier* collection: Chao-chou's "Mu", Case 1; Tung-shan's "Three Pounds of Hemp", Case 18.

The occasion that I mentioned when the student . . . ground of the eighth consciousness. Hakuin mentions this in an earlier Explication, #161, page 246.

The ninth, or immaculate, consciousness. A ninth (*amala*) consciousness, lying below the eighth consciousness, is postulated in some Buddhist schools.

However, if the student clings doggedly . . . an empty and incomplete Nirvana. Hinayana (“Lesser Vehicle”) Buddhism holds that though an Arhat enters into Nirvana after death, while living he is in a state of “limited Nirvana.” According to the Mahayana, Nirvana is attained completely the moment the ties to karmic existence are severed and Buddhahood is obtained. An Arhat would thus still have residues of illusion, karma, and suffering.

166. ON RAHU-ASURA’S ECLIPSING OF THE SUN AND MOON

Delivered in the third year of Enkyō (1746), Hakuin’s sixty-second year, at Hokusui-san Genryū-ji in Tadehara, a village about four miles west of Hara. A reference in Tōrei’s manuscript Chronological Biography (deleted from the published text) has: “In spring, the second month, the master responded to an invitation from Kairyū Oshō of Genryū-ji and lectured for the first time on the Lotus Sutra.”

Here Hakuin takes up the word Rahu (Chin. Lo-hou; Jap. Rago; literally “to grasp and obstruct”) in the name Rahu-asura. Asuras, “fighting demons,” are one of the undesirable rebirths in the six paths of transmigration. They are in constant war with the gods, especially the god Indra. In one of these battles an asura named Rahu is said to have seized the sun and moon, causing their eclipse. Rahu-asura is counted along with the sun, moon, five planets, and a comet named Ketu as one of the nine Hindu luminaries (kuyō), deities that also appear occasionally in Buddhist literature.

IN THE SPRING of the third year of Enkyō [1746] I was invited to Genryū-ji to conduct a lecture meeting on the *Lotus Sutra*. One day during the meeting a monk came into my chambers, made his bows, and said:

*In the first fascicle of Hsing-shan’s *Commentary on the Lotus Sutra*, page five, a note says, “The word *rāhu**

means to grasp and obstruct, to grasp the sun and the moon and block off their light. In the human world, this raising of a hand and obstructing the sun or moon would be called a solar eclipse, or a lunar eclipse.” For a long time I have had doubts about these comments.

Recently some Shintō scholars joined the Confucians and ridiculed the notion that Rahu-asura causes eclipses. “Buddhists may have some explanation for solar and lunar eclipses (we won’t get into that now) but to assert that the demon king of the asuras acquired great power after the asuras routed Indra’s heavenly army and instantly plunged the world into darkness by seizing the sun and moon, to contend that solar and lunar eclipses are all the result of this demon king’s actions — such ideas are, to understate the matter, highly dubious. Solar eclipses always occur on the first day of certain months. Lunar eclipses generally occur on the fifteenth of the month. Think about it. Why it is that Indra’s heavenly army is routed three or four times each year, and always on the first and fifteenth of the month? This would mean it is defeated in battle and the sun is eclipsed every year. It would mean that Indra’s troops are routed every time there is a lunar eclipse. When did this warfare begin? When will it end? Or does it just continue going on like that for billions and billions of kalpas?

“The experts who compile calendars must possess the five supernatural powers of the immortal sages and Buddhas’ three miraculous powers as well. The troops in Indra’s armies that actually took part in the battle could not predict its outcome, yet these scholars predict the results of a war fought in the farthest reaches of the universe, calculate without the least error the waxing and waning of the sun and moon, and publish the results to be distributed throughout the world. They proclaim: ‘Our calculations allow us to predict an eclipse many scores of years in the future. They are never off by even the smallest fraction. The sun, moon, and planets, *yin* and

yang, even creation itself, not a single thing can evade our calculations. Even if fire were to become water, or water to become fire, it would make no difference. What is certain beyond any doubt is the marvelous subtlety and unerring accuracy of our predictions. The difference between them and the groundless and nonsensical assertions made by others is the difference between cloud and mud.”

I was unable to come up with a single argument to rebut their assertions. What are your thoughts about this, master?

I answered as follows. I myself have long held doubts about those words. The story of an asura causing a solar eclipse by covering over the moon is mentioned in the *Sutra on the World's Arising*, the *Sutra on Contemplating Buddha*, the *Increasing by One Agama Sutra*, and other sutras, although it is unknown outside the Buddhist community. On the fifteen occasions when T'ien-t'ai Chih-i entered ultimate reality within the great treasure house of the Dharma-body, he committed what he learned there to memory and elucidated it in his various discourses. He must in the course of those elucidations have explained these words in terms of the student's meditative process, but I have unfortunately not been able to locate any of those excellent insights on the subject. It is possible that they disappeared at the time his disciples were recording his discourses.

The Buddha is said to have engaged in three kinds of preaching: Dharma preaching, preaching with parables, and preaching about cause and effect. The present case clearly belongs to the second kind, preaching by means of parable, in other words using appearances that would be called illusory or imaginary in the world at large to elucidate the principle of true and ultimate reality. People like you with your sheep's gaze and badger's cunning see only the illusory appearances. Because you are unable to grasp the true and ultimate significance of the words spoken by great Buddhist saints, you foolishly belittle them. Once you fall into hell, you will be unable to leave it for a very long time. It is a truly distressing thing to witness.

While conducting a recent lecture meeting on the *Lotus Sutra* I happened to read Chih-i's *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*. In the second volume he says, "The name Rahu was translated in Chinese using words that mean 'grasp and obstruct.' It refers to a beast of some kind that blocks out the sun and moon. It is eighty-four thousand *yojanas* tall, and its mouth is a thousand *yojanas* wide." Reading that I grasped for the first time that Rahu-asura represented primal ignorance. Why is that? An asura is possessed of a great many supernatural powers. When it is victorious in battle it suddenly manifests a body so large that the heavens are too small for it and the oceans too shallow to contain it. If it loses a battle, it shrinks its body to an extremely small size in a flash and, leading its eighty-four thousand followers, enters into hiding inside the thread of a lotus root. This means that the size of its body is not something you can measure in terms of large and small, long and short. Why does the sutra describe the asura as eighty-four thousand *yojanas* in height? Because the god Indra represents the Mind King or Eighth Consciousness and Rahu represents primal ignorance. The eighty-four thousand *yojanas* stand for the eighty-four thousand afflicting passions. "A mouth a thousand *yojanas* wide" refers to the ten evils, three of which result from physical acts and four from verbal acts. The words "sun" and "moon" in the name Buddha Sun Moon Bright indicate the radiance of the wisdom intrinsic in each person; it is the bright sun of wisdom that is taught in the esoteric school's Meditation on the Letter A. Chih-i also says in the same chapter of this work, "When the Buddha told Rahu, 'You should not swallow the light of the sun and moon,' Rahu's body trembled violently and became bathed in cold sweat." But if an old Buddha who attained enlightenment in the remote past suddenly appeared within a student who had engaged in sincere and diligent practice, Rahu and his eighty-four thousand followers would not merely be drenched in cold sweat, they would immediately vanish. The trouble is, most people cannot see this old Buddha — their own original being — and go on concealing the sun of wisdom within them.

This can be called the solar eclipse of birth and death, which continues for endless kalpas.

.....

Hsing-shan's Commentary on the Lotus Sutra. Hsu-chu Fa-hua-ching, a commentary on the Lotus Sutra by the Yuan dynasty priest Hsu Hsing-shan.

The story of an asura causing a solar eclipse . . . is mentioned in: Sutra on the World's Arising (Ch'i-shih ching, ch. 8); Sutra on Contemplating Buddha (Kuan-fo san-mei ching), ch. 1; and Increasing by One Agama Sutra (Tseng-i-a-han ching), ch. 3.

I have unfortunately not been able to locate . . . recording his discourses. Yoshizawa points out that T'ien-t'ai Chih-i does mention the words in chapter 2 of Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra (Fa-hua wen-ju), his commentary on the Lotus Sutra.

The Buddha is said to have engaged in three kinds of preaching. That is, preachings adapted to the capacities of his audience: preaching ultimate reality directly to those of superior capacity, using parables for those of intermediate capacity, and teachings of cause and effect for those of lesser capacity.

"The name Rahu . . . a thousand yojanas wide." Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra, ch. 2.

Meditation on the Letter A (Aji-kan), also known as the Meditation on the Moon Disc (Gatsurin-kan), is a Shingon meditation in which the student contemplates a graphic depiction of the letter A, the first sound of the Sanskrit alphabet said to embody the truth of uncreated existence, while uttering the sound of the letter.

167. THE EIGHT PRINCELY SONS

In this Explication Hakuin focuses on passages found in the Introduction to the Lotus Sutra:

There was a Buddha named Sun Moon Bright. . . . Then there was another Buddha also named Sun Moon Bright, and then another Buddha named Sun Moon Bright [five other Buddhas are enumerated.] . . . The first Buddha

was named Having Perceptions, the second Good Perception, the third Immeasurable Perception, the fourth Jeweled Perception, the fifth Increased Perception, the sixth Cleansed of Doubt Perception, the seventh Echoing Perception, and the eighth Dharma Perception. . . .

At this time there was a Bodhisattva named Virtue Storehouse whom the Buddha Sun Moon Bright prophesied would be the next to become a Buddha. . . . At that time there was also a Bodhisattva named Wonderfully Bright who had eight hundred disciples. At this time the Buddha Sun Moon Bright arose from his samadhi and preached for the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright the Great Vehicle sutra called the Lotus of the Wonderful Law, a Dharma to instruct Bodhisattvas that is guarded and kept in mind by the Buddhas. For sixty small kalpas the Buddha remained in his seat without rising, and the listeners in the assembly at the time also remained seated there for sixty small kalpas, their bodies and minds never moving. And yet it seemed to them that they had been listening to the Buddha preach for no more than the space of a meal. At this time in the assembly there was not a single person who in body or mind had the least feeling of weariness. . . . After the Buddha passed away, Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright upheld the sutra for a period of eighty small kalpas expounding it for others. The eight sons of the Buddha Sun Moon Bright all acknowledged Wonderfully Bright as their teacher. Wonderfully Bright taught and converted them and roused in them a firm determination to gain final perfect enlightenment. Those princely sons gave offerings to . . . millions of Buddhas, and after that all the sons were able to achieve the Buddha way.

(Adapted from The Lotus Sutra, Watson, p. 16)

In deciphering the context of Hakuin's remarks in this piece I was aided by Kamata Shigeo's annotations on the text (Hakuin, Kōdansha, 1977).

THERE IS A passage in the Introduction to the *Lotus Sutra* that reads, “Before the Buddha Sun Moon Bright turned from family life, he had eight princely sons, the first of whom was named Having Consciousness . . .” Hsu’s *Commentary* on the sutra says, “This Buddha Sun Moon Bright had eight sons, the present Buddha had one son, the difference of eight and one being due to causal circumstances. ‘One’ refers to the one path, pure and undefiled, ‘eight’ to the eightfold holy path.”²⁵ The moment I came to Hsu’s comment, it struck me as not being completely accurate. Chih-i, in his *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*, said, “Beneath each of the sutra’s words must lie the Buddha’s deep meditative insight,” and I sensed that this reference to eight princely sons contained a meaning of great importance, and that Hsu’s comment may not have taken due account of the meditative insight underlying it. While undoubtedly true that one should approach the time-honored words the Buddha preaches in his sutras with the greatest care, I have given this passage considerable thought, and as I am now lecturing on the *Lotus* it is difficult for me to pass it over in silence. As an offering to a few of the monks here in attendance, I will therefore venture some opinions of my own about it. It is not my intention that they be made known to the Buddhist community at large. Whether you monks accept my ideas or not is entirely up to you.

I suspect that the term eight princely sons is a metaphor for the eight consciousnesses, and that the Buddha Sun Moon Bright who appears in the introduction to the sutra is the ninth or Pure Consciousness, also called True and Fundamental Wisdom, also the Great and Perfect Mirror Wisdom²⁶ The Bodhisattva Virtue Storehouse apparently stands for Discriminative Wisdom, that which is gained after the attainment of True and Fundamental Wisdom.²⁷

If a student continues to strive diligently in his practice without flagging or retreating, he will reach a place in which all thoughts and emotions are extinguished, a mental state exactly like a deep, limpid pool of water, as utterly still and unmoving as the great emptiness of outer space which not even a single speck of dust can intrude upon. This place is the Eighth *Alaya* Consciousness.

The consciousness that appears at the moment of birth, becoming the fundamental source of illusion and remaining until the

moment of death, is the Seventh Consciousness.

The consciousness that keeps appearing and reappearing via the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, taking in or rejecting various stimuli that impinge from the external world as rapidly as wind or lightning, always working busily and unceasingly — that is the Sixth Consciousness.

The eyes seeing objects, the ears hearing sounds, the nose smelling odors, the tongue tasting flavors, and the body feeling things, while themselves being unable to distinguish beauty and ugliness from these stimuli — such is the working of the first Five Consciousnesses.

Although the first Five Consciousnesses and the Eighth Consciousness are nondiscriminating, the Sixth and Seventh Consciousnesses have a discriminating faculty. The Five Consciousnesses do not have that faculty, but since each of them perceives stimuli from the external world, they are called the Princely Son Having Perceptions. And since they have not a single wrong thought, they are also called the Princely Son Good Perception. Since considerable interplay between good and bad occurs in the Sixth Consciousness, it is called the Princely Son Immeasurable Perception. When the student arouses the Bodhi-mind in a single instant of thought, and thanks to skillful means reaches the precious realm of enlightenment, since that also takes place within the Sixth Consciousness, it is called the Princely Son Jeweled Perception.

As the Seventh Consciousness is cognizant of the decisions and workings of the Sixth Consciousness and helps the Sixth Consciousness transform into the Four Buddha Wisdoms, it is called the Princely Son Increased Perception. As it achieves undeniable faith and understanding and sweeps away the many obstacles that bar the path to ultimate reality, it is called the Princely Son Cleansed of Doubt Perception.

Careful scrutiny will show that the Eighth Consciousness is completely empty, without any shape or form whatever. But if you brush against it even slightly, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind suddenly take on the marvelous working of the *alaya* consciousness. Since this is like an echo sounding down a mountain valley, it is called the Princely Son Echoing Perception. In this valley

completely empty and devoid of form, everything — the created and uncreated, the world of sentient beings, the ten worlds and ten essential qualities, the hundred worlds and thousand essential qualities — is, without exception, contained. As this suddenly turns or transforms to become the *Lotus Sutra's* teaching of “one vehicle alone,” it is called the Princely Son Dharma Perception.

[QUESTION:] Although both the Seventh and Eighth Consciousnesses have their own proper functions, why is it that all those functions are associated with the word “perception” or “consciousness”?

[ANSWER:] Although the first Five Consciousnesses and the Seventh and Eighth Consciousnesses appear to be distinct from one another, what is termed perception or consciousness lies hidden in all of their functions and roams in total freedom between them. In other words, the word perception or consciousness is used because conscious perception is always taking place in each of the eight consciousnesses.

In a place of true suchness that is eternally unchanging, where by all rights it should not happen, eight unborn princely sons are born to parents who are no more than illusory flowers appearing in the air. This place is called the Mind King of the Eighth Consciousness. The *Vimalakirti Sutra* calls it “the country called Wonderful Joy of the Buddha Immovable.”²⁸ It is compared to a deep pit brimming with blackest ignorance. What appears to sentient beings transmigrating in the six paths as the crystal Mirror of Karma or as Lord Emma's list of evil deeds is all this consciousness.

However, if you rededicate yourself to your practice and continue to strive diligently, this same consciousness, these same worldly passions become, just as they are, the Great and Perfect Mirror Wisdom, the Seventh Consciousness becomes the Wisdom of Sameness, the Sixth Consciousness becomes Wisdom of Marvelous Observation, and the first Five Consciousnesses become the Wisdom of Benefiting Others. All exist in their entirety within the Great Perfect Mirror, and it is there that every one of their marvelous workings is displayed. The trichilial cosmos, including each and every Buddha-land and heaven and hell as well, are all of them images that appear in the Great Perfect Mirror, which reflects all

things without exception. This is the Tathagata Sun Moon Bright, and it is the Buddha the *Vimalakirti Sutra* calls Sumeru Lamp King. Every Buddha in the ten directions, every Tathagata in the three worlds appears and illuminates things in this same way. Hence not only twenty billion Buddhas, but ten million billion Buddhas, Buddhas as numerous as Ganges sand, are all combined in this single Buddha that the sutra calls Tathagata Sun Moon Bright.

[QUESTION:] In that case, it is a question of numbers that are beyond calculation, immensity beyond our comprehension. Why, then, does the sutra limit Buddhas to a certain number such as twenty billion?

[ANSWER:] An excellent question. To begin with, the number two [the Chinese number twenty in twenty billion is written using the characters two-ten] embraces all existing things. Heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang* emerged by branching off from the primordial one. With permutations of *yin* and *yang*, the four signs, broken and unbroken lines, came into being; further transformations resulted in the eight trigrams, and then the sixty-four hexagrams we find in the *Book of Changes*. Various forms in the relative world came into being — lord and vassal, father and son, husband and wife, old and young, noble and mean, wise and foolish, skillful and unskillful, active and passive, pain and pleasure, self and other, this and that, right and wrong, hate and love, close and far, light and dark, form and emptiness, being and nonbeing, profit and loss, long life and short life, walking about and staying put, age and youth, poor and rich, rising and falling, giving and taking. At the slightest stirring the primordial one instantaneously becomes two, like echoes appearing from a small sound, like myriad forms appearing from a small shadow. In such a sense the number two may be considered to be the original and invariable source of everything that exists.

Phrases such as “dwelling in the true Dharma for twenty small kalpas,” or “dwelling in the Semblance Dharma for twenty small kalpas” that you encounter in the *Lotus Sutra* should thus be seen as examples of this transformation of the number two into numberless phenomena throughout the universe.

When Kumarajiva translated the *Lotus* into Chinese, he deleted the character *oku*, “hundred million,” in the words “two hundred

million Buddhas,” making it “twenty thousand Buddhas” instead, apparently for the ludicrous reason that he disliked having to use large numbers. I have read that Prince Shōtoku became deeply concerned on finding that character *oku* [hundred million], which appeared in a quotation cited from the *Lotus* in a work by the T’ien-t’ai master Nan-yueh,²⁹ was missing from the text of the *Lotus Sutra* in his possession. Proceeding to the Yumedono Hall at Hōryū-ji, he entered into a samadhic state and traveled to Tai-ming temple in China. There he obtained the sutra Nan-yueh had used and brought it to Japan. I used to wonder why, given the tens of thousands of difficult verbal complications scattered throughout countless Buddhist sutras, the Prince would make such a fuss about this single character. Today I can understand why his doubts merit our deepest respect and admiration.

The words “All those sharing the same name, Barada” also appear in the sutra.³⁰ Hsu’s commentary says, “In the *Sutra of Collected Stories of the Buddha’s Past Lives*,³¹ this name is translated as *jū-tō*, using Chinese characters meaning “two banners.” When I read that I was so astonished my eyes nearly popped out of my head. Why? If *jū-tō*, “two Dharma banners,” is the correct reading, it would subvert the basic purport of the entire sutra. The correct reading had to be *jū-tō* written with Chinese characters meaning “two eye pupils.” In transcribing the text three or more times, an ancient scribe must have mistakenly written one character for another, very similar character. I picked up a copy of the tenth fascicle of the *Lotus Sutra* that one of the monks had brought to today’s lecture and carefully checked through it but was unable to find any occurrence at all of the characters for eye pupil. Nonetheless, I resolved that however others chose to read it, I would read it with such a meaning. The pupil of the eye is of greatest importance to the physical body; moreover the text meant it was a double eye pupil, two pupils in a single eye, which is a physical trait found only in the greatest sages.³² If translated “two eye pupils,” the word Barada would thus mean that he possessed both the wisdoms, true and temporary, of a Buddha. Why do I say this? Because just wisdom is the primary object or “central eye” of all

sentient beings, the two wisdoms are the very life of all the Buddhas. I believe the interpretation I have given here is correct.

The Chinese characters “two banners” may have been used to translate the name Barada because Buddhas are generally associated with embellishments such as Dharma banners and canopies. But if that is the case, it was a very careless mistake. Perhaps the chief translator was not present at the time the rendering was decided upon. Anyway, I hope this eliminates any doubts about the passage.

At this point a monk handed me a slip of paper. He said it contained “evidence that was discovered by the head priest of Tōkō-ji in Kai province.” Written in red ink were the words: “It says in fascicle forty of the *Sutra of Collected Stories of the Buddha’s Past Lives* that the name Barada means ‘two eye pupils.’ Hsu’s commentary is altogether mistaken about this.” The moment I read that I felt as though I had been handed a blazing torch on a dark night road. All the creases vanished from my brow, and I pictured in my mind Tao-sheng when he opened for the first time the *Nirvana Sutra* that had been newly transmitted to China.³³

The *Lotus Sutra* also says, “At that time the Buddha Sun Moon Bright arose from samadhi and preached for the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright the Mahayana scripture called the *Lotus Sutra*, which contains a teaching for instructing Bodhisattvas that the Buddhas themselves guard and keep in their minds. For sixty small kalpas the Buddha remained in his seat without rising, and the listeners in the assembly at the time also remained seated there for sixty small kalpas, their bodies and minds never stirring. Yet it seemed to them that they had been listening to the Buddha preach for no more than the space of a single meal. At this time in the assembly there was not a single person whose body or mind had the least feeling of weariness.”³⁴

This passage, containing a hidden key to the *Lotus Sutra*, is impossible to believe, impossible to understand, impossible to penetrate, impossible to enter. Leaving aside for the moment the matter of followers of the Two Vehicles, even students of superior capability, ones who have achieved a perfectly mature attainment,

may have doubts about this passage, or might even despise it. Why is that?

Even though it is true that people exist in great variety, old and young, strong and weak, short-lived and long-lived, wise and ignorant, it would still be impossible for any of them to remain seated like a stone for sixty kalpas without eating or sleeping or even becoming weary. It is not without reason that the Confucians and Shintōists cite such passages to criticize Buddhists for irresponsible and nonsensical teachings. There is found in these words, however, a wonderfully subtle meaning of great profundity that cannot be understood or interpreted through reasoning or logic. Let me try to explain.

“Sixty small kalpas” refers to the six “dusts” or objects of sensation and perception — form, sound, odor, taste, texture, and mental objects. Nothing in this world can exist apart from these six dusts. When the Tathagata preached the *Lotus Sutra*, water, birds, trees, and forests heard it in unison and preached it in unison as well. They sat motionless as rocks without tiring in the least for a hundred billion kalpas as though it was a mere finger-snap, a single instant of thought. This very instant itself, when you men are sitting here in front of me, is sixty small kalpas. This is no different from the *Diamond Sutra’s* assertion, “I must cause all living beings — born from eggs, from wombs, from moisture, or by transformation — to enter Nirvana without residue.” And don’t try to tell me that the teaching in the *Diamond Sutra* and other Wisdom sutras is like butter, but the teaching in the *Lotus* and *Nirvana* sutras is the finest ghee.³⁵ The Wisdom sutras and the *Lotus sutras* are not different. Let me put it into other words:

At midnight emptiness gnashes its teeth.

168. THE EMERGING FROM THE EARTH CHAPTER

It is said in “The Emerging from the Earth” chapter of the Lotus Sutra that the Buddha told the assembled Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas, who had requested his permission to protect the sutra and spread its teachings throughout the land after his demise, that there was no need for them to protect the sutra because “in the saha world³⁶ in which I live there are Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas as numerous as the sands of sixty thousand Ganges and their retinues equal to the sands of sixty thousand Ganges who will be able to protect, read, recite, and widely preach the sutra.”

“When the Buddha spoke these words, the earth of the thousand-millionfold countries of the saha world trembled and split open, and out of it emerged at the same instant immeasurable thousands, ten thousands, millions of Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas. The bodies of these Bodhisattvas were all golden in hue, with the thirty-two features and an immeasurable brightness. Previously they had all been dwelling in the world of empty space underneath this saha world. But when these Bodhisattvas heard the voice of Shakamuni Buddha speaking, they came up from below” (adapted from Watson, p. 213).

IT SAYS IN the “Emerging from the Earth” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, “While these Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas who had emerged from the earth were employing the Bodhisattvas’ various methods of praising to praise the Buddhas, an interval of fifty small kalpas passed by. At that time Shakamuni Buddha sat silent, and the four kinds of believers likewise all remained silent for fifty small kalpas.”³⁷

Someone made the following comment on this passage: “The Buddha’s preaching cannot be untrue, even the gods Indra and Brahma are eager to listen to him, so a person of my attainments has no business taking exception to his preaching. But in spite of that I must say that this passage in the “Emerging from the Earth” chapter seems dubious to me. The *Lotus Sutra* states, ‘While these Bodhisattvas employed various methods of praising the Buddha, an interval of fifty small kalpas passed by.’

“A kalpa is an immeasurably long period of time, so immense that even one kalpa has been described as the length of time for a stone sixteen miles high on each side to be worn away if touched with a

cloth every hundred years, or as the length of time it would take to fill an empty cube sixteen miles square if you put a single mustard seed into it every hundred years.

“But what can the Lotus mean, speaking of *fifty* small kalpas, of saying the Buddha was ‘praised for fifty small kalpas’? What Buddha could that be? Shakamuni preached the *Lotus* and *Nirvana* sutras over the period of eight years, and he was eighty years old when he died under the Sala trees. His disciple Ananda was the same age when he passed away by the side of the Ganges. None of the other sacred Buddhist figures of the past lived over one hundred years either. That is why I am mystified when I read the sutra stating that the Buddha was praised for fifty small kalpas.

“In his *Annotations on Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*³⁸ the T’ien-t’ai teacher Miao-lo says: ‘In difficult circumstances even a short time seems long. In pleasurable circumstances even a long time seems short.’ His comments would seem to betray a desire merely to esteem the Dharma. In *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra*,³⁹ Chih-i says, ‘Fifty small kalpas are made to be felt as the length of half a day.’ In other words, these words refer to the Tathagata’s power to lengthen or shorten time at will.”

I [Hakuin] find this altogether inadequate. I might even say it is irresponsible. Putting aside the Tathagata’s ability to lengthen or shorten time at will, where within these fifty kalpas did the Buddha’s eight years of preaching take place? After fifty small kalpas not even any bone fragments of the inhabitants of Varanasi or Vaishali would remain.⁴⁰ However, owing to the incomprehensible power possessed by the Tathagata, it was only the people who went to Vulture Peak and heard him preach the *Lotus Sutra* and experienced the serene joy of receiving the true Dharma who could perceive that it took place in the space of just half a day. So I think we are justified in discounting these immense numbers such as fifty small kalpas, and just regard it as a matter of the Tathagata’s power to lengthen or shorten time at will. Why is that? It is because if we assume that the Buddha, during his eight-year preaching career, preached half a day on Vulture Peak, half a day in Varanasi, and half a day in Vaishali, then the three words “fifty small kalpas” are unnecessary. One might even say that inasmuch as the Tathagata is able to make a half-day

into any length of time he chooses, the words are totally meaningless.

But it also seems to me, on giving the matter further thought, that Buddhas do not spend all their time wielding their supernatural powers. They use them only when it is necessary to benefit sentient beings. What would be the sense of employing those powers to lengthen half a day into fifty small kalpas? If they did it without good reason, it would be no more than a childish trick. All they would have to do would be to say “half a day.” They would not use words like “fifty small kalpas” when doing so would just complicate matters.

While Hantan napped for an hour waiting for his millet to be cooked, he dreamed he had a glorious career over a span of fifty years amid the greatest luxury.⁴¹ A mere hour became fifty years. In the Tathagata’s case, half a day was lengthened into fifty small kalpas. Or we could also say that fifty small kalpas were shrunk into half a day. Why is that? Suppose that a person is experiencing many terrible torments. He would feel a half a day on earth as though it were an eternity in hell. If thanks to the Tathagata’s compassion he was saved from that suffering, an eternity of fifty small kalpas would seem like half a day. This we could say was owing to the Tathagata’s ability to lengthen or shorten time. But if the words five small kalpas are used without good reason, as they seem to be in this case, when it is said that five small kalpas are shortened into half a day, then they will be criticized as another case of Buddhists’ unfortunate penchant for engaging in reckless speech.

When today’s Confucians and followers of Shintō hear preachings such as these, they are prone to belittle the words of the great sage because they cannot fully understand their deep meaning: “The old Buddha speaks ridiculous nonsense. Buddhists say his words are loftier than even *The Great Learning*, but we can see no reason at all to believe that.”

Their criticism is not completely unjustified. As a descendant of the Buddha, I believe and put into practice each word and phrase from the Buddha’s mouth. But since even I am not entirely without my doubts, non-Buddhists can be expected to have theirs as well — though for vilifying the Dharma they will probably fall into the interminable Hells when they die. Unless a scholar of great virtue

appears who can clarify doubts of this kind, the Buddha Dharma will suffer grievous harm.

As I am not without a few interpretations of my own in that line, I will now give them you.

The *Lotus* says, “At that time Shakamuni Buddha sat silently, and the four kinds of believers likewise all remained silent for fifty small kalpas.” This is the central point of the “Emerging from the Earth” chapter. “The Buddha sat silently.” Is this to be understood in a relative or an absolute sense? Is he merely sitting and reflecting silently, or is he contemplating the vast sea of wisdom?⁴² Forget about the Vulture Peak assembly, which took place long ago. Here at this present assembly where each of us is sitting right now, are the head priest and each of the four kinds of believers sitting actively, or inactively? Are they deluded and ignorant or wise and sage-like? Those are the matters you have got to investigate to their depths. If you are able to grasp them clearly in the experience of *kenshō*, I will affirm that you have perfectly understood the meaning of fifty small kalpas. If you understand the fifty small kalpas, you will also understand why the Buddha sat silently for his entire lifetime.

When the time arrives, heaven and hell are silent, Buddha-lands and devil realms are silent. Unless you yourself can clarify that the fifty small kalpas exist in a single instant of thought, there is no way on earth you will be able to grasp the great meaning of the *Lotus Sutra*. It is not something a beginner can understand.

The *Lotus* also says that “at that time an interval of fifty small kalpas passed by as [Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas] praised the Buddha.” What do the words “at that time” mean? This short phrase contains within it one of the most vital and difficult cruxes in the entire sutra. Fifty small kalpas exist “at that time.” “At that time” is itself fifty small kalpas. Because of that, all sights and sounds, all form and perception, all the fundamental elements of existence are contained in these fifty small kalpas. Perceived by an enlightened eye, it is none other than the present thought-instant arising in this particular moment.

[QUESTION:] If that were the case, even a thousand or a million kalpas would all be contained within this present thought-instant. Then why

does the sutra refer specifically to fifty small kalpas?

[ANSWER:] All existences are none others than the five dusts, the objects of sensation and perception; sentient beings are none other than the five *skandhas*, or aggregates of existence. Hence the sutra has simply taken the numbers five in the five dusts and five aggregates and used them to express fifty small kalpas.⁴³ Ultimately, it is the single instant of thought into which saints and sages have thrown their entire lives. Once you reach this place, you no longer have any need to praise the Buddhas or read the sutras. Here all beings sentient and non-sentient attain the Way together, and together become Buddhas. This is the very marrow of the *Lotus Sutra*, the most basic heart of the words, “there is only one vehicle, not two, not three.”⁴⁴

[QUESTION:] Could you give some additional evidence for that?

[ANSWER:] I could indeed. Unfortunately, since you lack the experience that comes upon emitting a joyous “*Ka!*” whatever I said would have no more meaning for you than you would get from playing with mud pies.⁴⁵

This is one of the most important secrets contained in the *Lotus Sutra*, and one of the most difficult to understand as well. It is only known when you die the great death. The World-Honored One from his great compassion gave utterance to it using skillful means. The Buddhas and patriarchs always use this secret method when dealing with students of the highest caliber. Half-baked students couldn’t see it even in their dreams.

Shakamuni said, “None of the great Arhats among my disciples can grasp this meaning. It can only be grasped by the great Bodhisattvas.”⁴⁶ How true that is! This meaning is a central path to the sutras in this latter day, a fortress to protect the Buddha Dharma in this defiled world. If you truly realize this, you will leap beyond the gradual satori of the Lesser Vehicle and reach straightaway the precious abode of the great Bodhisattvas.

As for a true patrician of the secret depths, he will grasp it at a single glance. If, on the other hand, he gets sidelined into finding out how Chih-i’s *Deep Meaning of the Lotus* and *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra* interpret it,⁴⁷ what Chan-jan and Kuan-ting have to

say about it, he will not understand until the Year of the Jackass.⁴⁸ Why? Doesn't the sutra say, "Because he slandered this sutra, this is the punishment he will incur"?⁴⁹

If you really desire to understand this point, you must first of all find some way to discern the true face of the sutra. In order to do that, you must quickly get to the bottom of the true nature intrinsic within you. The moment you see the true nature of your original being you will then understand this meaning perfectly, and you will see the true face of the *Lotus* perfectly at well.

Hence the *Nirvana Sutra* says, "Bodhisattvas see the Buddha-nature in their own eyes" and "Tathagatas see the Buddha-nature in their own eyes." The Great Teacher Bodhidharma said, "If a person wishes to fully achieve the Buddha Way, he must achieve *kenshō*."

Why is that? Young children who are unaccustomed to seeing a horse and carriage will run away from it and hide deep among the rushes.

169. BLACK FIRE

This piece was apparently written between Hakuin's fifty-first and fifty-fifth years.

DURING THE GEMBUN era [1736–40], a fire broke out at the neighboring Numazu post station. I sent two of my monks and our old servant Kakuzaemon to find out what was happening. Kakuzaemon came running back, gasping for breath, and made the following report.

"Ahh, there is nothing as terrifying or as hateful as fire! Eight hundred dwellings, suddenly reduced to ash. How damaging and destructive it is! And yet it also has a trait that I admire."

"What would that be?" I asked.

"It occurred to me, on considering how rapidly fire spreads in the darkness, that if it burned with a black flame it would destroy many more human lives, and I probably wouldn't have returned here alive.

It is fortunate that its flames burn so brightly. Even tiny fires, small as a bean or grain of wheat, flicker like stars, almost as though they had a consciousness of their own.”

Kakuzaemon’s words set me to thinking. I turned them over and over in my mind. The black fire of impermanence — birth and death — moves like the wind, never ceasing day or night, and consumes us all. Not a single person, young or old, exalted or lowly, priest or layman, wise or foolish, can escape its destruction. Yet no shouts of “Fire!” “Fire!” are ever heard. Moreover, the principle of karmic retribution — cause and effect — works with perfect clarity right before our eyes. Even the smallest, most minor evils are consumed in this fire, burning like dim stars in the night. The most frightening thing is that most people remain unaware of this, until sooner and later they are completely enveloped in the flames. How truly sad and distressing it is!

I shouted, “Kakuza!” Kakuzaemon looked up. “Don’t say that you returned here alive and unharmed. Don’t you know that you’ve been burned to a crisp? You’re a lump of charcoal!”

Kakuzaemon sat with a blank look on his face. I gave another loud shout. His blankness only deepened.

.....

Tōrei’s *Draft Biography* (entry for age thirty-three, the year Hakuin became head priest at Shōin-ji) identifies Kakuzaemon as an elderly servant who performed chores around the temple, “working from morning to night gathering fuel and tending the vegetable gardens.” The mental blankness of Kakuzaemon in the final paragraph is explained in the following annotation: “Master Hakuin wants to show that most people are like Kakuzaemon, immersed this very moment in the midst of this raging fire. Because it consumes everyone, the young and Bodhisattvas alike, the master was always teaching people, “Watch out! Be careful what you do!” but most, like Kakuza, remain completely unconcerned, their minds empty of religious aspirations, intending to live to be a hundred or two hundred years old. . . . Nonetheless, when the day arrives and they must face

death, they suddenly act as though their heads were on fire — too late, too late!”

BOOK FIVE

Accounts and Records (Ki)

Explanations of Dharma Names (Setsu)

Book Five consists of sixteen pieces, ten Ki and six Setsu, the former consisting of accounts of the origin and background of hermitages and temples, Buddhist images, a sutra repository, Buddhist relics, a spirit stone, and people whose stories Hakuin deemed in some way edifying; and the latter consisting of explanations for students of the Dharma names they had received from Hakuin and other teachers. Also included among the Accounts and Records is an unnumbered piece, “Mr. Gotō’s Taking of Life,” which was in Hakuin’s original manuscript but was deleted from the published text.

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ACCOUNTS AND RECORDS (KI)

170. ACCOUNT OF THE HERMITAGE AT MOUNT IWATAKI

This is one of Hakuin's earliest surviving inscriptions. It was composed at the age of thirty-one, evidently while he was residing at Mount Iwataki, and is signed with his ordination name, Ekaku; he would not adopt the name Hakuin for another two years. He was nearing the end of the extended period of pilgrimage that had begun at the age of eighteen, during which he had experienced several deep enlightenments, and was trying to locate an isolated spot where he could devote himself to solitary practice. He learned by chance of just such a sanctuary in the mountains of Mino province where a layman named Shikano Tokugen had constructed a small hermitage and was looking for a priest to occupy it. The hermitage was at Mount Iwataki, which is located several kilometers north of Ōta in Mino province, not far from the mountains of Ibuka where four hundred years earlier Kanzan Egen, founder of the Myōshin-ji, had secluded himself to engage in solitary practice. According to Katō Shōshun, the rundown hut that Layman Shikano restored for Hakuin had originally stood within the precincts of a small temple named Jingō-ji (Hakuin Oshō Nempu, Chronological Biography of Priest Hakuin, p. 150). Nothing is known about the Kokūzō Hall mentioned here, though presumably it was located on Mount Iwataki, and it may have been a part of the Jingō-ji.

Hakuin moved in and began a severe regimen of zazen, subsisting on one bowl of gruel each day. Hakuin mentions this period in his autobiography Wild Ivy (p. 54), but it is described more fully in the Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 187–92). To these accounts can be added a description Tōrei gives in his Commentary on the Daruma Zen-kyō: “The master, by pushing

himself mercilessly, finally succeeding in breaking free from the illness (Zen sickness) that had for so long thwarted his practice. Entering the Kokūzō Hall on Mount Iwataki, he devoted himself to zazen for a period of over twenty months. He was forced to leave when an old family servant came and took him back to Shōin-ji, where he was installed as abbot” (Daruma Zen-kyō settsū-kōsho). The Account of the Hermitage at Mount Iwataki was apparently composed at the request of Layman Shikano. A draft copy of the inscription in Hakuin’s hand is extant (reproduced in HZB #193).

THE HERMITAGE AT Mount Iwataki was built by Layman Shikano Tokugen of Yamanoue village. Mr. Shikano is a simple, honest man of deep generosity, and a devoted follower of Buddhism. He always shows great kindness in his dealings with the villagers. His two sons, themselves both wealthy men, are as modest and humble as their father.

When Layman Shikano fell ill this spring, he told his sons, “I’ll soon be a hundred years old. I don’t have much time left. When I die, I want you to use a portion of your inheritance to have my mortuary tablet enshrined on Mount Kōya.”

“We will do that,” said the sons, “but that is not enough.”

“Invite some monks from a large temple to conduct a ceremony and provide a vegetarian feast for them,” said the father.

“We will do that,” they said, “but it is still not enough.”

“What do you propose to do, then?” asked the father.

They lowered their heads.

“You are dutiful sons. You have never done anything counter to my wishes. The gods and Buddhas are witness to that. You shouldn’t hesitate to speak.”

They said, “Among the many shrines and temples you have built or repaired is the Kokūzō Hall on Mount Iwataki. It is a place of great sanctity, with a setting of unmatched natural beauty. When it fell into disrepair some years ago, it became the haunt of monkeys. It deteriorated to the point that its walls began rotting away. After you rebuilt it, it became a pilgrimage site once again. There is no guarantee that it won’t suffer the same fate in the future. We would like to build a hermitage at the site in which a priest could reside. We

could enshrine your mortuary tablet in the hall, and endow it with rice paddies with a two *roku* yield. Doing this would benefit you in your future life as well. It would be like killing two birds with one stone. We would take care of all the necessary work involved.”

The layman was extremely pleased. “Thank you for giving such great consideration to my welfare,” he said, and he told them to get started without delay.

Such is the story of how the hermitage on Mount Iwataki came to be built.

.....

My mortuary tablet. A mortuary tablet (*ihai*), with the Dharma name of the deceased inscribed on it, was normally enshrined in the temple to which the family belonged, where it would receive the benefit of the priests’ daily sutra readings and other services. People of means might also have them enshrined in larger, more famous temples as well, such as those on Mount Kōya (present Nara prefecture).

Kokūzō Hall on Mount Iwataki. Kokūzō (Sanskrit, Ākāshagarbha) is a Bodhisattva whose name, literally “Sky Repository,” signifies wisdom and merit as boundless as the sky. Although the Kokūzō Hall was presumably on Mount Iwataki, nothing else is known about it.

171. ACCOUNT OF MOUNT FUJI IN MINO PROVINCE

The colophon attached to this piece is dated 1716, placing it at around the same time as the previous one, while Hakuin was practicing at the Iwataki hermitage. It was written at Layman Shikano’s request, probably using information he had supplied. Shikano is said to have been a follower of the Nembutsu, hence the frequent references to Amida and the Pure Land faith.

The “Mount Fuji” of Mino Province (Mino Fuji), rising to a height of approximately one thousand feet, is located north of the present city of Mino-kamo in Gifu prefecture.

AT ITS ULTIMATE source the Perfect Way is ineffably mysterious and silent, its essence dark and deeply concealed.⁵⁰ When the slightest stirring occurs within this mysterious darkness, the two principles of *yin* and *yang* come into existence. What is pure and empty is called heaven; what is rigid and unmoving is called earth.

There is one immense and solid mass of this earth known as Mount Fuji, whose splendid form dominates the three surrounding provinces of Suruga, Tōtōmi, and Kai. Mount Fuji’s incalculable virtue has a protective influence that extends over the entire country of Japan. Soaring majestically many miles into the sky, its rugged slopes of eternal snow are like enormous, wonderfully carved walls of pristine whiteness. Spreading out from its clear, cloud-piercing cone are seven or eight radiant silver petals, making it resemble a finely sculpted lotus flower. The tutelary god of the peak, Sengen Daiji, is a manifestation of Amida Buddha. Majestic and august in appearance, he works in sincere and intimate ways.⁵¹

A person wishing to climb to the summit of Mount Fuji must choose the warmest days of mid-summer for the ascent. Even then he must be clothed as heavily as for the coldest winter months, and be sure he is supplied with food for a journey of a hundred leagues. Before attempting the climb he must first undergo a ritual purification, ten days of fasting and ablutions. If even the slightest defilement remains, angry rumblings will be heard from inside the mountain’s mysterious grottoes, and sounds of profound resentment will immediately reverberate from its peaks. Poisonous mists will belch forth from empty caverns, noxious fumes will spit out from precipitous cliffs, whirlwinds bellowing like thunder will throw out storms of solid sleet and hail. Many climbers vanish without a trace, never to be seen again. For these reasons few people are able to climb to the top of Mount Fuji even once in their lives. Those who do it three times, or nine times, are virtually nonexistent.

Here in the village of Yamakami in Kamo county, Mino province, lives a gentleman of great benevolence and generosity named

Shikano Zenbei, who is known for his strong religious faith. One of his ancestors six or seven generations back made an annual ascent of Mount Fuji for almost fifty consecutive years. On his final climb, as he was fighting off the frigid night cold, he made a silent vow to the god of the mountain: "I have grown old. I am feeble in mind and body. I sorely regret that I will be unable to continue my pilgrimages to this holy peak. If possible, I would like to take some pine saplings from the foot of the mountain, carry them to my home province and replant them there. If they do not wither, I will take it as a sign that the god has not forsaken me."

With thoughts moving between sadness at leaving the mountain and the desire to obtain the pine saplings, he abruptly fell asleep. A sacred monk appeared to him. Forbidding in appearance, dark and severe in demeanor, he stood there loftily, and speaking to Shikano in an informal manner, said:

"No one has ever before committed himself to climbing this mountain with such great devotion. I know that old age has made you infirm so that you will not be able to come here again. Nonetheless, you must not throw aside the deep aspiration that has inspired you all these years. If a mind of great sincerity drops its guard even the slightest bit, all the merits it has achieved will be wasted.

"When you return to your native Mino province, this is what you should do. To the northeast of your house you will find a mountain that resembles Mount Fuji. I will give you a sacred image of Amida Buddha. I want you to take it and enshrine it on that mountain together with the pine saplings. If you worship it with unflagging devotion, you will assure peace and tranquility for your descendants and receive the love and respect of your neighbors." The monk then gave Zenbei the sacred image.

When Zenbei awoke he found a small golden image of Amida Buddha, about an inch and a half high, glittering brilliantly in his hand. He returned to his native village in extremely high spirits. Upon seeking the sacred mountain, he found it exactly where the monk said it would be. He named the mountain Mount Fuji as the monk had instructed, erected a shrine on it, enshrined the statue of Amida Buddha inside it, and planted the pine saplings at the mountain's

summit. Now descendants of those original pine saplings, brilliant green trees hundreds of feet high, soar quietly into the moonlit clouds above.

From all around villagers came to marvel at the shrine and worship the image of Amida. Many marvelous events occurred in the surrounding area in the following decades, like shadows cast from the Buddha, or miraculous echoes produced from his sacred presence.

As the years went by, however, the number of worshippers dwindled. The shrine was gradually forgotten. A brush fire swept the mountain, destroying both the shrine and the image. Since a Buddha's body is essentially formless, it should undergo no change whatever, and yet Shakamuni Buddha, who was born at Lumbini and entered into Nirvana under the Sala trees, shares these occurrences in common with all great Buddhist sages who appear in this world in their compassion to teach others. In view of that, might it be said that the loss of the sacred golden figure of Amida Buddha in Mino, which Zenbei had received long ago on Mount Fuji in Suruga, is a case of the Buddha's sacred teaching responding to the needs of sentient beings as well?

This year, the summer of the sixth year of Shōtoku [1716], Layman Shikano Tokugen had a caller. "How long has it been now," he asked, "since the fire destroyed all trace of the shrine on Mount Fuji? You now have two fine sons, both of whom enjoy prosperity and health. Does this not accord with the divine revelation your ancestor received on Mount Fuji long ago? If so, why have you failed to carry on the fine and noble aspiration that generations of your ancestors have cherished? Why have you made no effort to rebuild the shrine?"

In deep appreciation for the admonition, the Layman replied, "You are perfectly right. Thank you for showing me the error of my ways." Working together with his son and grandson, he had the shrine rebuilt and a new image enshrined inside it. People came from all around and worshipped silently before it. The sounds that could be heard from the mountain torrents and the colors and forms of the surrounding mountain scenery all seemed to take part in the rejoicing.

Someone recently said to me, “Mount Fuji is the world’s most sacred mountain. Its size and towering height are unmatched. It is because there is nothing to which it can be compared that it is known as the *Fu-ji* or “one and only” mountain.⁵² Aren’t you belittling the great peak by giving its name to our small mountain in Mino province?”

I [Ekaku] replied, “You are viewing these peaks merely in terms of their size and height. If you can see and worship them as the measureless, ocean-deep vow of Amida Buddha, as his radiant light that illuminates all things everywhere, you will see them as manifestations of Universal Compassion [*Fu-ji*]. How could what those people worshipped in the past in their singleminded devotion have been two separate mountains — Suruga Fuji and Mino Fuji? I can see no reason whatever why this mountain can’t also be named Fuji.”

Without uttering a word, the man left. I thereupon wrote this account down and presented it to Layman Shikano.

[COLOPHON:] I respectfully proclaim the following to Shikano Zenbei, Layman Tokugen, the patron of endless good works: Ekaku, an insignificant teacher from Shōin-ji in Suruga province, a carp hidden in the depths of the true Dharma’s vast ocean, performed nine bows and inscribed this, with his knees shaking in fear.

Autumn, the eighth month of the sixth year of
Shōtoku [1716]⁵³

172. RECORD OF THE *YŪSEN* ROCK

*The word **Yūsen**, literally “roaming sage,” conveying the image of a realm of rocks and streams where sages roam freely beyond the dust of the world, was used as a title for poems as early as the Six Dynasties period in China, where “spirit” rocks (kiseki), rocks with unusual shapes and rare coloration, have long been prized and*

avidly collected. This passion for rocks found its way to Japan at a fairly early period, and in the Muromachi period appears as a theme in the poetry of the Gozan monasteries. Hakuin's own attachment to spirit rocks is seen in a number of such pieces in Poison Blossoms, e.g., the long verse thanking his friend Ishii Gentoku for a gift of rocks for the Shōin-ji garden (#293).

This early piece dates from 1724, Hakuin's fortieth year.

SENIOR PRIEST KAN came over from Butsujitsu-an with an unusual rock in his sleeve. "This was discovered recently at Kongō-ji," he said. "I had to disturb your nap because I need to consult you about a name for it."

"Why come to a feeble old crow when you need a phoenix?" I replied. "Would you force a gimp-legged turtle to do tricks at the end of a pole?"

Kan said, "Recently Tetsuzui Rōshi of Funi-an gave the rock the name *Yūsen*, but I'm not sure how the words should be understood. Do they mean an immortal sage came down and amused himself on the rock? Or that a sage transformed himself into the rock so he could enjoy himself roaming through the human world? It is said that if a person truly appreciates and esteems a spirit rock like this, his room will instantly transform into the realm of the sages. Is that why the master of Kongō-ji [Unzan] called this rock 'a sage clad in robes?'"

"No, that couldn't be what he meant," I said. "Generally speaking, there are four kinds of sage — immortal sages, *yang* type sages, heavenly sages, and wizards who dwell on earth. All of them attain sagehood through merit they gain by perfecting the vital spirit within them. The singleminded focus of their diligent work extends over thousands of lifetimes, tens of thousands of years; it is more intense than a spark from a flint, or a flash from a lightning bolt. If they exhaust the merit they have accumulated, or if their vigorous spirit falters, they are reborn as ticks on a bull's neck or lice in a horse's ear. I'm sure Unzan Rōshi was not thinking of any those four types of sage. Zen master Hsu-t'ang said, 'Gloss and luster on a rock doesn't make it a jadestone.' Carefully examine the reason for this. When you grasp it, you will be able to truly understand the *Yūsen* rock."

Senior Priest Kan, an unusually wise monk, simply made two bows and said, “My most humble thanks for this fine name.” I could only smile.

.....

Butsujitsu-an was the retirement temple of Hakuin’s great friend Unzan Sotei (1685–1747), the former head priest of Kongō-ji. He appears in a number of pieces in *Poison Blossoms*. Annotations identify Kan Jōza (Senior Priest Kan) as Fuhō Sokan (n.d.), Unzan’s successor at Kongō-ji.

Tetsuzui Rōshi. Tetsuzui Genshō (1640–1745), the long-lived head priest of the Funi-an in Matsunaga village (in present Numazu); according to some accounts he was a Dharma heir of Shidō Munan.

Four kinds of sage. As no source for this particular taxonomy has been located, it may well be Hakuin’s own. The alchemist Ko Hung’s *Pao p’u tzu* (*Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity*) mentions three types of sage: superior sages who appear in human form and ascend into the heavens, middling sages who appear on earth and ramble through the world’s celebrated mountains, and inferior sages who become sages after they die. Not included in Ko Hung’s list is Hakuin’s “yang type sage” (*yō-sen*), the meaning of which is uncertain.

Zen master Hsu-t’ang said . . . From the *Record of Hsu-t’ang*, ch. 5: “Gloss and luster on a rock doesn’t make it a jade. Beauty in a flowing stream doesn’t mean it contains gold.” Muchaku Dōchū comments on this: “In a mountain filled with lustrous rocks there are bound to be some jades, but those are ‘worldly jades,’ not genuine ones” (*Kidō-roku Rikō*). In this context “worldly jade” (*se-gyoku*) suggests one with impurities and imperfections that keep it from being classed as a true jade.

Senior Priest Kan . . . I could only smile. “Since Kan was a monk of outstanding capacity, he felt no need to offer a reply” (annotation).

173. ACCOUNT OF THE OBITOKE JIZŌ AT NANAORYAMA IN MINO PROVINCE

Jizō, the Bodhisattva who saves sentient beings suffering torments in the six paths of karmic retribution, is popularly venerated in Japan as the guardian of young children and the patron saint of safe childbirth. He assumes many forms in responding to the needs of supplicants; one of these forms is the Obitoke Jizō. Obitoke, literally “girdle unfastening,” derives from the practice of binding a woman’s abdomen during her pregnancy; unfastening it signifies a safe childbirth. In the Edo period temples dedicated to the worship of Obitoke Jizō appeared around the country. Although the temple or shrine referred to here has vanished from history, the image of the Obitoke Jizō it enshrined is now said to be in Myōchi-ji, a Zen temple in Mino province.

One of Hakuin’s own encounters with the Bodhisattva is recorded in the Chronological Biography, 1723, his thirty-ninth year, a bit later than the events recorded in this inscription. He says that Jizō appeared to him in a dream, with a body of “infinite magnitude, filling all space. He was sitting in attendance at the Bodhisattva’s side, and asked him, ‘How do I incorporate the attainment I’ve achieved into my everyday life?’ The Bodhisattva looked around at him and said, ‘As if sitting inside a thicket of razor-sharp thorns and briars.’ Cold shivers passed up and down the master’s spine. His hair stood on end.” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 196). Jizō is also regarded as an incarnation of Emma (Sanskrit Yama), the Lord of Hell, and some of Hakuin’s most powerful one-line calligraphies, ones he wrote beginning in his eighties, are inscribed: “I place my trust in the Bodhisattva of Hell” (see The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 244–46).

AH, HOW MARVELOUS are the great Bodhisattvas! With boundless compassion, they declare a universal vow to save all sentient beings from suffering, assuming infinite manifestations in response to their

different needs, apportioning themselves throughout the six paths of existence in order to lead them to liberation.

The Tōmyō-in at Nanaoyama, a site sacred to Jizō Bodhisattva, is a temple situated in a setting of unsurpassed natural beauty. A legend in this part of Mino province credits the founding of Tōmyō-in to Lord Oda Nobunaga.

In the first year of the Kyōhō era [1716], in the course of a pilgrimage I was making in search of the Way, I paid a visit to Rōdō Rōshi in eastern Mino province.⁵⁴ Rōdō was a Myōshin-ji priest, a descendant seventeen generations removed from National Master Kanzan. Virtuous conduct came simply and naturally to him. He scrupulously observed the Buddhist precepts, engaged in hidden practice, and never faltered even during the summer heat or winter cold. Anyone who would aspire to match Rōdō Rōshi as a teacher must possess a will with the strength of metal or stone.

Rōdō told me the following story:

One day in the ninth month of this year, while I was immersed in samadhi, it suddenly seemed I was visiting a place of marvelous beauty. There was a towering mountain with seven separate peaks that shone like gold pieces in the autumn sun. An ancient hall stood isolated on a plateau halfway up the mountain. Inside it, standing upright and resolute, was an image of Jizō Bodhisattva. Before him was a solitary lamp in a clay saucer about eight inches in diameter. I prostrated myself before the figure, feeling such profound gratitude that I found my entire body pearling with sweat. I was awakened from my dream by a knocking outside my chambers. I got up and opened the door. It was Kaji Kohei Tamesada from Murohara south of the village.

“You woke me from a very good dream,” I said.

“Would you tell me what it was?” he asked.

When I described to Kaji what I had seen, he clapped his hands together in astonishment. “Amazing! Absolutely amazing!” he exclaimed. “It’s as though I had been

summoned here today because I had foreseen you would have such a dream.”

I asked him to explain, and Kaji related the following story. “The place you visited in your dream is Mount Nanao, southeast of Murohara. There used to be a temple there, sacred to the Bodhisattva Jizō, that was constructed by Oda Nobunaga.⁵⁵ When Lord Nobunaga extended his dominion over Ise and Ōmi provinces to the west and Suruga and Tōtōmi provinces to the east, gaining control of the rich plains of Mino province, he ruled his domain from Gifu Castle on Mount Kinka. His powerful spirit prevailed through the eight directions, his great vigor consuming all who opposed him. He was truly the hero of his age.

“It happened that one of his wives experienced a pregnancy of such difficulty that even the most skillful physicians could do nothing but look on with wrinkled brows. They summoned a diviner. ‘Not even the gods would be of any help to you,’ he said. ‘Unless you enlist the compassionate assistance of Jizō Bodhisattva, there is little chance that either mother or child will survive. Jizō saves all beings suffering in the six paths of existence. His spiritual power can achieve truly miraculous results. Ten leagues to the east of this castle is a mountain with seven peaks that is sacred to the Bodhisattva. If you erect a temple there and make a vow before the Bodhisattva, the women in the villages in the vicinity of the mountain will never experience difficult childbirth, not only now but in the future as well. Before all else, you must make supplication to the Bodhisattva.’

“Lord Nobunaga readily agreed. No sooner had he performed his devotions to the Bodhisattva than the abnormal twisting of the placenta that had afflicted his wife vanished, and the suffering she and the child had been experiencing disappeared as well. Everyone in the castle began chanting the name of Jizō Bodhisattva with palms pressed together in *gasshō*, marveling at this

manifestation of the Bodhisattva's power. Lord Nobunaga wept tears of joy as well.

“He immediately dispatched a horseman ten leagues eastward to Nanaoyama [Seven-Ridge Mountain] near our village. It was not long before an image of Jizō Bodhisattva was shining forth from a splendid temple he had constructed there. Many people came to worship it, and ever since countless miracles have occurred in the surrounding area.

“After the passage of many years, however, the Bodhisattva withdrew his presence. The temple fell into disrepair, the image crumbled to dust, and all that remained were ruins. Yet the miraculous power of the Bodhisattva continued unchanged, and to this day no case of difficult childbirth has been reported in any of the villages around the temple. Even women living several leagues distant shared in this benefit and have not been plagued by difficult childbirth either.

“Village elders held a meeting recently and concluded that to be favored with such a sacred site, and to be blessed with the Bodhisattva's divine help as well, was more difficult than carrying Mount T'ai under one's arm,⁵⁶ that by comparison constructing a hall and enshrining a Buddhist image in it was no more difficult than breaking a branch from a tree. Since I am the village head, they came to me and reported what they had decided.

“I told them, ‘To cast a fine bell you must employ a skilled metalsmith. It is the same with establishing the temple you desire. Unfortunately, these days a truly enlightened priest is not easy to find.’

“As a result of our discussion, a decision was made to ask you, master Rōdō, to assume that role. I have come today for that very purpose. Even if you might refuse our earnest request, can you ignore the meaning of that Bodhisattva appearing to you when you were doing zazen?”

There was no way that Rōdō Rōshi could refuse the request. “You are right,” he said. “Let us go and have a look at this sacred site. After the temple is rebuilt, I may decide to live out the rest of my days there.” Kaji joyfully prostrated himself before the Rōshi, and then left.

As I was staying with Rōdō Rōshi at the time, he told me to write a detailed record of everything that had transpired. I have thus composed this inscription, and we now await the completion of the Jizō Hall.

174. RECORD OF THE SUTRA REPOSITORY AT KIICHIZEN-JI

This inscription, written in Hakuin’s forty-ninth year (1733), describes circumstances concerning the construction of a sutra repository to house a set of the Buddhist scriptures at the Zen temple Kiichi-ji in Izu province. He focuses largely on the role Layman Yoda Takanaga (d. 1739), the temple’s chief patron, played in bringing the project to completion.

Manpō-zan Kiichizen-ji, to use Kiichi-ji’s full and official name, is near the small town of Matsuzaki in a particularly remote area located on the western side of Izu peninsula, some fifteen miles up from its southern extremity. Kiichi-ji is nestled in a beautiful setting on the southern slope of a hill overlooking a small river valley. Even today this part of western Izu is one of the least inaccessible areas on the peninsula. In pre-modern times, its craggy, deeply indented coasts and rugged mountainous terrain, relatively easy to cordon off with barriers at key points, were made to order for feudal authorities seeking a place of exile for criminals and other undesirables.

The Chinese Zen monk I-shan I-ning (1247–1317), who had been dispatched to Japan as an emissary of the Yuan government but was detained on his arrival by Japanese officials on the suspicion that he was a spy for Mongol forces then menacing the country, was

confined for a time at the spot where Kiichi-ji now stands. When his bona fides as a Zen missionary were later established, he was installed as abbot at Kenchō-ji and Engaku-ji in Kamakura, and later at Nanzen-ji in Kyoto, where he taught many promising young monks in this early period of Japanese Zen. He later became the founder of Kiichi-ji.

The sutra repository (kyōzō) is a building housing a sutra storage case that is equipped with shelves made up of special containers filled with Buddhist scriptures. The revolving storage case (rinzō), whose invention is attributed to Fu Ta-shih (497–569), a famous layman of early Chinese Buddhism, is a large cylindrical cabinet with eight sides, each side containing tiers of shelves filled with scriptures. The cabinet is set on a central pivot that is revolved to allow access to all scriptures on the shelves. By revolving the storage case one turn, a person was said to acquire the same merit as reading the entire Buddhist canon.

*Ōishi Shigemichi and Yoda Takanaga, the temple patrons mentioned in the text, were wealthy farmers, landowners, and Zen laymen who resided in Ōsawa, a small farming village adjacent to Kiichi-ji. The Yodas, one of the richest and most important families in Izu province, had close ties to Hakuin. Several letters Hakuin addressed to the Yoda family are extant, one of them a lengthy text he sent to Takanaga's eldest son, dated twenty-two years after this piece was written (see *Beating the Cloth Drum*, pp. 99–108). An inscription Hakuin wrote for a Suiriku ceremony he conducted in Matsuzaki at Yoda Takanaga's request, dated the second year of Hōreki (1752), is also included in *Poison Blossoms*, #99.*

THE FORTY-NINE YEARS the old Indian [Shakamuni] spent teaching sentient beings are ultimately summed up in a single instant of thought.⁵⁷ What need is there to understand how to split open a particle of dust?⁵⁸ The lofty words preached in countless numbers by generations of sages can be disposed of by simply raising a single finger.⁵⁹ Why bother walking around a sutra repository?⁶⁰ The Cakravartin King's treasure of the golden wheel vanquishes even the most ferocious foes throughout the world. Shakamuni's treasure of

the great Dharma wheel crushes all the thieves of delusion that afflict sentient beings.

Manpō-zan Kiichizen-ji in Naga county, southern Izu, is a sacred temple founded by Zen master I-shan I-ning from the land of the Sung. Wise sages have invested the old mountain with an auspicious haze of immeasurable height. Dragon Kings and Devas protecting the precincts have imbued the ancient pines with the marvelous redolence of timeless age.

In winter of this year, the eighteenth of Kyōhō [1733], six thousand seven hundred volumes of Buddhist scripture had been assembled, and an octagonal sutra repository to house them was completed. An undertaking of this magnitude was not realized overnight; it was possible only through the combined efforts of temple patrons Ōishi Shichiroemon Shigemichi, who initiated the project, and Yoda Sajibei Takanaga, who brought it to completion.

Shigemichi was born in the neighboring village of Minewa. He was a fine gentleman of benevolent and unpretentious disposition. As he gazed at the falling flowers in springtime, he was saddened by thoughts of the frailty and uncertainty of worldly success. As he trod over the fallen autumn leaves, he keenly felt the brevity of human life. "Izu province may be small and insignificant," he thought to himself, "but it is not poor in Buddhist temples. It possesses a good share of Shintō shrines as well. Old Layman P'ang cast his entire wealth into a lake.⁶¹ I will cast mine into the building of a repository for the Buddhist sutras."

One night a venerable figure with the elegant presence of ages past appeared to Shigemichi in a dream. Slowly and quietly, the figure said, "If you visit the temple at Mount Fukino, you will find there a person who will help you."⁶² On visiting the temple, Shigemichi did encounter such a man, the priest of the temple, and related his story to him from first to last. Since the priest himself already harbored notions of a similar kind, the two men joined forces and set about turning their aspiration into reality. Together they solicited throughout the province. In time they succeeded in assembling four thousand Buddhist sutra scrolls, which they donated to Kiichi-ji in the fourth year of Kyōhō [1719]. It was a formidable achievement. The name of the priest was Tetsugai, who now serves

at Fumon-in in Dōyama.⁶³ Shigemichi took the tonsure, receiving the Dharma name Layman Mumon Chōjin. Soon after that, he passed away.

Twelve years slipped past. In autumn of the seventeenth year of Kyōhō [1732], Mr. Yoda sighed to himself, “Mr. Ōishi passed away before he could collect a complete set of the Buddhist scriptures. I am going to carry on his splendid work and make sure that it is completed.”

As the head of one of the wealthiest families in southern Izu, Takanaga lives in affluent circumstances. By donating a small fraction of his wealth, a complete set of sutras and commentaries was soon procured, and the construction of the sutra repository completed as well. In order to maintain the gift, he also donated some rice fields with a yield of several *koku*.

The Buddha said, “There are twenty things of great difficulty for human beings. [One of them is] for a man of great wealth and position to develop an aspiration for the Way.”⁶⁴ It would seem that Takanaga is someone who has been exempted from a prophecy that issued from the golden mouth of the Buddha himself! An occurrence of incalculable worth.

A farmer in neighboring Michibu village named Sōzaemon Mitsuyu was inspired by the benevolence and generosity of these two men to donate a statue of the deity Benzaiten carved by Prince Shōtoku for enshrinement in the sutra repository. How extraordinary! Benzaiten is one of many forms assumed by the Bodhisattva Kannon, who includes among his infinite manifestations the celebrated laymen Fu Ta-shih and Vimalakirti. We must deeply venerate a goddess such as Benzaiten.⁶⁵

On the day long ago when the great teacher Fu Ta-shih conceived the idea of the revolving sutra repository, he is said to have pledged: “It is my deepest wish that all those who enter this hall will be reborn in the human realm for many future lives and arouse the Bodhi-mind, and that all those who come and turn this repository one revolution will derive the same merit they would receive from reciting and holding in mind all the sutras and commentaries.”

How can one doubt, in view of this, that the men whose donations made the construction of this repository possible, as well as the

clerics and lay people who engaged in the actual work, will be blessed with good fortune in their future existence?

Eidō Oshō, the abbot of Kiichi-ji,⁶⁶ sent a letter to Shōin-ji asking me to compose an inscription setting forth this series of events. So intense was my joy on hearing the wonderful news about the sutra repository that without even considering my obvious limitations I immediately set to work. I composed the inscription, but I was only able to cover a mere tenth of what actually occurred. In addition to the matters requested by Eidō Oshō, I have included several stories of my own as well, which I committed to paper so that good and right-minded men and women would know about them.

One of them took place during the Tenna era [1681–84]. It seems a mendicant monk of Settsu province who wandered from village to village assembling donations for a great collection of the Buddhist sutras had a dream one night in which a white horse appeared to him with tears in its eyes. “Please, priest,” it said, “have compassion on me and add me to your list of donors.” The monk laughed and said, “You seem to be covered all over with hair. I don’t suppose you’d have even a scrap of paper to your name. What on earth could you donate to me?” The horse replied, “I travel twice daily between Nose and Ikeda. I’ll make the trip three times a day, and donate the proceeds of the extra trip to you.” The owner of the horse had the same dream and immediately began looking for the monk. When he finally found him, the two men grabbed hands with tears in their eyes. The man ended up donating the horse to the monk.⁶⁷

Another story tells about a young wife who lived long ago in Wakasa province. While visiting one of the old temples in the area she entered the sutra repository and turned the revolving sutra case one revolution, repeating as she did the posthumous name of her deceased mother. She fell into a dreamlike state in which she saw a heavenly being riding through the sky on a five-colored cloud that was surrounded by blinding purple light and cast an exquisite fragrance over the fields below. The woman cowered in fear, her hands pressed together in *gasshō*, and thought “How wonderful that a common countrywoman like me should be allowed to worship such a being.” Addressing her, the being said, “Don’t you recognize me? I am your mother. Thanks to the merit you gained by reciting my name

singlemindedly as you revolved the sutra repository, I have in spite my unworthiness attained rebirth in the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods. I only regret that I was unable to be reborn into the Tushita Heaven and join the assembly of Maitreya, the Compassionate One. During my life on earth I kept twenty pieces of gold hidden beneath the pillar that stands at the northeast corner of your room. I want you to use that money to have the broken tiles on the roof of the sutra repository repaired. If you do, I will surely be reborn in the Tushita Heaven.”⁶⁸

When Zen master Yueh-t’ang Shao was abbot at Mount A-yu-wang, a group of bandits broke into the temple to steal the Buddha-relics.⁶⁹ While all the monks were dispersing in terror, Yueh-t’ang grabbed the Buddha-relics and fled into the mountains behind the temple. He dug a deep hole and hid himself inside it, clutching the relics to his chest. After searching high and low for the relics and failing to find them, the bandits became incensed and decided to set fire to the main gate. As they were preparing to do that, the sutra repository suddenly began revolving with a heavy thundering sound, frightening the bandits so much that they all fled. Ahh, sutra repositories are always surrounded by wise and sacred beings, and they are under the protection of the king of the Naga gods. That is why a miracle like this occurred. It is a truly wonderful story.

A woman once sent the priest Chao-chou some money and asked him to revolve the sutra repository for her. On receiving the donation, Chao-chou rose from his Zen chair and walked around it one time. When the woman learned of it, she said, “I asked you to turn the repository one revolution. What do mean by turning it only half way?”⁷⁰

Let me [Hakuin] ask you: “What is the complete turning of the sutra repository? If your discernment can fully penetrate this, you have achieved the great matter, you have bored through all the six roots and six dusts. If on the other hand you are still unsure about it, come here to the temple and give the sutra repository a turn.”

I now joyfully perform *gasshō*, and pray that any merit I have attained is turned toward keeping the country at peace, the people happy and prosperous, the temples pure and good, and the temple patrons prosperous and long-lived; and that all suffering sentient

beings throughout the universe will strive together to realize the supreme Buddha Way and turn the wheel of the true Dharma.

*All Buddhas, all Bodhisattvas in the three worlds and throughout the ten direction — Maha Prajna Paramita.*⁷¹

175. RECORD OF THE FOUNDING OF MURYŌJUZEN-JI

This is the first of two pieces on Muryōjuzen-ji (usually referred to by its shortened form Muryō-ji), the small temple in Hina village six miles west of the Hara post station that Hakuin reestablished in his sixties. Together with Shōin-ji, where Hakuin resided as head priest, and Ryūtaku-ji, the large practice temple he founded in Mishima in his final years, Muryō-ji is one of three temples most closely associated with his religious career. It was to graves erected in these temples that Hakuin's ashes were divided and interred after his death. The story of Hakuin's determined attempts to convince his student Tōrei to become the first head priest when Muryō-ji was rebuilt, told in the letters that passed between the two men at the time, can be found in Beating the Cloth Drum, pp. 142–76. The local historian Akiyama Kanji's research on Hakuin and his relation to Muryō-ji appears in SH, pp. 184–206.

THIS TEMPLE, WHICH I named Ummon, or “Cloud Gate,” is located near the miraculous spot where Kaguya-hime, “the moon princess,” was born and raised, and where the old bamboo cutter lived who appears in the tale of the princess. Its mountain name is Shinkō-zan. Built on the site of old Muryōju-ji, a temple sacred to Sengen, the great Bodhisattva of Mount Fuji, it is situated in a beautiful natural setting, a place where people throughout the country have long come to worship.

Long ago, in the time of Emperor Keikō [71–130], an old bamboo cutter saw a strange light glowing every night from a stalk of bamboo

in a nearby grove. When he cut the bamboo, he discovered an infant girl inside. He and his wife were overjoyed and raised the girl as their own daughter. She had great natural beauty, with skin that seemed to glow with radiance. She grew into a beautiful young woman, bewitching all who saw her. An endless procession of suitors arrived to seek her hand. Officials of high rank appeared, saying they would give their lives to obtain the priceless pearl beneath the jaws of the dragon. Princes came, saying they were eager to attain the fabulous nine-holed shell from the swallow's perilous cliffside nest.

Eventually her reputation reached the ears of the emperor, who dispatched an emissary from the capital to pay her a visit. When the emissary approached her house, he saw an ethereal light surrounding it and detected a divine fragrance emanating from the young girl's room. In wonderment and disbelief he returned to Kyoto and reported what he had seen. The emperor made the long and difficult trip to Suruga to see her. When her parents learned that the emperor was coming, they were filled with fear. They took the princess with them and hid inside a stone cave to the north of their home. They burned cottonseed and gizzard shad to create the odor that is experienced when a cremation has been performed. Smelling the smoke and believing that the young girl had died, the emperor was beside himself with grief. Not long after that the girl vanished into the rocky grottoes beneath Mount Fuji and was never seen again. Local people believed her to be an incarnation of Sengen Bodhisattva.

The girl's father was fond of hawking and the girl had a pet white dog. His favorite hawk and the dog are now enshrined as gods in the Ashitaka and Kushi Shrines on the slopes of Mount Fuji. This story has been passed down from ancient times.

A small, white stone stupa was recently unearthed in the area. It revealed that a temple named Muryōju-ji had formerly existed at the site. Surely it was discovered thanks to the secret working of Sengen Bodhisattva. We call the new temple we have built at this spot Muryōju Ummon-an. Although my disciples and I belong to the Rinzai lineage of National Master Daitō, when compared with the vast scope of Daitō's vow and aspiration our strength, sad to say, is meager. Although the time to revive the tradition of this great Zen

master is now at hand, the vigor with which we pursue this effort is unfortunately also inadequate.

At the beginning of the Genroku era [1688–1704], the elderly priest Dokuon Genri restored Ummon-an at this site in Hina village, and at the end of the Enkyō era [1744–48], master Kairyū collected donations and made three attempts to reconstruct the temple. [After Dokuon's death,] Layman Ishii Gentoku of Hina village was entrusted with the funds that had been collected and began laying plans to bring Dokuon's project to fruition. Before his death, Layman Ishii entrusted the task to Mr. Furugōri and Mr. Sugisawa, his friends and fellow laymen. They have succeeded admirably in carrying it through to completion.

Today, on the eighth day of the fourth month, the second year of Hōreki [1752], the rebuilding of the Ummon-an hermitage has finally been accomplished. It has been furnished with a well, a kitchen, and all the proper temple fittings. The new head priest of Ummon-an [Tōrei] has been placed in charge of the opening ceremony. I herewith place my palms together in *gasshō*, and say:

It is my fervent prayer that the foundation of imperial rule may grow ever stronger, the sun of Buddhism may shine ever more brightly, and this temple will be protected against fire and calamities of every kind. I also pray that in the future all those who reside in this temple will whip forward with steadfast determination the great wheel of the Bodhisattva Vow, and will, sporting on their sleeves the sacred amulet that divests people of their lives and polishing the keen claws and fangs of the Dharma cave, strive to lead sentient beings to deliverance. As we gather here to celebrate the completion of this new temple, do you know the person we can count on to assure that this is carried out? He is none other than the new head priest, Tōrei Enji Anju.

.....

Hakuin devotes the first half of this account to the *Taketori Monogatari*, *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, a well-known folk tale that, according to local legend, took place near the Muryō-ji site.

Taketori Monogatari is one of the oldest extant Japanese narrative tales, dating from the 10th century and perhaps earlier. The most commonly told version of the story is quite different from the one Hakuin relates here, which may represent a local, oral form of the tale.

In the more widely known version, an old bamboo cutter sees a strange light glowing from a stalk of bamboo. He cuts the bamboo open and discovers inside it a tiny infant girl the size of a thumb. He and his wife raise the girl as their own, naming her Kaguya-hime, Princess Kaguya. Thereafter, whenever the old bamboo cutter cuts down a bamboo, he finds a nugget of gold inside, and the family becomes very wealthy. The infant grows into a young girl of ordinary size and extraordinary beauty. When five princes come seeking her hand in marriage, the old bamboo cutter persuades his daughter to accept one of them for her husband. She asks the princes to bring various articles, promising to marry the one who succeeds in producing them. But as the articles are all things impossible to obtain, none of the men is able to bring them to her. The girl's reputation reaches the ears of the emperor, who travels to Suruga, falls in love with her, and asks her to marry him. She rejects the offer, saying that she has come from another country, "far, far away."

Finally she reveals to her foster parents that she has come from the moon, and must now return. A heavenly entourage appears and she is conveyed back to her native home. Saddened to lose her, when the emperor is told that Mount Fuji is the place closest to heaven he has his soldiers carry a letter for the princess up to the summit and burn it there in hopes it will reach her. The men are also ordered to burn an elixir of immortality (*fushi*), which becomes the name of the mountain. It is said that the Japanese characters for Mount Fuji, "mountain abounding with warriors," derive from the sight of the Emperor's men ascending the slopes to carry out his orders, and that the smoke that issues to this day from the summit of Mount Fuji comes from the elixir and burning letter.

The priceless pearl beneath the jaws of the dragon and the fabulous nine-holed shell from the swallow's perilous cliffside nest are expressions denoting something extremely difficult to acquire.

Gizzard shad is a type of shad that when being cooked is said to smell like burning human flesh.

176. RECORD OF THE RELICS AT MURYŌJUZEN-JI

This, the second of two pieces on Muryō-ji (see #175), is an account of some Buddha-relics (sharira) that had been donated to the temple. Hakuin dwells briefly on the history of such relics and then praises his lay student Yotsugi Masayuki for his generosity in offering them as a donation to Muryō-ji. According to the entry in the Chronological Biography for 1752 (the same year this account was written, when Hakuin was sixty-eight): “In winter, to celebrate the completion of the Muryō-ji, Layman Chikan (Yotsugi Masayuki) gave Tōrei seven Buddha-relics for enshrinement in the temple and asked master Hakuin to deliver lectures there on the Sutra of the Bequeathed Teaching.” The entry for the following year has: “Hakuin went in the spring to view the relics that had been enshrined at Muryō-ji” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 220).

Tōrei wrote two accounts of these relics, and the Confucian teacher Yanada Zeigan, a friend of both Hakuin and Yotsugi, wrote one as well. Tōrei’s accounts, which are still in manuscript, supply particulars concerning his friend Yotsugi’s gift that do not appear here.

Yotsugi Masayuki (n.d.), who also went by the sobriquet Gifu-ya after the name of his establishment, was a wealthy Kyoto merchant who lived at the corner of Sanjō and Takakura streets, near the center of the city. He was an ardent Zen student from his youth, and gave numerous donations to help Hakuin carry out various building and publishing projects.

Yotsugi hailed from the same small village in Ōmi province as Tōrei, whom he helped during his early years of training by lending him hermitages for solitary retreats in the eastern hills of Kyoto. After

being introduced to Hakuin by Tōrei, Yotsugi became a devoted student of the master. His name appears in the letters of Hakuin's final decades.

"Relics" (Skt. sharira) are tiny, gemlike fragments that are found among the ashes of people possessed of exceptional spiritual attainment after their cremation. Enshrined in stupas and beautifully fashioned reliquaries, such relics were greatly prized. They are worshipped as objects of great sanctity and believed to possess miraculous powers.

Although Hakuin's account of the relics at Muryōjuzen-ji is in keeping with the veneration that Buddhist followers generally show towards such relics, in another work he displayed a more typical Zen perspective: "A monk who was studying under Zen master Yun-chu refused a pair of trousers the master had sent to him, saying, 'I already have the ones I was born with,' but when Yun-chu asked him, 'What did you wear prior to your birth?' the monk was unable to answer. Later, when the monk died and his body was cremated, relics were found among his ashes. When these were shown to Yun-chu, he said, 'I'd much rather have had one phrase from him in response to the question I asked when he was alive than ten bushels of relics from a dead man'" (Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin, p. 77).

It may also be mentioned that after Hakuin's cremation, a great many relics were reportedly found among the ashes. "They resembled particles of sand or tiny pebbles, and were the color of precious blue gems. The true fruits of the master's meditation and wisdom . . . they were divided into three lots and interred in stupas erected at the master's three temples: Shōin-ji, Muryō-ji, and Ryūtaku-ji" (Chronological Biography, Precious Mirror Cave, p. 234).

YOTSUGI MASAYUKI, who lives at Takakura in Kyoto, is a man of natural grace and courtesy. He possesses firm resolve and fine aspiration. He displays courage and discernment in his devotion to Zen practice, and takes great joy in putting the Bodhisattva Way into practice. With great perseverance over a period of many years, he assembled a collection of genuine relics of Shakamuni Buddha which had been preserved over the centuries at seven different sites

in our country. In winter of this year, the second of Hōreki [1752], he took particles from each of these relics and donated them to Ummon-zan Muryōzen-ji. They will protect the temple long into the future. Nothing could please this old priest more.

Now, five days after the winter solstice, I came to Muryō-ji and opened the doors of the reliquary that houses the relics. Clerics and lay people from far and near gathered to gaze at them and make bows of veneration. I conducted a three-day lecture meeting on the *Sutra of the Bequeathed Teaching*. At the opening of the meeting I read out a verse:

Seven tiny crystal beads, true relics from the Buddha's
body,
Their serene light illuminating and benefiting sentient
beings,
Now are safely enshrined upon the summit of Mount
Ummon,
Guarded over, and jealously preserved, by its five temple
gods.

Relics of the Buddha's adamant Dharma-body have the power to permeate all realms of existence, a radiance that can swallow up the causes and conditions of karmic life. Long ago, when Shakamuni entered Nirvana under the Sala tree, his Dharma heir, the Venerable Mahakashapa, obtained from his breast the marvelously auspicious swastika that is regarded as the Buddha's mind-seal. On the day Buddha-relics first entered our own country, the great *kami* Amaterasu personally entrusted them to a shrine maiden, declaring, "I myself will always pay reverence to them." The auspicious light that hovers constantly over Kongōshō-ji at the Ise Shrine and the perpetual sacred mist that forever envelops Cockleg Mountain in India are emanations from the sacred relics preserved at those sites.

Once when a fleet-footed demon ran off with one of the Buddha's teeth, the guardian deity Idate crossed the heavens with great speed and recovered it. When Mongol troops broke down the gates of Mount T'ien-t'ung to steal the Buddha-relics in the monastery, Priest Yueh-t'ang saved them by digging a hole in the cliff behind the temple and crawling inside with the relics clutched to his breast. This

shows that even barbarians from far-off foreign lands know that the Buddha's relics are more precious than a bright torch on a moonless night road; that even gods and outlandish demons regard them with the reverence and gratitude they would feel for a seaworthy ship in a perilous ocean storm.

Long ago the Indian King Ashoka divided the Buddha's relics into eight lots and then, further parceling them into smaller fragments, had them interred in eighty-four thousand stupas erected throughout the country. In China, Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty constructed thirty-six Buddhist temples, placing a relic stupa in each one, and entrusted their protection to the gods and demon hosts.

In our own land, Prince Shōtoku, a reincarnation of the eminent Chinese priest Nan-yueh Hui-ssu, also venerated relics of the Buddha. Shōgun Minamoto Sanetomo dispatched Adachi Morinaga to Sung China to obtain Buddha-relics, and although Morinaga almost lost the relics he had procured when he visited the court of the Chinese emperor, he eventually succeeded in returning with them safely to Japan.

In such ways as these, fragments of the Buddha's relics have come to be enshrined at seven different locations in Japan. Small pieces taken from them have now been donated to Muryō-ji, where their radiance will forever illuminate the surrounding mountains and valleys. They are truly a treasure beyond price! Painted on the reliquary that holds them are images of the Four Heavenly Kings who guard the Dharma. Because of Layman Yotsugi's gracious gift, our tiny Muryō-ji has become one of most noted Buddhist temples in the eastern provinces. It was all made possible thanks to the devotion and benevolence Yotsugi Masayuki of Kyoto.

.....

Guarded over . . . by its five temple gods. Statues of the gods of the Asama, Ashitaka, Inukai, Akiba, and Kitano Shintō Shrines are enshrined at Muryō-ji.

Marvelously auspicious swastika. The swastika formed of spiraled hair on the Buddha's breast is among the auspicious attributes

possessed by a Buddha; it is said to symbolize the mind-seal that is the mark of enlightenment.

The great kami Amaterasu (Amaterasu ōmikami). In the *Genkō Shakusho* Amaterasu ōmikami, an important Shintō deity of the Ise Shrine, is portrayed as entrusting Buddha-relics to the shrine. This account does not include the words attributed to him here.

Kongōshō-ji is a Rinzai temple on Mount Asama to the northeast of the Ise Shrine that has a well-known relic pagoda.

Cockleg Mountain. The Buddha's Dharma heir Mahakashapa went to Cockleg Mountain in India at the end of his life hoping to transmit the golden robe he had received from the Buddha as a symbol of the Dharma transmission to Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future.

Once when a fleet-footed demon (shōshitsu-ki) . . . recovered it. The story is from the *Nirvana Sutra*.

Priest Yueh-t'ang saved them . . . to his breast. The full story is given in #174, pp. 287–8.

Nan-yueh Hui-ssu (515–77) is a Chinese T'ien-t'ai priest whose incarnation in Japan as Prince Shōtoku (572–622) is alleged in the *Records of Seven Generations (Shichidaiki)*.

177. AN HONORABLE MAN AT THE ABE RIVER CROSSING

This story, which is still told in the Suruga area, concerns an incident that took place at one of the dangerous river crossings on the Tōkaidō road, not far from Hakuin's temple. In 1929, Furukawa Taikō Rōshi, then head priest at Seiken-ji, a large and important Zen temple near Shizuoka, had a commemorative stele describing the incident erected at the site. From it, we learn that the honorable man's name was Yoshibe.

Hakuin wrote this piece in 1738, his fifty-fourth year, not long after the event. Some forty years earlier the German physician Kaempfer,

who made two trips from Nagasaki to Edo and back, left an informative first-hand description of circumstances at these river fords:

Several of the Rivers we are to cross over, chiefly upon Tookaido, run with so impetuous a rapidity towards the sea, that they will bear no bridge nor boat, and this by reason partly of the neighbouring snow-mountains, where they arise, partly of the frequent great rains, which will swell them to such a degree, as to make them overflow their banks. These must be forded thro' in shallow places. Men, horses, and baggage, are deliver'd up to the care of certain people, bred up to this business, who are well acquainted with the bed of the river, and the places which are the most proper for fording. These people, as they are made answerable for their passenger's lives, and all accidents that might befall them in the passage, exert all their strength, care and dexterity to support them with their arms, against the impetuosity of the river, and the stones rolling down from the mountains, where the rivers arise. Norimons [palanquins] are carried over by the same people upon their arms.

(*History of Japan*, Vol. II, pp. 294–5. Glasgow: MacLehose and Sons, 1906)

The cheapest way to cross was by riding piggyback on one of the porter's shoulders; at high water a pair of carriers was required. People of means could make crossings in litters or palanquins, four porters for a single passenger, six for two.

This piece shows Hakuin celebrating good character with reference only to the Chinese classics, without any explicit connection to Zen, and also manifests the respect he felt for people of low social rank, whom he holds up, implicitly, as models of conduct for his own followers and for those of high status.

Poison Blossoms (#203) contains a preface Hakuin wrote for a roster made up of donors for a project he initiated to build a bridge over a difficult river crossing in Tōtōmi province.

IN THE THIRD year of the Gembun era [1738], autumn rains continuing for days on end raised river levels throughout Suruga province. Officials suspended river crossings, and travelers on the Tōkaidō, people of all social ranks, were greatly inconvenienced. Some were stranded for five days, some for even ten. At the Abe River, about a league west of the town of Sumpu [present-day Shizuoka], several thousand people who had been waiting for the water to subside were busily struggling now that daybreak had arrived to make their way across the river. Some sat astride the neck of one of the hardy river porters, some were hanging on for dear life to one of their sturdy arms. All were having a difficult time negotiating the still swiftly flowing water. Old and young cried out to one another; rich and poor floundered side by side in the rapids.

One man, who had an old, threadbare pouch hanging from his waist, and who, from the look of him, had fallen on bad times, was bargaining with a porter for a reduced fee. Suddenly, with a show of anger the man unfastened the pouch from his waist, took off his kimono, bundled it up, and putting it on top of his head, began wading across the river, intending to ford it on his own. Once or twice in the midst of the treacherous stream he had a near fall and was almost swept away, but he finally succeeded in reaching the western bank.

Soon after that as the porter was returning to the place where they had argued over the fee, he spied in a hollow place on the riverbank a leather bag filled with what seemed to be four or five strings of coins.⁷² On picking it up, he found it was surprisingly heavy. When he looked inside, he found it was filled with large gold coins. He thought, “That fellow who just went across must have dropped it. He grudged me a mere five-*mon* carrying fee, and then put his life at risk by crossing on his own. If it belongs to him, he’ll be out of his mind when he discovers it is missing. The poor fellow might even keel right over and die there on the roadside.”

He immediately crossed the river again and began hurrying after the man. When he had gone several leagues, reaching the bottom of Utsunoya Pass, he caught up with him. The man was naked to the waist, his right hand grasping a walking staff, hurrying precipitately

down from the pass on stone steps set in the mountainside. He was weeping miserably.

The porter said, "Aren't you the person who made the crossing this morning on your own?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Why are you going back?"

"I dropped something," the man replied, "and I'm in a hurry." He turned to run off.

Grabbing the man's robe to stop him, the porter said, "Just what I thought. What did you lose? Describe it to me. If it's what I think it is, I'll return it to you."

"I lost a bag of coins," he said.

"What was inside it?"

"One hundred and fifty *ryō* in one-*ryō* gold coins. Fifty *ryō* were wrapped in a piece of yellow-bordered green silk about a foot square. The other hundred *ryō* were in another, smaller bag; it was tied with a yellow cord. There were also seven or eight letters I'd received from home."

"You don't have to worry any longer," said the porter. "Here's the pouch. I brought it for you." He produced the pouch and handed it to the man. The man took it with tears cascading down his cheeks, and raised it above his head in thanks.

"When you lose something inside your own home, it's difficult to find it," the man said. "But here on the Tōkaidō, with its heavy traffic? With men and horses coming and going all day long? No matter how quickly I could have returned to the spot and looked for the pouch, there wasn't much chance of retrieving it. Yet I couldn't just forget about it. If I hadn't found it back at the river, I would have had no choice but to drown myself. I couldn't have faced my wife and children after something like that. So while I was determined to return and look for it, I had no idea I'd encounter a person of your upright character who would return the money to me. You've not only given back my money to me but my life itself. You've saved my life. Please accept half of the money in the pouch. It can't repay even a tenth of the kindness you've shown me."

"I can't accept that money," said the porter. "If I had any intention of obtaining your money, why would I have run after you? Now I

must get back to the ford. I have a job to do carrying people across the river. I have a wife and children to support. Continue on your way, sir.”

As the porter started to leave, the man grabbed his hand and, with tears rolling down his cheeks, said, “Please listen to my story. I am a poor man from Kii province. I left home to work the fishing nets in Awa province. The money in that pouch is the wages thirty of my fellow workers earned through their hard work. They entrusted it to me to take back to their families in Kii province. The fifty *ryō* wrapped in yellow silk belongs to our master in Awa. He asked me to take it to Kii for him as well. He is a splendid person, and quite well off too. If I explained to him what happened, I am sure he would understand. Please accept the fifty *ryō*. It would make me feel much easier. I must also ask you your name. To help repay the debt of gratitude we owe you, my wife and children will surely want to chant it mornings and evenings as a mantra of thanksgiving.”

“If I agreed to accept the money,” the porter replied, “how could I ever have an easy conscience? If I act against what I feel to be right, my heart would never be at ease — it is not made of stone. I am a river porter, poor and half-starved. I work at a Tōkaidō river crossing and I live in an impoverished village. I’m not someone that announces his name to proper gentlemen I happen to meet on the road. I have a father approaching seventy, a wife who is now over thirty years old, and a four-year-old son. I rent out my shoulders to people who need to ford the river. It is very hard, working at full tilt from morning till night without a moment’s rest. I can’t be sure from day to day that my family will have enough to eat. Yet I have borne the cold and hunger, and I believe that I have lived an honest life. If it meant I must starve by the roadside, I would never accept money from a traveler that I wasn’t entitled to. Any food that I bought with it would only defile my wife and children. Not to mention the heavenly gods, who see everything as clearly as a fruit lying in their hand and surely would not let such an error go unpunished. This is your money. All I did was take a glimpse at it. If people had to give part of their money to others just because they happened to see it, wouldn’t they have to parcel out their fields and gardens, and their villages,

mountains, forests, and trees to others as well?” Without another word, he departed.

The man, his eyes still filled with tears, set out after the porter. Re-crossing the Abe River, he proceeded to the castle town on the other side, located the porter’s dwelling, and went inside. He saw the old father, sitting under a window that had been rudely cut in one of the walls. He was plaiting straw sandals, working with his legs stretched straight out and straw cords hooked between his toes. A woman was seated beside a stove, sewing some tattered garments. Placing his hands before him on the ground, he prostrated himself, then explained what had taken place and begged them to accept a reward. The old man, after giving him a brief glance, returned to his sandal-making, which he seemed to enjoy immensely. It was as though they hadn’t even heard what he said. The woman got up and with knitted brow took the man’s hands and pushed him out the front door.

The man stood there weeping pitifully. Neighbors and passersby, seeing him, had tears in their eyes as well. Finally, he left and went to tell his story at the local magistrate’s office. The magistrate summoned the old man and the wife. He was apologetic. “Ahh!” he sighed, “People such as you two are indeed praiseworthy. Like subjects of the Emperors Yao and Shun.⁷³ If everyone was like you, this world would be a perfect place.”

To the traveler, the magistrate said, “You may leave now. Go and tell your comrades that everything will be taken care of satisfactorily,” and he produced five *ryō* that he said would be used to reward the porter.

Ahh! When I heard this story, I thought of the saying: “Until a person is confronted with great difficulty, you cannot discern the truth of his resolve; until he is confronted with great wealth, you cannot know if his heart is true and just.”⁷⁴ How true it is!

178. AN OLD MAN FROM NANIWA

IN NANIWA YEARS ago there was an old fellow who was marvelously adept at shooting matchlock guns. He had several dozen men as disciples. One day as he was walking down the street with seven or eight of these students, they happened to encounter an old priest accompanied by a group of his own students. In passing each other, the disciples bowed their heads in greeting to one another. "Who was that?" asked the old man. "Priest so-and-so, of such-and-such temple," replied one of his followers. "Because of his great wisdom and virtue people refer to him as a living Buddha." The old man turned his head around and looked hard at the priest. "He may be wise and virtuous, but I'm going to take a musket ball from this bag of mine and take a shot at him. I'll strike him squarely in his vitals. He won't even have time to cry out." The students laughed, thinking their old teacher was just spouting his usual nonsense.

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An annotation, apparently transmitting Hakuin's own words, helps us grasp the point of this story: "No matter how ornate a priest's robes are and how deeply people revere him, such matters are merely outward appearances. They pertain only to the lifetime of the priest. If he were struck by a musket ball, that would be the end of him. But if that priest were also someone who had grasped the marvelous, untransmittable Way of the Buddhas and patriarchs, that musket ball wouldn't faze him. It would be powerless in the face of the sound of one hand. Hence the teaching this old fellow imparted to his disciples about the musket ball is no trifling matter. Now if he was someone who had not attained the Way, his words would of course possess no salutary meaning whatsoever. I ask you: how are you going to avoid this iron musket ball?"

179. A STARVING MAN AT THE BUN SHOP

Hakuin's Chronological Biography tells us that "In the winter of 1744, his sixtieth year, while the master was visiting Jishō-ji in Kai province, donations were gathered and a printing of the Heart Sutra was made using movable type. On the way home he lectured at Rinsen-an in Shimizu on Ch'uan-lao's Comments on the Diamond Sutra. Since the hall was extremely small, with room for only six students, it was not possible for a large number of people to participate. During the meeting the master taught using the story of a starving man at a tea shop" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 209).

In some Instructions to the Assembly (Jishū) that Hakuin delivered at the meeting (#39), he states that "several tens" of people had been accepted for the meeting and that over a hundred people actually attended, necessitating the construction of a temporary shed-like building to accommodate them all. He also points out Rinsen-an's connection with the well-known Sōtō teacher Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655). Shōsan's memorial stupa was placed at Rinsen-an, and the head priest Ekyū (n.d.), who was a student of Hakuin, was in the fourth generation of Shōsan's lineage.

IN WINTER OF the first year of Enkyō [1744], as I was returning from a trip to northern Izu, several priests and former students of mine, who had been lying in wait for me among the shady bowers of Rinsen-an in Nagasawa, made a sudden surprise attack. They had secretly hatched a plan to have me deliver Zen lectures at the temple. Quietly ensconced at Akiyama Kokan's residence in Yasuhisa village at the time, I was not interested in embarking on any Dharma engagements.

Head priest Ekyū led the first assault, surrounded by a cohort of green troops waving Dharma banners and urging me to accede to the request. I held firm against them. A second wave, led by Layman Kōrin Jimbei, including foot soldiers of all ages, young and old, stormed in, pressing me to comply. I valiantly fought them off. Deeming their numbers insufficient, they called in reinforcements. Jun and Ka came in the vanguard, forces under Yu and Kan took up the rear, and they ultimately succeeded in overwhelming Rinsen. Kyū was in the main party, which was supported by Tetsu and Chō, and held Ji and Rin in reserve. Outside, troopers Chū, Yaku, Betsu,

Daku, Lin, and Ki awaited yet another group that was advancing from the north. Finally, totally surrounded, unable to advance or retreat or offer further resistance, I surrendered and was taken by Layman Kōrin.⁷⁵

The Layman carried me off to his country retreat. A sumptuous banquet of the choicest delicacies was set before me. I was accorded the greatest courtesy, as though I was a guest of the highest rank. They then produced a copy of *Ch'uan-lao's Comments on the Diamond Sutra* and asked me to deliver some comments on it.⁷⁶ I declined. "A vanquished general does not talk of war,"⁷⁷ I said. But they refused to listen to my objections. My fate was sealed. I was finally forced to deliver my confession.⁷⁸

During the meeting a man came forward, greeted me, and said, "Priests and laity who came from far and near to hear these talks must feel like a farmer who has been blessed by a heavy rainfall after a long and severe drought. However I am unable to openly take part in the meeting as I would like. Some of my unworthy acquaintances would surely criticize me if I did. To avoid their censure, I decided to participate in secret."⁷⁹

I replied that I could understand his position. Such matters ought to be dealt with prudently, taking into consideration the circumstances and consequences of one's actions. I told him about a fellow who had showed up in the village just yesterday. He had the despondent look of a man who had fallen on very hard times. His wildly disheveled hair was like a lump of mugwort dashed about in the wind, his haggard, brown face like a cabbage leaf withered by the frost. A tattered old robe clung to his skeletal frame, leaving his thighs and elbows exposed and making him look like a molting quail. His sedge hat was so broken it didn't cover his ears. And yet hanging from his shoulder was a pouch that looked as though it might contain several strings of coins.

He entered from the east and stopped at a teahouse on the outskirts of the village. Taking off his hat, and loosening the string on his money pouch, he declared to the young girl tending the shop, "I'll have twenty or thirty of your best fried buns." Although wary of the beggarly looking stranger, she was reassured by the plump money pouch he held in his hand, and she put twenty or so of the five-*mon*

buns on a tray and handed them to the man. He grabbed them and immediately wolfed them down, looking as though he wanted still more. Then he abruptly fastened his money pouch and lit out like a rabbit breaking free of its pen.

The girl ran after him, yelling, "Cheat! Thief! He ran off without paying!" Several men happened to be nearby and joined in the chase. They soon caught up with the man, surrounded him, and began pressing him for the money. He refused to part with the battered old pouch, so they finally forced it from his grasp. When they opened it, they found that it was filled with pebbles. Enraged, they began reviling the man and beating him. It was as if a hungry ghost that chanced upon a scrap of food had suddenly tumbled back into hell.⁸⁰

The man was weeping when he raised himself up and placed both hands on the ground before him in a deep bow. "Please, I beg you," he said, "stop beating me for a moment and hear me out. It is said that when cornered or pressed to extreme, birds will peck out at you, beasts will grab for you, and men will tell you lies."⁸¹ Having experienced such extremity, I know how true that is!

"Despite my appearance, I am the son of a wealthy Kyoto family. Never learning the proper way to behave myself, I did not accept the instruction of my elders or my brothers. I spent all my time in the pleasure quarters, drinking and indulging my sexual appetites. I saw my parents as deadly enemies, my relations as menial servants. I used money as though it were water; fine silken garments were of no more consequence than mud or sand.

"I brought the large and splendid family business to the brink of collapse. My parents, no longer able to deal with me, went to the magistrate's office and officially disowned me. People say that the universe is boundless. I now found myself alone in that boundlessness, with no place I could go for shelter. How many times during that period I contemplated suicide — a sharp sword, or drowning. But life is not so easily cast away, death not so readily embraced. Swallowing my pride, I resolved to travel to Edo and brazenly throw myself on the mercy of an acquaintance I knew there.

"I set out for Edo, a hundred leagues distant, without a coin in my pocket. On the way, sleeping in the open, I experienced in full

measure the severity of the elements. So painful did I find it to contemplate my present situation that I thought my heart would rend into pieces. And, as it turned out, the man I had counted on for help knew all about my past behavior and refused to have anything to do with me. He didn't even offer me a lukewarm cup of tea. It was the same wherever I turned.

“Having reached the end of my tether, there was nothing I could do but head back to Kyoto. Again I suffered greatly from hunger and cold, dying nine times over, feeling as though I shouldered the misfortunes of Confucius's men in Ch'en and the privations of Po I and Shu Ch'i all in one.⁸² For three days I had nothing to eat, and could barely keep from tumbling over and falling to my death in the valley below. Without the slightest idea how to save myself, I made up my mind after some deep soul-searching that my living or dying would be decided at that roadside teashop. If I ate without paying, I would be severely beaten. If I didn't eat something, I would surely die of starvation. Rather than perish unbeaten, I resolved to extend my life by enduring the punishment.

“That is my story. Who could have imagined things would end up this way? A twenty-four-year-old man, flesh and blood, the son of a father and mother, destined to be beaten severely, flogged to death for his crimes. Not even the most benevolent person would raise a finger to help me — rejected by everyone I counted on, turned away everywhere I sought support — when you think about it, my life was given cheaply. Only thirty fried buns!”

When the man finished speaking, he fell back to the ground weeping. The villagers who had gathered around him had tears in their eyes as well. Turning away, scratching their heads, they left him lying in the dust.

That young man endured a severe beating in order to preserve his life. You young monks studying here also endure great suffering in order to gain the life of wisdom found in the eternal Dharma-body. In both cases considerable endurance is required, but the result is as different as the moon is from a snapping turtle.

It is written in the *Ch'en Kui*.⁸³ “A carpenter shows courage by climbing fearlessly onto the roofs of high buildings and towers. A fisherman shows courage by plunging into the water and seizing

large creatures of the deep. A warrior shows courage by rushing straight into the jaws of the enemy, heedless of the danger. A faithful minister is one who shows courage by speaking out to his master at the risk of displeasing him, unmoved by any previous rewards he has received and without fear of the possibility of torture and death.”

What I want to say is that a Buddhist monk shows his courage by severing all the attachments to family that are so difficult to sever, renouncing wealth and profit that are so difficult to renounce, forsaking fame and reputation that are so difficult to forsake, forgetting old customs and practices that are so difficult to forget. He throws aside his myriad connections with worldly life and devotes himself singlemindedly to negotiating the Way. He strives to bore through the old stories in the koan barriers that are so difficult to bore through, penetrate the patriarchs’ barriers that are so difficult to penetrate, enduring privations that are so difficult to endure, contenting himself until his death with a life of spartan simplicity. Maturing into a great Dharma vessel, he proceeds to help others by constantly imparting the Dharma teachings to them, raising the auspicious sun of the Buddha Dharma up so it will shine brightly amid the eternal darkness, and he never wavers or falls back from this mission. Such is the courage of Zen monks who negotiate the hidden depths.

Truly, there is no matter on earth that is greater than birth and death and no achievement that is richer and fuller than leaving birth and death behind and entering enlightenment. As we do not know whence life comes, it is called the great matter of life; as we do not know where we go when we die, it is called the great matter of death.⁸⁴ If a person is able to penetrate to an understanding of life, he will also understand death; if he penetrates to an understanding of death, he will understand life. The great matter of life is like a great mass of raging fire, the great matter of death like an impenetrable adamant cage.⁸⁵ Thus it is said, “Birth and death is the great matter, death arrives with great speed.”⁸⁶ Those words are extremely difficult to believe, extremely difficult to grasp. They deal with a matter of greatest importance that is impossible to enter into through ordinary reflection or cogitation.

You followers of the Way, do not despair if your progress toward enlightenment is slow. You should despair if you have trouble achieving pure singlemindedness in your practice. But do not despair if you find it difficult to enter into enlightenment. Just press forward and seek it with continuous application and unbroken determination.

Confucius said, "The superior man has his mind fixed on penalties; the petty man has his mind fixed on bounty."⁸⁷ The superior man is circumspect and thorough in serving his master, rising early in the morning and retiring late at night, regretting his lack of ability. Fearing the punishment meted out to unworthy vassals, his mind is fixed on penalties. Because of this, the rewards that Heaven bestows are never far away. It is the opposite with a petty man. He fawns and flatters, works when his master is watching and takes it easy when his back is turned. He expects to be amply rewarded immediately upon performing some trifling act, and if he is not, he is quick to anger and resents his master. Because of that, misery and self-created woes are always close at hand.

It is the same for the patricians who follow the path of Zen. They engage in hidden practice and secret application, reflecting on the privations and suffering of their Zen predecessors. Ashamed that Zen study in the present day has become so slack, they devote themselves to their training unflinchingly, day and night. Not expecting quick results, they proceed steadily forward, with far-reaching aspirations. Because of that, attainment is not far away. It is the opposite with mediocre monks. After sitting idly in zazen for three or four months, they start to grumble, complaining about the lack of results. They go around moaning and scratching their heads, deeply troubled. Why does this happen? It is because enlightenment, breaking free of birth and death, is extremely difficult to achieve, and the temptation to beat a hasty retreat is always close at hand.

Sentient beings move endlessly through the cycle of birth and death, enduring interminable suffering. Inhabitants of the heavenly realms live in a state of continuous pleasure but never have a chance to seek enlightenment. Both pleasure and pain, both happiness and unhappiness exist in the human world alone. Whether a person's time on earth is devoted to serious religious

practice or idled away depends on him alone. The time to gain release from that endless suffering is now. What are you waiting for?

You, my friend, are worried that your companions might criticize you for attending this meeting. If you give consideration to such matters, you will never be able to forge a true link to *prajna* wisdom. For you, the important thing is to forget such worries, see their criticism for what it is, and devote your attention solely to resolving the great matter of human life.

In one of his previous existences, Shakamuni Buddha was a young boy named Sessen Dōji. In order to hear the second half of a *gatha* on impermanence, Sessen threw himself into the jaws of a *yaksha* demon. In another existence, Shakamuni placed himself between the jaws of a starving tiger. Reborn as a Deer King, he rescued a herd of deer from a raging wildfire; reborn as a doe, he sacrificed himself to protect the fawn he was carrying from the hunter's trap.⁸⁸ Are you so timid as to shrink from the mere words someone might say about you?

Nagarjuna's *Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom* states, "Although five hundred people harshly reviled the Buddha, he would not be in the least perturbed; although five hundred people praised him, he would not show a sign of pleasure."⁸⁹ The criticism of such people is of no more consequence than a tiny scab on the skin. What will you do about your truly serious illness — the eternal night that is birth and death? Will you ignore this grave malady and worry about the tiny scab? Devote yourself diligently to your practice. If you do, you will surely experience good results. Doesn't Lieh Tzu say, "Those who achieve great things do not worry about trifles"?⁹⁰ Such is the path young monks destined to become men of truly great stature should take.

• MR. GOTŌ'S TAKING OF LIFE

This piece is not found in the printed edition of Poison Blossoms. It is translated from a manuscript preserved at the Matsugaoka Bunko of

Kamakura. An annotation accompanying the manuscript tells us that it was deleted from the final version when government censors (whose offices were located in Kyoto's Nijō Castle) let it be known unofficially that they would be unable to pass it for publication, citing "certain objectionable material" it contained. We are not told what this material is. With a talking turtle making an appearance, the tale certainly seems fanciful enough to avoid being associated with contemporary events. The problem may have been identifying a provincial daimyō and one of his retainers by name. "Mr. Gotō's Taking of Life" resembles one or two other pieces in Poison Blossoms that seem at first sight somewhat out of place among a collection of Zen records. In content and style they strongly resemble stories in Accounts of the Miraculous Effects of the Ten Phrase Kannon Sutra for Prolonging Life, or in some of the narratives I translated in Beating the Cloth Drum. They are designed to highlight the perils of ignoring the fundamental Buddhist principle of cause and effect, and a number of them end, like this one, with the guilty party getting his just deserts, reduced to beggary, then being torn to bits by savage dogs.

It seems likely that Hakuin heard of the Gotō story soon after it is purported to have happened. The Chronological Biography has young Hakuin visiting a temple in Fukuyama, a castle town on the Inland Sea near the city of Hiroshima where the story allegedly took place, in 1707, during the pilgrimage he made around the country in his twenties (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 161).

IN THE BEGINNING years of the Genroku era [1688–1704], there was a retainer named Gotō in the service of Mizuno Sakushū, the Lord of Fukuyama Castle in Bingo province. Giving no credence to the Buddhist teaching of cause and effect, Mr. Gotō indulged in the taking of life, building a small pond behind his house and filling it with several hundred turtles, which he took great pleasure in eating. One day he invited some friends for a turtle dinner. He went out to the pond, grabbed a large turtle, and placed it on the chopping block. As he was about to deliver the *coup de grâce*, the turtle's frantic struggling knocked the knife from his grip. It sank to the bottom of the pond. Cursing his luck, Gotō said to the turtle, "Swim down and

find my knife. If you bring it back to me, your life will be spared.” Released into the pond, the turtle soon reappeared with the knife gripped in its mouth. Taking it, Gotō then reached into the pond and grabbed the turtle. He returned it to the chopping block and promptly killed it.

He brought the turtle to the table and set it before the delighted guests. They were eating it with great relish until Gotō related the story of how he had tricked the turtle. They suddenly lost all interest in the food, excused themselves, and left. Gotō felt contempt for them. “Acting like a bunch of women,” he thought, laughing to himself. “Well, let them go. Good riddance!” He resumed his seat at the table and consumed all the food and drink by himself. Soon he began to feel feverish all over, and that night he was plagued by bad dreams. His eyebrows and hair fell out, and ulcers appeared on all his fingers. A physician came and prescribed some medicine, but it had no effect. Someone told him, “You could cure yourself if you drank a potion of Chinese medicine mixed with raw liver taken from a young girl.” Gotō had a search made throughout the province for a suitable young girl, but he was unable to find a single one who suited his needs.

There was a fine-looking young servant in the Gotō household named Kiyō. Gotō decided to use her liver for his potion. When he was unable to get his wife to go along with his plan, he enlisted the help of a butcher who had a shop north of the castle. He told Kiyō to carry a box filled with leather balls to the butcher’s house. On her way there she happened to meet her uncle. “It will be dark by the time you return,” he told her as they parted. “Make sure you let my wife know when you get back.”

Night had fallen when a priest rapped at the uncle’s door. “Kiyō is in great danger. You must hurry and save her,” he said. The uncle, greatly alarmed, ran to the Gotō residence and asked to see his niece. “Kiyō is sick,” he was told, but when he refused to be turned away a retainer came out and said, “To tell the truth, we haven’t seen Kiyō for several days. We have people out looking everywhere for her. I’m sure we will find her before long. I will inform you right away if she doesn’t show up. Until then, please don’t tell her family about her disappearance.”

The uncle left, his suspicions deepening, and on returning home he set out again, this time to visit the butcher. On the way, he met up with the butcher, who was carrying a box of leather balls. The uncle grabbed hold of the man and said, "Last night when I saw Kiyō, she was taking that box to your house. What are you doing with it? Where is she?"

"Mr. Gotō has been trying to obtain the liver of a female fox. I got one today, and am on my way to his house to deliver it to him. I don't know anything about Kiyō," he replied.

The enraged uncle took the butcher, lashed him to a willow tree at the roadside, broke a thick branch from the tree, and began beating him with it. The uncle delivered countless blows until the man's body was lacerated and covered with blood. "I'll give you a lot worse than that unless you tell the truth. I'll break every bone in your body!" he cried, giving him a score or so more furious blows with the club.

"Stop! Stop! I'll tell you!" the butcher screamed. Weeping bitterly he said, "The liver in this box is Kiyō's. I tried to refuse, but Mr. Gotō would not listen. I was sure he would have taken his sword to me if I hadn't carried out his orders. I decided it would be best for me to do as he said and receive payment for it. Not only did I never get the money, I have now ended up being beaten within an inch of my life."

The uncle became so distraught he began howling baleful cries that could be heard throughout the nearby village. Family members from Kiyō's house came running, having been deeply worried ever since the priest had come and told the uncle of the danger she was in. When they heard what had happened, they too fell to the ground weeping. All they could do now was to gather Kiyō's remains and take them home. The butcher confessed that he had disposed of Kiyō's body in a reed thicket on the banks of the river.

The uncle handed the butcher over to the local magistrate, who ordered Gotō to be arrested and his household placed under close confinement. Together with the other family members the uncle proceeded to the reed bank to look for Kiyō's body. They found her lying peacefully on a bed of broken reeds. Shedding tears of gratitude, they gathered around her, overjoyed to find her alive.

"How glad I am to see you all again," she said. "Yesterday, Mr. Gotō sent me out on an errand. Suppressing certain fears I had, I

made my way to the butcher's house. He led me into a dark shed behind his house and tied me to a post. He stabbed me in the chest several times. I was scared to death. He took out a sword and put it against my chest. But then a wonderful thing happened. The Abuto Kannon suddenly appeared amid a radiant light. I don't know what happened after that, because I fainted away."

Her uncle, weeping with joy, opened Kiyo's robe. He discovered a lacerated brocade pouch, which was found to contain one half of a small scroll of the *Kannon Sutra*. It was the same scroll on which Kiyo's mother had inscribed the sutra when she had visited the Abuto Kannon to pray for the Bodhisattva's help in conceiving a child. She had performed three prostrations before inscribing each of the Chinese characters of the text. This discovery deeply affected everyone and they proceeded to the Abuto Kannon Shrine to offer thanks. The uncle inspected the box and found on opening it that it contained the other half of the *Kannon Sutra*. It emitted a strange radiance and an ineffable fragrance that further astonished everyone.

Since Kiyo had been saved, Gotō was spared the executioner's blade. But all his worldly goods were confiscated and he was banished from the province. He ended up living as a beggar, wandering tearfully from village to village until one day he was set upon by wild dogs and torn to pieces.

.....

Abuto Kannon. The name given to an image of Kannon that was worshipped in this area.

Kannon Sutra (Kannon-gyō) is the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. It has been regarded as an independent sutra and widely used as a recitation text.

EXPLANATIONS OF DHARMA NAMES (SETSU)

180. EXPLANATION OF THE DHARMA NAME DAIIN

Hakuin wrote this undated piece to explain the significance of the Dharma name Dai-in, "Great Recluse," given to an unidentified layman on whom he had presumably conferred it.

The recluse, who withdraws from the world for various reasons to live in solitude and seclusion, appears very early in Chinese literature in the poem "Summoning the Recluse," attributed to Ch'u Yuan (4th century B.C.). In a poem by the Chin dynasty (265–420) poet Wang K'ang-min, the small recluse and the great recluse are contrasted, apparently for the first time: "Small hermits conceal themselves in the hills and marshes, Great hermits hide themselves in the capital." Later writers offered many different twists on this theme, reflecting sundry biases and backgrounds. One well-known example is Po Chu-i's "The Half Recluse," written in the mid-T'ang, which endorses a position somewhere between the two extremes as the most likely to bring happiness.

Confucianism is essentially opposed to any turning from the world, while Taoism wholeheartedly supports it. Buddhism has generally taken a positive attitude. Hakuin, whose interest in the subject of reclusiveness turns, predictably, on the way in which he can relate it to Zen training, identifies the great recluse with someone who has "realized formlessness" (that is, attained great enlightenment) and the small recluse with someone of only partial attainment. In this sense, he holds up his version of the "great recluse" as infinitely superior to even the most celebrated hermits of Chinese legend, men who had renounced the world but never got around to the more important business of renouncing themselves.

Hakuin constantly warns students of the danger of falling into the “dark pit of partial attainment,” where they will lose the spirit of urgency they will need to carry their practice through to completion. This outcome cannot be avoided, he says, unless their initial attainment (kenshō) is followed by post-satori training — vigorous application to advanced, hard-to-pass koans under a qualified teacher, which will allow them to deepen their realization as they lead others to the goal of enlightenment as well. As bent as he was on working in all quarters to get his message across, it follows that he would interpret the idea of the recluse’s tracelessness in terms of inscrutability of mind rather than public obscurity.

IT WAS SAID in ancient times that small recluses hid themselves in the mountains and great recluses hid themselves in the city. After having given the matter considerable thought, I have come to regard this as a shallow and commonplace saying, and not altogether accurate at that.

Ahh, recluses, recluses. How difficult it is to become a recluse. How difficult to discuss them. A figure standing on a precipice motionless as a stack of firewood with a goosefoot staff clutched in his hand and a gourd dipper slung over his shoulder, or sitting under the trees humming sweet songs. But if he has no inner virtue worth your praise and no external qualities worth your emulation, such a person is no more than an ignorant fool, someone who has hoodwinked his fellow men with pointless displays of his reclusive habits. He may think that shouldering a mattock and going around with bracken roots in his hand makes him a recluse, but no matter where he goes to live, in the mountains or in the marketplace, he is just a poor, cold, hungry little man — utterly ridiculous. He certainly doesn’t deserve to be called a recluse. It is said that a recluse is a person who conceals his virtue and hides his radiance. What I want to know is what virtue does he have to conceal, what radiance does he have to hide?

I have heard that there are genuine recluses in the southern regions who don’t hide themselves either in the mountains or in the city. They make the formless hills their home, conceal themselves in echoless valleys, take refuge in undying forests, and make non-

abiding their abode. They are found hurrying through city streets beyond comprehension, or selling firewood at a place nowhere to be found. As recluses, not even Ch'ao Fu or Hsu Yu could lay a hand on them. Not even Po I or Shu Ch'i would be able to flush them out. Why is this? It is because they never manifest emotion, thought, or perception in any of the three realms, and because whatever they do they never leave the samadhi of complete cessation. It is people such as this that we can speak of as great recluses.

.....

Southern regions (Nanpō) is apparently a reference to India.

Not even Ch'ao Fu or Hsu Yu could lay a hand on them. Ch'ao Fu, "old nest-elder," so called because of his habit of sleeping in trees to avoid contact with the world, was offered the throne by Emperor Yao, but refused it. When the Emperor offered the throne to Hsu Yu, he not only declined but immediately washed out his ears to cleanse them of the defilement. Hsu Yu drank stream water from the hollow of his hand, and when someone gave him a gourd for a dipper, he hung it on a tree, but later threw it away because he found the noise it made rattling against the tree distracting.

They never manifest emotion, thought, or perception . . . never leave the samadhi of complete cessation. "Echoing words Vimalakirti used in censuring Shariputra" (annotation) in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, "Disciples" chapter. Shariputra was sitting in quiet meditation under a tree in the forest. Layman Vimalakirti approached him and said: "Ah, Shariputra, you should not assume that this sort of sitting is true quiet sitting! Quiet sitting means that in this threefold world you manifest neither body nor will. This is quiet sitting. Not rising out of the samadhi of complete cessation and yet showing yourself in the ceremonies of daily life — this is quiet sitting. Not abandoning the principles of the Way and yet showing yourself in the activities of a common mortal — this is quiet sitting. Your mind not fixed on internal things and yet not engaged with externals either — this is quiet sitting. Unmoved by sundry theories, but practicing the thirty-seven elements of the Way — this is quiet sitting. Entering nirvana without having put an end to earthly desires — this is quiet sitting. If you can

do this kind of sitting, you will merit the Buddha's seal of approval" (*The Vimalakirti Sutra*, Watson, p. 37).

A version of this piece that appears in *Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan* (*kan* 1) ends with the additional sentences: "Is not Han-shan with his mugwort hair, dirty face, and ragged robe engaging in the dignified conduct [of the Bodhisattva] within the samadhi of complete cessation? Perhaps he is such a [genuine] recluse — perhaps he is not."

181. EXPLANATION OF THE DHARMA NAME DAIYŪ JITETSU KOJI

Hakuin gave the lay name Daiyū Jitetsu posthumously to Watanabe Heizaemon Hisachika, proprietor of the main honjin inn at the Hara post station, at the request of his son Sukefusa. Both Sukefusa and his father were close friends of Hakuin and important patrons of Shōin-ji. Heizaemon died in the tenth month of 1717, dating this piece to Hakuin's thirty-third year. Two months later, Heizaemon's wife requested a Dharma name for herself (see the following piece, #182). "Daiyū" means "Great and Steadfast Courage"; Jitetsu Koji translates as "The Layman Who Penetrates the Self."

WATANABE HEIZAEMON HISACHIKA was a simple, pure-hearted man with a deep and unwavering commitment to the path of Buddha. The wealthy Watanabe family is known throughout the province for their benevolence. Their true worth is found in the accumulation of merciful acts that generations of family members have performed. I gave Heizaemon a Dharma name once before, along with the text of the Three Refuges to recite. For over one thousand days he kept incense burning constantly at the family altar and recited the Three Refuges morning and night, flagging neither in the heat of summer nor the freezing cold of winter.

On the thirteenth of the tenth month of this year, the second of Kyōhō [1717], Heizaemon passed away quietly without any suffering.

It was surely the result of his many years of compassionate conduct. His son and heir Sukefusa came and asked me to write something to explain the meaning of his father's Dharma name. I have written a Chinese verse to elucidate the meaning of the name Daiyū:

Great and steadfast courage
Surpassing all understanding
Is the life-blood of patriarchs
The golden words of Buddhas
It is not lacking in any person
It is not concealed from view
It becomes the morning cloud
It becomes the squall at dusk
It appears as an autumn mist
And as the warm spring sun
As flawless snow-white jade
Or a yard of cold blue frost.
Not grudging my eyebrows
I've revealed the essentials,
But to get a grasp on them —
Black heaven, yellow earth.

.....

Three Refuges (san-ki; also san-kie) refers to taking refuge in the three jewels or treasures of Buddhism, a pledge a student takes at the time he is initiated into the Buddhist order: "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha."

Or a yard of cold blue frost. "Green (or blue) frost" is an epithet descriptive of the cold steel of the sword of wisdom.

Not grudging my eyebrows. A teacher is said to lose his eyebrows by explaining too much.

Black heaven, yellow earth. "In the *Book of Changes* black and yellow are said to be the colors of heaven and earth: heaven is black, the earth yellow" (annotation). "He means, 'Hear the sound of one hand'" (annotation).

182. EXPLANATION OF THE DHARMA NAME JISSAI EISHIN DAISHI

Jissai Eishin Daishi (“Elder Sister of the Excellent Mind of Ultimate Truth”) was the wife of Watanabe Heizaemon, proprietor of the main honjin inn at the Hara post station and the subject of the previous piece. In the twelfth month of 1717, two months after the death of her husband, she went to Shōin-ji and asked Hakuin for a Dharma name. Jissai Eishin’s real name and dates are unknown, but we know from the verse Hakuin read at her funeral (#158) that she died at the age of eighty.

WATANABE SUKEFUSA’S MOTHER is a courteous, refined lady possessed of all the finest feminine virtues. She places her trust in the Buddha Way, inquiring into the true and direct causes of Buddhahood while adeptly managing the family budget and skillfully supervising her household. She lives in perfect accord with the Dharma teachings, always keeping offerings of incense and flowers on the family altar and performing sutra recitations. That Sukefusa grew into such a fine man is due entirely to his mother’s nurturing and discipline.

At the end of this year, the second of Kyōhō [1717], she shaved her head and requested a Dharma name. I gave her the name Jissai Eishin Daishi. The words appear in the sutras: “At the ground of ultimate truth not a single mote of dust intrudes.” It describes a state the Buddhas themselves always maintain in their minds.

Sukefusa said, “Would you please inscribe something to explain the meaning of this Dharma name?” This verse was my answer:

Ah, the greatness of ultimate truth
Vast, spacious beyond all measure
One solid mass of sheer emptiness
An immaculate, unprofaned purity
Extending throughout the universe
Encompassing every sentient being
Revealing each one in its suchness
Revealing their faultless perfection

Without any form or mark whatever
Prior to names or labels of any kind.

Look!!!

A gimpy tortoise with rabbit horns and turtle hair
Growing from its chin clumps after a soaring bird.

.....

“At the ground of ultimate truth not a single mote of dust intrudes.”
The words Hakuin quotes appear in *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 9,
section on Kuei-shan Ling-yu.

Ah, the greatness of ultimate truth. “You won’t be able to grasp the
lines that follow until you hear the sound of one hand” (annotation).

183. EXPLANATION OF THE DHARMA NAME RŌSEN

*Hakuin wrote this inscription at the request of a Zen monk whom he
refers to as “Zen man Chū.”*

IN THE EIGHTEENTH year of the Kyōhō era [1733], on a day a western
breeze was filling peoples’ hearts with thoughts of home, Zen man
Chū from Shimōsa province came and announced that he would be
returning to his home temple. He also asked me to write a verse
about Rōsen [“Old Sage”], his teacher’s Dharma name. As the
teacher is an old friend of mine, I was unable to refuse. When I was
derelict in carrying out my promise, brother Chū came around
pestering me about it like a young child trying to wheedle something
from its mother. So I wrote out this verse for him:

His temples were snow-white before the great beginning,
His face undiscernible even to the ancient emperor
sages.

With a *Chen*-feather robe, hand holding a wolf-fang
mace,
He is much keener on killing you than on giving you life.

Just then a visitor came. When he read the verse, he was amazed. “Could such a person actually exist in this day and age?” he asked. “He does indeed,” I replied, “This Rōsen is just such a fellow.

“Every word that comes from a Zen teacher must accord with ultimate truth. Every syllable that spits from his mouth has to be perfectly genuine. If they aren’t, his teachings become wild, reckless talk, acts of dishonesty and deceit. You could write his words on a rice cracker and throw it to the dogs, but even they wouldn’t touch it.

“You should turn within and examine your own original self: What does ‘old’ in Old Sage mean? What does ‘sage’ mean? Bore through them! All the way to their source! You’ll understand that they are not in the least bit different from what I am always affirming to you. You will experience a marvelous joy and wonderful clarity that you will be unable to express in word or thought.

“Between affirming this and not affirming it, there is a difference of a thousand leagues. If you direct your light within and examine your own self, you will discover that this is how your mind is — it is an ‘Old Sage.’ There is no use going and asking someone else about this fellow.”

The visitor was again flabbergasted.

“Next time you come,” I told him, “I’ll have to write a verse and give you a name. I’ll call you *Layman Flabbergasted*.”

The visitor dropped his head and laughed. I wrote this for him as well, in hopes that he will make it to the farthest reaches of the Buddha Way.

.....

Filling peoples’ hearts with thoughts of home. The phrase “thoughts of home,” *junsai*, a contraction of the words “water shield (a perennial water grass used in soups) and sea bass,” is based on a story told about the poet Chang Han (3rd century B.C.), who served the Prince of Ch’i but resigned his post because he could not go

without the hot water shield soup and pickled sea bass of his native Sung-chiang in Kiangsu province. The term *junsai* is often used when someone is unable to resist thinking of his home province, his mother's cooking, etc. Hakuin is alluding to thoughts of the true self-nature.

His temples were snow-white . . . even to the ancient emperor sages. The first line of the verse alludes to the word "Old," the second line to the word "Sage," in the name Rōsen.

With a Chen-feather robe, hand holding a wolf-fang mace. Feathers of the *Chen* bird were a deadly poison (see #138, pp. 182, 183). Maces made from the wolf-fang bush were used as weapons in ancient China.

184. EXPLANATION OF LAYMAN DAIKŌ KOGAN'S NAME

The recipient of this Dharma name, Akiyama Sōzaemon Shigemasa (n.d.), was the head of the Akiyama family of Yasuhisa village in northern Izu province and one of the most prosperous landowners in the Izu-Suruga area. A draft version of this inscription has survived in the form of a letter. As it is dated, we are able to assign this piece to the fourth month of 1725, Hakuin's forty-first year, a period when he was engaged in intense zazen practice; it was the year before his final decisive enlightenment (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 197).

It has been said that Hakuin's association with the Akiyama family began as a result of the marriage of Sōzaemon's daughter Chika into the Watanabe family of Hara, an event that took place before Hakuin was installed as head priest at Shōin-ji. Heads of the Watanabe clan owned one of the main honjin inns at the Hara post station, which catered to daimyō and others of high rank. Sōzaemon and his son Michitomo were both important patrons of Shōin-ji during Hakuin's tenure there. The Akiyama clan is discussed in Shamon Hakuin (Buddhist Monk Hakuin), a work by the local historian Akiyama Kanji.

Sōzaemon's son Michitomo was also a Hakuin student and received a Buddhist name from him as well; the inscription explaining it is translated in the following piece, #185.

AKIYAMA SŌZAEMON SHIGEMASA is a reclusive gentleman of Yasuhisa village in northern Izu province. He has a sincere, upright character distinguished by refined elegance and quiet determination. He comes from a long line of wealthy landowners in Suruga and Izu province that has flourished unabated for several hundred years, rising like an immense tree high above the other giants of the forest, with magnificent twisting branches curling outward from a majestic dragon-like trunk. Coming from such stock, Sozaemon's mind was bound to turn toward the Way. He began his Zen study with Ho Oshō of Enjō-zan Ryūsen-ji. Later, he came to pay me a visit. It was as though karmic influences had ordained our meeting. I now regard him as an elder brother. Three years ago, he invited me to his home, but at the time I was intent on devoting myself quietly to my zazen practice, so I was unable to accept his kind offer.

Having viewed the scattering springtime flowers and falling autumn leaves and become deeply aware of the transience of human life, in the spring of this year, the tenth of Kyōhō [1725], Sōzaemon came to my temple and asked me repeatedly for a Dharma name. Once again I failed to respond to a request from him. His second son Tsunehide then came and made an earnest appeal on his father's behalf. Realizing the depth of his sincerity, I was unable to let matters slide any longer. I wrote out the name Daikō Kogan Koji ["Layman Great Light of the Old Shore"]. It derives from the Sanskrit *Maka-hannya-haramitta*, which may be rendered as "Reaching the Other Shore of Great Wisdom."

One day the Layman came into my chambers, made two bows, and said, "I'm embarrassed to have a name that means 'Reaching the Other Shore of Great Wisdom.' I'm just a slow-witted country farmer. I lack the karmic seeds within that would connect me to Buddha-wisdom. I don't engage in the kind of hidden practice that would convey me to the other shore. There is such a great disparity between the meaning of my name and the actual reality."

“I am glad you asked that question,” I replied. “The mind that seeks to answer it is the very marrow of the Buddhas, the life-root of the ancestral teachers. Some call it ‘the great and important cause for which Buddhas have appeared in the world,’ others call it ‘the treasury of the true Dharma eye.’ It is the direct path that will convey you swiftly and suddenly to the other shore. It is the inner sanctum of the celestial treasure trove.

“Layman Daikō, I want you to investigate over and over: What is the mind that produced that question? Bore into it when you are doing zazen. Bore into it when you are standing and moving about. Bore into it when you are immersed in everyday activities as well as when you are in places of tranquility, whether you are moving, sitting, or lying down. Bore from the front. Bore from the sides. Bore into it until there is nothing left to bore into, and mind, thoughts, perceptions, and emotions are all suspended. Body and mind will be as though seated inside a glass jar of perfect crystal. Then, with knower and known forgotten, you will become one with the seeking mind and everything will abruptly cease to exist. At that moment, if you just keep pressing ahead without any rising of fear, you will feel as though you are shattering a vast sheet of ice, shoving over a towering jade tower. Everything in the ten directions will suddenly vanish without a trace, leaving vast emptiness within and without, and whatever you do, whether active or at rest, will be perfectly clear and true. The joy you will experience will be greater than anything you have seen or heard in all your seventy years.

“At that point, if you fire your spirit with even more resolve and continue to bore in with great care and assiduity, you will realize in yourself the nonduality of fundamental truth and changing phenomena, the oneness of enlightenment and illusion. There will be no shore for you to leave, no yonder shore to seek, no meditation or wisdom to practice, and no contradiction whatever between the name you bear and the reality you live. You will still be the same useless old duffer with nothing to do, your eyes horizontal, your nose up-and-down, but even the Buddhas and patriarchs will be unable to lay a hand on you. When that time comes, this screed I’ve written out will be an embarrassment to you. You will feel nothing but shame for the speculations you have ventured about name and reality, and

shame as well to be called Daikō Kogan, Reaching the Other Shore of Great Wisdom. Ah, what a glorious moment that will be!”

The Layman bowed to me and departed. I wrote this down and sent it to him — embarrassing myself yet one more time.

.....

Ho Oshō of Enjō-zan Ryūsen-ji. Annotations identify the priest as Kenryū Sōho (n.d.) of Enjō-zan Ryūsen-ji in eastern Suruga province.

Three years ago, he invited me . . . unable to accept his kind offer. This is apparently the period of intense zazen practice described in Hakuin’s *Chronological Biography* (age 41).

185. EXPLANATION OF LAYMAN ITTSUI KOKAN’S NAME

Layman Ittsui Kokan is the Dharma name of Akiyama Michitomo (1682–1750), the son of Akiyama Sōzaemon, who appeared in the previous piece (#184). A student of Hakuin like his father, Michitomo received this lay Buddhist name in 1743. Four years earlier, in the autumn of 1739, Hakuin had conducted a month-long series of talks at Michitomo’s residence. Over thirty people came to hear him deliver Zen comments on Ta-hui’s Letters, a collection of letters the Sung priest Ta-hui sent his lay students, which Hakuin held in high regard (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 204).

Ittsui, “One Mallet,” a wooden hammer used in Zen temples, has an octagonal head that is struck against a wooden block to announce the start of ceremonies and other proceedings. The word Ittsui might also be translated “one blow from the mallet,” as in the Zen phrase ittsui sentō, “one blow from the mallet, a thousand hits.” Kokan, “Old Mirror,” is a metaphor for the Zen mind or intrinsic

Buddha-nature. Michitomo's name could thus be rendered as "One blow of the mallet shatters the old mirror."

IN YASUHISA VILLAGE of northern Izu province lives a country gentleman named Akiyama Yohei Michitomo. He has always greatly valued the Buddha-mind school [Zen] and placed his trust in its teachings. He has been visiting my small temple for almost thirty years now. He is deeply devoted to Zen practice, and though he has not fully penetrated its secrets, his efforts never slacken. A gentleman of the old school, Michitomo has a quiet and lofty manner. Even though he may be buffeted by the eight winds or the seven misfortunes, he is never led astray by perverse thoughts of good fortune, reputation, or prestige. This pure and lofty nature does not change even amid the privileged circumstances of his everyday life.

On a trip he made with me to Rinzai-ji in southern Izu to attend a ninety-day meeting, he maintained this same quiet, lofty bearing throughout the entire retreat. Later, when he accompanied me to the Keirin-ji training hall in Ujō, Kai province for another three-month retreat, he shared the same adversities as the monks in training, but his quiet and disinterested demeanor never wavered. It was as though he was wholly indifferent to thoughts of profit and loss, pro and con. Not even veteran Rinzai monks, men who have embraced the Way and devoted themselves to zazen and koan practice for twenty or thirty years, could measure up to him.

In spring of this year, the third of the Kampo era [1743], he came and requested a lay Buddhist name. I gave him the sobriquet Ittsui Kokan. He asked me what it meant, so I explained it to him step by step.

"All sentient beings born in one of the four ways [from the womb, an egg, moisture, or by metamorphosis] possess an old mirror that reflects unerringly the five colors and always reflects the myriad things in their true suchness. The hills and streams, the entire earth in all its endless shapes and forms, the heavens and hells, the pure and impure lands, the realms of Buddhas and demons, samsara and Nirvana — they are all reflected in the mirror of the Buddha-mind, with nothing, not the finest hair, left out. The old mirror is for that

reason also referred to as the storehouse consciousness. When enlightenment is attained, it is called the Great Mirror Wisdom.

“There are those who devote their entire lives to constantly wiping and polishing this mirror, enduring untold suffering in the three worlds for sixty long kalpas. Such people belong to the path of the Shravakas.

“However, there are those who are able to grasp a mallet and smash the mirror, allowing them to penetrate through its very source, so that they are then free to use the brilliant light of the Great Mirror Wisdom at will, take it up and put it down freely, liberating the vast multitude of sentient beings reflected in the mirror, never slackening or falling back from this even with the passage of endless eons. They are the great Mahayana Bodhisattvas, beings who have reached sudden and complete attainment. You must become one of them. You must not end up a Shravaka!”

“What about the mallet?” asked the Layman.

Placing my palms together in *gasshō*, I said, “A monk asked master Chao-chou, ‘The myriad things return to the one. Where does the one return?’ Chao-chou said, ‘When I was in Ch’ing-chou, I made a robe that weighed seven pounds.’ Those words function with exceeding efficacy to sever the root source of birth and death. They work like a sword whose great blade extends into the heavens and utterly demolishes the ancient den of primal ignorance. They strike with greater force than a five-ton mallet.

“If a student takes up such a mallet and strikes down at the surface of the mirror three thousand times in the morning and eight hundred times in the evening, and then, mustering all his effort, goes on to strike down at it a thousand times, ten thousand times, a million times, never once turning from the work or shrinking from the hardship, he will see results before even a week is out. Samsara and Nirvana, afflicting passions, enlightenment — the mallet smashes them all into oblivion. Empty space disappears completely, the iron mountains crumble, producing a most profound and intense joy in the student. These are all auspicious portents of the rebirth that comes in the wake of this destruction.

“And when rebirth suddenly occurs, Dharma gates beyond number with all their boundless meaning are present in the head of

that mallet. The Bodhisattva proceeds to use it with complete and utter freedom, rambling through countless lands and countries to help the vast multitude of sentient beings. When you reach that point, Layman Ittsui Kokan, even if the Buddhas and patriarchs got together and marshaled all their efforts, there is no way they would be able to touch you. What a splendid moment it will be!”

A faint smile appeared on the Layman’s lips. I thereupon wrote out this explanation to give to him.

.....

The eight winds or the seven misfortunes. The eight winds (*happū*) are causes that incite evil passions — gain, loss, slander, eulogy, praise, ridicule, pain, pleasure. The seven misfortunes (*shichi-ja*) are joy, anger, grief, pleasure, love, hate, desire.

On a trip he made with me to Rinzai-ji. . . . This was a lecture meeting held in 1737 at Rinzai-ji in Izu province on the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 204). The Keirin-ji meeting referred to in the following sentence, also on the *Blue Cliff Record*, was held in 1741, two years before this inscription was written.

BOOK SIX

Letters (*Sho*)

The sixteen letters that make up Book Six are the only collection of Hakuin's shorter, personal letters (as opposed to long, book-length epistles such as Oradegama) to be published until the 20th century.

*Altogether, about ninety of Hakuin's letters have been published, the earliest dating from his mid-twenties when he was still on his pilgrimage around the country. The few that have survived from his forties give hints of the great adversity he faced after agreeing to become head priest of Shōin-ji in the village of Hara. But the majority of his extant letters were composed between his late fifties and mid-seventies, a period when he was purposefully widening the scope of his teaching activity and busily inventing new ways of taking his message outside the Zen community. Most of the earlier letters are brief, businesslike dispatches dealing with temple affairs; the later ones, which are generally longer, are often provoked by some perceived laxity, error, or lack of resolve in one of his students or, in the case of Tōrei and other leading disciples, by a need to prod the student to return and finish his training. About a half dozen letters such as those included in Oradegama are teaching epistles of great length that Hakuin later revised and published as books. Another selection of Hakuin letters is translated in my *Beating the Cloth Drum* (Shambhala, 2012).*

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186. TO THE HEAD PRIEST OF GEKKEI-JI

Hakuin wrote this letter to a priest named Shundō Sekiryū (n.d.), incumbent of Gekkei-ji, a temple in the Ichigaya district of Edo, to order some copies of the Record of Bukkō (Bukkō-roku), the recorded sayings of Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan (1226–86), which had been published by Gekkei-ji in the ninth month of 1726. There are two Instructions to the Assembly (Jishū) dealing with the Bukkō-roku in Poison Blossoms, the earliest one (#11) dating from this same year. This suggests a date of autumn 1726 for this letter.

Bukkō is the Kokushi or National Master title bestowed by the Japanese emperor on Wu-hsueh, an eminent Chinese priest who came to Japan by imperial invitation to serve as head of the Kenchō-ji monastery in Kamakura, and later at the Engaku-ji, constructed for him nearby. Gekkei-ji belonged to the Engaku-ji line.

This letter, which reveals the great respect Hakuin had for Zen master Wu-hsueh, also contributes nicely to our feeling for how he related to contemporary Zen masters. His letter begins, unusually, with a poem.

Trees and fields feathered with white frost,
Mikan trees heavy with bright orange fruit.
Biting cold nips through my thin black robe,
Chestnuts have ripened a rich vibrant purple.

I trust that your teaching banners are raised up high and that new students of superior ability are issuing from your Dharma forge. Although I have still not had the good fortune of making your acquaintance, news of your virtuous activity has long filled my ears and been a source of great pleasure to me.

I recently learned of the remarkable deed you have performed in republishing National Master Bukkō's Zen records. It is surely the result of your deep vow and boundless compassion. Such a truly

great accomplishment will benefit the Zen school for thousands of years. It is like handing a compass to someone on a fogbound sea, or giving a man a flaming torch on a dark night road.

A Zen monk who stopped over here recently on his way to Kyoto was carrying a copy of your new publication. I made him remain here a while so I would have an opportunity to read it through. As I did it seemed as though the vital essence of Nan-yueh's Zen suddenly came to life, as though the genuine traditions of the Eastern Mountain shone radiantly from my desktop. One glance at the National Master's words abruptly resolved doubts that had long lingered in my mind. I felt a deep admiration that swept away years of plaguing obstructions. I was so overcome with joy and appreciation, I found tears rolling down my old cheeks. How could I have known that such a great treasure would suddenly appear like this in our own country, and at a time when the Dharma is in such a perilous and degenerate state!

I respectfully request that two or three copies of the work be sent to me here at Shōin-ji, as quickly as possible. I want to preserve them in my temple to serve as "eye-opening medicine" for future generations of students. I am sending Sochō, one of my young monks, to your temple. He will explain the matter to you in more detail.

Place take good care of yourself as the weather grows colder.
Most humbly and sincerely, [Hakuin]

.....

Nan-yueh's Zen. Nan-yueh Huai-jang (667–744), an heir of Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng, was founder of one the three main lines of Chinese Zen, one of which later evolved into the Lin-chi (Jap. Rinzai) school.

Eastern Mountain (Tung-shan) refers to Wu-tsu Fa-yen's (1024–1104) style of Zen. The Yang-ch'i line of Lin-chi to which Hakuin belonged was a later offshoot of the Nan-yueh branch.

187. TO LAYMAN ISHII

This relatively early letter, from 1734, Hakuin's fiftieth year, is addressed to the physician Ishii Gentoku (1671–1751), his close friend and lay pupil. Fifteen years older than Hakuin, Layman Ishii resided in Hina village, six miles west of the Hara post station. He began practicing at Shōin-ji in 1728, eight years after Hakuin was installed as abbot, and only a little over a year after the decisive enlightenment Hakuin experienced in his forty-second year. A number of miscellaneous pieces Hakuin wrote for or about Layman Ishii, also included in Poison Blossoms, confirm that Ishii was considerably advanced in his study of Zen, a point further substantiated by the difficulty of the teaching Hakuin addresses to him here.

WHILE ON A trip to his native province my attendant Boku stopped by to visit the residence of Layman Ishii. Pleading poor health he threw himself at the Layman's feet, imploring him for help. He was given use of the Layman's private chambers and for ten days devoted himself assiduously to zazen.⁹¹

I happened to overhear a discussion several of Boku's comrades were having about him. "Boku hit on a truly splendid plan," they decided. "He is sure to return with a much deeper attainment." I wasn't so sure. "Boku," I said to myself, "This was not a good idea. When the Layman, being a kind and deeply compassionate man, sees how troubled you are, he is sure to be greatly concerned and want to help you. But whatever help you receive now, and even the deeper attainment that may result, is going to stick to your bones and cling to your hide. It will prevent you from experiencing the intense joy that should accompany the sudden entrance into satori. You will remain a half-assed little stable boy the rest of your life, your wisdom never completely clear and your attainment never alive and vital."⁹² A most regrettable outcome indeed!

Yesterday, the evening of the twelfth, the day when Boku returned to Shōin-ji, I lay in wait for him with a black snake up my sleeve.⁹³

By and by, an unkempt and disheveled Boku entered the room, his face no different from when he had left.

“What words did the Layman have for you?” I asked.

“He didn’t utter a single word to help me,” Boku said with tears raining down his face.

Scarcely able to keep from laughing aloud, I cried out, “How wonderful! If you had come back here with even a grain of Zen understanding, I would have snatched your robe and begging bowl from you, given you thirty blows with my staff, and chased you out the gate. You had a very close shave, Boku! You might have ended up doing nothing but getting the Layman entangled in your personal troubles. I had no idea he would be so rigorous in dealing with you!

“Boku, the great and essential matter is like eating a peach. You must not be hasty. You must wait patiently until the fruit is fully ripe. Then, when the soft, pink fruit is cut in two, the kernel falls out of itself, and the flesh can be enjoyed with all its marvelous fragrance and with all its delicious flavor. How marvelously edifying it is to watch this happen!

“Observe the way a mother hen warms an egg. When she has warmed the egg sufficiently so that conditions are right for hatching, instead of pecking the egg, she waits. She holds back until she hears faint pecking sounds inside the shell. She gives the shell a single peck, and the baby chick emerges. It is truly heartwarming to watch her forthrightly attending to this task, cocking her head this way and that, up and down, as she restrains herself from pecking. Yet if she did not hold back, if she pecked the shell too early, she would spoil everything, producing a sight too terrible to behold.

“Or consider the case of a pregnant woman. Although her time has not yet arrived, she and her husband prepare with every possible precaution, securing in advance the services of a physician. Now, a physician of only middling talents, one who is eager to achieve results and hasten the delivery, may decide to force the birth prematurely or attempt a perilous breech delivery, gravely imperiling the lives of both mother and child.

“Or take the example of a man who is stricken with an undulant fever, suffering periodic fits of convulsive shivers. If a physician attempts to cure the man quickly, after he has suffered only one or

two paroxysms, the infection will remain in his system only to recur later in more virulent form. Hence the saying, 'A mediocre physician neither helps nor harms. A poor physician harms without helping. It is wisest not to send for either.'

"One day when I was in Mino province, I observed a cicada casting off its skin in the shade. It managed to get its head free, and then its hands and feet emerged one after the other. But its left wing remained inside, adhering to the old skin. It didn't look as though the cicada would ever get that wing unstuck. Watching it struggling to free itself, I was moved by feelings of pity to assist it with my fingernail. 'Excellent,' I thought, 'now you are free to go your way.' But the wing I had touched remained shut and would not open. The cicada was never able to fly the way it should have. Watching it, I felt ashamed of myself, regretting deeply what I had done.

"When you consider it, present-day Zen teachers act in much the same way in guiding their students. I've seen and heard how they take young people of exceptional talent — those destined to become the very pillars and ridgepoles of our school — and with extremely ill-advised and inopportune methods end up turning them into something half-baked and unachieved. This is the primary cause for the decline of our Zen school, the reason the Zen groves are withering away.

"Now and again you come across superior seekers of genuine ability assiduously devoting themselves to private application and hidden practice. As they continue steadily forward, accumulating merit, their efforts achieve a purity that infuses them with strength. Their emotions gradually cease to arise altogether. They then arrive at an impasse and are unable to move forward despite the most strenuous application. It is as if they are trapped inside an invincible enclosure of adamant strength, or sitting inside a bottle of purest crystal, unable to advance, unable to retreat — and they become blockheads, utter dunces.

"Suddenly the moment arrives when they become one with their questing mind. Koan and mind both disappear. Breathing itself seems to cease. This, although they are not aware of it, is the moment when the tortoise shell cracks and fissures, when the

phoenix emerges from its egg. They are experiencing the auspicious signs that appear when a person is about to attain the Buddha Way.

“What a shame if at such a critical moment someone who is supposed to be their good friend and teacher succumbs to tender emotions, indulges in grandmotherly kindness, and serves them up various intellectual explanations that knock them back into the familiar old nest of conceptual understanding, dragging them down into the cavernous old den of darkness and delusion. But that is not the end of the damage the teacher does them. He produces a phony winter-melon seal,⁹⁴ impresses it on a piece of paper, and awards it to one or more of them. ‘You are like this,’ he says, ‘I am like this, too. Preserve and protect it with care.’ The trouble is, the roots binding the students to life still have not been severed. The gardens of the patriarchs still lie beyond their farthest horizons. Any teacher who does this, though he may love his student dearly, causes him irreparable harm. The students for their part start dancing around, rolling their heads this way and that way, wagging their tails joyfully, eagerly lapping up the fox slobber being doled out to them completely unaware it is a virulent poison.⁹⁵ They squander their entire lives stuck in a half-drunken, half-sober state of delusion. Not even the hand of a Buddha can cure them.

“A foolish man long ago heard that if you put a leech out under the sun in very hot weather, it will transform into a dragonfly and soar into the sky. He decided to put it to the test. So one summer day he waded into a marsh and poked around until he found a particularly large old leech. Throwing it down on the hot ground, he watched attentively as the worm squirmed and writhed in agony. Suddenly, it flipped over on its back, split in two, and transformed into an ugly creature with a hundred legs like a centipede. It scowled menacingly at him, snapping its fangs in anger. Ahh! This creature that was supposed to soar freely through the sky had turned into a repulsive worm that could do nothing but crawl miserably along the ground. A truly terrifying turn of events!

“There was a servant in ancient China who worked in the kitchen of a temple in the far western regions of the country. The temple was filled with monks engaged in the rigors of training. The servant devoted all the time he wasn’t engaged in his main job preparing

meals for the brotherhood in the practice of zazen. One day he suddenly entered a profound samadhi. When he showed no signs of coming out of it, the head priest of the temple directed the senior monk in charge of the training hall to keep an eye on him. When the servant finally got up from his zazen cushion three days later, he had penetrated the heart and marrow of the Dharma. He was now able to clearly see the karma of his previous lives. He went to the head priest and began setting forth the realization he had attained, but before he had finished, the head priest suddenly put his hands over his ears. 'Stop! Stop!' he said. 'The rest is something I have yet to experience. If you explain it to me, I'm afraid it might obstruct my own entrance into enlightenment.'

"How invaluable that story is! There was nothing halfhearted about the ancients' practice of the Way. It was difficult in the extreme. One of them said, 'It is like passing through a region infested with venomous insects [*ku*].⁹⁶ You must pass through with all possible haste, not stopping to accept even a drop of water from someone you meet.' The great master Yun-men said, 'While you are engaged in practice, if anyone comes up and tries to teach you Zen, I want you to take a dipper of warm shit and throw it over him.'

"That's why I say to outstanding students who are engaged in negotiating the hidden depths, 'I would rather you sink into the sea of birth and death and remain there until the skin on your body is covered with festering sores, than for you ever to go to others for your strength.'"

Before I had even finished speaking, Boku performed two prostrations. "Master," he said, "thank you for the great compassion you have shown in giving me this teaching. Although I cannot hope to comprehend it all, and do not doubt it in the least, I do have a few questions.

"In the past when teachers dealt with their students, there was no room for any hesitation — it was as if they held a naked sword blade raised over the students' heads. They were like the giant golden-winged Garuda, monarch of the feathered kingdom, cleaving through the whale-backed seas and deftly seizing live dragons swimming beneath the waves. Zen monks are like vigorous red-finned carp when the peach trees are in blossom, butting their way upstream

straight into the tremendous current, braving the perilous forked lightning of the Dragon Gate.⁹⁷ At the utterance of a single word, they enter realization. At the sound of a single shout, they attain cessation. If those who call themselves teachers all behave like dead otters and those who call themselves their followers all behave like dumb sheep,⁹⁸ the halls of Zen everywhere in the land, the training grounds where Buddhas are singled out, will all be rendered utterly useless — no better than coffins for the dead — and the assertions of the perverse silent illumination Zen teachers with their ‘box-shrub Zen’ will carry the day.⁹⁹ If that happens, the supreme teaching of the Buddha-mind school will plunge to earth forever, and its true and rigorous traditions will disappear forever from the ancestral groves.”

I gave a sigh, and said, “Boku, come over here. I want you to listen carefully to what I say. In studying Zen, when you penetrate to the source it is necessary to pierce completely through. It is the same with all the workings of heaven and earth. The wonderful transformation of springtime does not take place without the winter’s severity — the intense cold that makes the hundred plants and grasses fade and shrivel, the bamboo split and shatter. But with the advent of spring, the ten thousand buds and blossoms emerge, rivaling one another with their charms and beauties. Hence the saying, ‘to make something grow and develop, you must cut it back. To make something flourish, you must check its progress.’”

“Long ago, when the First Patriarch Bodhidharma was living in seclusion doing zazen at Shao-shih, he had a student named Hui-k’o. Hui-k’o possessed outstanding talent and learning, and he had a dauntless, heroic spirit as well. For three years he continued to refine his attainment while serving as Bodhidharma’s attendant; untold hardship and suffering were his constant companions.

“Today’s students engage in practice clothed in warm garments, they get plenty to eat, and they are as soft and weak as the eldest sons of a wealthy family. Would any of them be able to stand stalwart and resolute in a courtyard buried up to his waist in snow like a stack of firewood on a bitter cold night like Hui-k’o did?¹⁰⁰ Unless you are made of stone or metal, or have the legs of a wooden statue, suffering of this intensity is beyond enduring. The marrow-chilling cold of the Northern Wei winter constantly penetrated the thin cotton

robe he wore. He stood resolutely and silently through that adversity until dawn, never relaxing his efforts for a second, nor weeping a single tear. Bodhidharma offered him not the slightest help whatsoever. Finally, Hui-k'o took a knife and cut off his left arm. Hsi-sou was perfectly justified in holding Bodhidharma up as a model for Zen monks throughout the world.

“When the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng raised the Dharma standard at Ts'ao-ch'i, the priest Nan-yueh came to study with him. Hui-neng asked, ‘What is this that thus comes?’ Nan-yueh just stood in a daze, unable to respond. Hui-neng did not utter a single word to relieve his confusion, and it was not until Nan-yueh had practiced arduously for eight more years that the patriarch finally offered him a turning word.¹⁰¹ Ahh! This good teacher, who had accumulated great merit over eighty rebirths,¹⁰² now, when the time was ripe, employed his marvelous means with incomparable skill to bring about Nan-yueh's liberation. Why didn't he simply lead Nan-yueh to the immense joy of liberation by employing those means at the start? You do not get the incandescent fire to forge fine Pin-chou steel by stoking the furnace with kindling.¹⁰³ The oranges of Chiang-nan do not assume their delicious sweet flavor until they have passed through bitter frosts. And wouldn't any honest farmer be ashamed to partake of green unripened grain for his meals?

“Students who have not yet penetrated to the source should not be troubled if their entrance into enlightenment is slow in coming, but they *should* worry if their practice is not pure and genuine. Students who have already penetrated to attainment should not be troubled if people fail to revere them, but they *should* be concerned about the difficulty of achieving practice that is pure and genuine.

“Long ago, when Lin-chi spent three years practicing at Huang-po's temple, he received these words of sanction from Huang-po's disciple Ch'en Tsun-su: ‘Someone whose practice is this pure and genuine is certain to become a great shade tree [for all the beings of the world].’¹⁰⁴ Lin-chi by that time had extensive knowledge of the sutras and commentaries, and he had exhaustively investigated the precepts as well. Today's students lack this knowledge of the scriptures or the precepts. Because of that, they confound their own feelings, perceptions, and understanding for absolute truth, then they

go around shooting off their mouths and peddling their half-baked ideas to others, and end up making a total waste of their lives.

“Observe the manner in which a clear-eyed teacher like Mu-chou [Ch'en Tsun-su] was able unequivocally to affirm Lin-chi: ‘Your practice is pure and genuine!’ That purity and that genuineness of practice are extremely difficult to attain, even if a student devotes an entire lifetime to Zen training. However, once you attain it, you are without doubt a tiger with wings. Boku, there is no reason you cannot become a man of such capacity.

“Yet Lin-chi went three times to ask Huang-po about the cardinal meaning of the Buddha Dharma. Each time he received painful blows from Huang-po's stick and withdrew in tears. But he was still not liberated, so he set out to see master Ta-yu. Huang-po gave him not the least bit of help. After experiencing a significant understanding at Ta-yu's, Lin-chi returned to Huang-po and reported what Ta-yu had told him. Huang-po said, ‘If that blabbermouth dares show his face around here, I'll give him thirty blows with this stick of mine!’¹⁰⁵

“An authentic Zen teacher such as Huang-po is like a solitary peak towering forbiddingly into the sky. Today, you could comb the entire earth and not come up with a single person like him.

“The great teacher Hsuan-sha practiced arduously at Hsueh-feng's mountain hermitage, forgetting both food and sleep, but was unable to achieve a breakthrough of any kind. He left the temple with tears in his eyes, yet Hsueh-feng did not utter a single word to help him. At this point, you can be sure that one of today's teachers would have burdened him with a copious load of warm shit. As it turned out, when he reached the foot of the mountain, Hsuan-sha tripped and fell, and experienced a sudden realization.¹⁰⁶

“It is like a melon grower harvesting his crop. He waits until their fragrance and flavor are at their peak before he goes into the melon patch. When he does, he has no need to carry a knife with him, only a bamboo basket. As the melons are fully ripe, the roots and tendrils and stems don't have to be cut; they have fallen away of themselves, leaving the fruit lying there on the ground. All he has to do is to go and pick them up.

“Don’t you see? Hsuan-sha’s enlightenment had fully matured just like those melons. It was a stinking fruit whose smell has wafted down through the centuries and taken the lives of countless pilgrims who partook of it. Yet if Hsuan-sha’s teacher Hsueh-feng had taken out his knife at the critical moment, stepped in and cut the stem, Hsuan-sha’s teaching would never have been transmitted to future generations.

“Hsiang-yen trained at his teacher Kuei-shan’s temple for many years without attaining even a glimpse of realization. Making up his mind to leave, he went to inform Kuei-shan with tears in his eyes. Kuei-shan was completely unsympathetic. He didn’t even look at him. After traveling around, Hsiang-yen took up residence in a solitary hermitage. One day as he was sweeping, his broom threw a fragment of tile against a bamboo trunk. When the sound it made reached his ears, all the barriers suddenly fell away. He bathed and put on a clean robe. Facing in the direction of Kuei-shan’s temple, he offered some incense, performed three prostrations, and said, ‘It is not my late teacher’s religious virtue that I revere. I revere the fact that he never once explained everything to me.’¹⁰⁷

“The following story is told about a monk who visited a Zen teacher and begged insistently for the principles of Zen. The teacher never paid him the least attention. The monk waited for his chance, then one day suddenly grabbed the master and hurried him to a secluded spot at the rear of the temple. He seated the master on the ground, spread out his prostration cloth before him, and performed three bows. ‘I appeal to your great mercy and compassion,’ he said. ‘Please teach me the principles of Zen. Guide me to sudden enlightenment.’ The master ignored him. Enraged, the monk flew into a fit of passion, sprang to his feet, and — eyes red with anger — broke off a large branch from a nearby tree. Brandishing it, he stood in front of the master glaring scornfully at him. ‘Priest!’ he cried. ‘If you don’t tell me what you know, I am going to club you to death, cast your body down the cliff, and leave this place for good.’ ‘If you want to beat me to death, go ahead,’ replied the master. ‘I’m not going to teach you any Zen.’ What a pity. This monk was obviously gifted with special capacity and spiritual strength and had what it takes to penetrate the truth and perish into the great death. But see

what great caution and infinite care these ancient teachers exercised when leading students to self-awakening.

“Zen master Tao-wu responded to a monk with the words, ‘I won’t say living. I won’t say dead.’ ‘Why is that?’ asked the monk. ‘I won’t say. I won’t say,’ replied Tao-wu.¹⁰⁸ Tao-wu did not refuse to speak because he was reluctant to teach the monk. He was trying to protect him. If he had tried to teach him something, it would only have harmed him. In fact, there is no way a teacher can teach the Buddha-patriarchs’ marvelous, untransmittable Dharma to others. If a priest tells you he has liberated students by teaching them the Dharma, you can be sure of two things: he has not penetrated the source, and he is not a genuine Zen teacher. But for you, what is essential is not whether he is genuine or not. What is essential is to pledge that you will never have anything to do with false teachers like him. The Zen you practice must be true and authentic, and it must be practiced under a true and authentic teacher. Would you call Zen sages such as Bodhidharma, Hui-neng, Huang-po, Hsueh-feng, and Tao-wu dead otters? Would you characterize venerable teachers such as Hui-k’o, Nan-yueh, Lin-chi, Hsuan-sha, and Hsiang-yen as dumb sheep?

“The exchanges that took place when teachers and students faced each other in the past did not always dispense with words, and when the students asked questions, they were generally for the purpose of seeking instruction, receiving appraisal of their own views, probing the master’s insight, resolving a troubling problem, or making a personal assertion.¹⁰⁹ They were nothing like the half-baked encounters carried out by pseudo-Zennists of today, with teachers who can’t tell the difference between fine and coarse, between a rock and a precious jade. Plunging right in from the outset, doing whatever they can to free up the cicada’s wings, they spew out great quantities of the worst imaginable filth, leaving their students’ faces lacquered over with the stuff.”¹¹⁰

Boku said: “But there are students who reach satori by studying the words and teachings of the Buddha-patriarchs, and there are students who achieve great and final cessation by following a teacher’s advice. By comparing them to inhabitants of Uttarakuru, or to people addicted to worldly wisdom and skillful words, to lump

them with the dried buds and dead seeds of the Two Vehicles — wouldn't that mean they have no hope of ever attaining the Buddha's Dharma?¹¹¹ Surely the Dharma should have some expedient means that could be used to help them?"

I sighed and replied, "The ocean of true reality is boundless and profoundly deep. The Buddha Way is immeasurably vast. Some people do nothing but seek fame and success until their dying day, never showing the slightest interest in the path of Zen or the Buddha's Dharma. Others become engrossed in literary pursuits or become addicted to saké or women, oblivious to the hellfires flaming up under their very noses. Some, relying on insignificant bits of knowledge they pick up, shamelessly deny the law of cause and effect, woefully lacking any true grasp of its working. Some find ways to attract large numbers of people to their temples, believing to the end of their days that this is proof of a successful teaching career. Now it is true that compared to fellows of that stamp, students who reach satori thanks to teachings they hear, or arrive at cessation thanks to advice they receive from a teacher, are indeed wonderful occurrences — as rare as lotus flowers blossoming amid raging fire. The attainment they achieve is due to large stores of karmic merit accumulated in previous existences. It is not easy to achieve, it is not insignificant, and it must be valued and deeply respected.

"But for all that, there is still no getting around the fact that genuine practitioners of Zen must once achieve *kenshō* [see their true nature], and then bring the one great matter of their life to final cessation. Satori and cessation are one thing, they are not two. But differences inevitably appear in the profundity of the satori and the strength or power that results from it. Let me try to describe this to you by explaining how progress toward final cessation, and lack of progress as well, appears in four types of students following their initial *kenshō*.

"First you have the students who engage in genuine Zen practice for a long time until wisdom and principles are gradually exhausted, emotions and views eliminated, techniques and verbal resources all used up. They wither into a perfect and unflappable serenity, their bodies and minds completely dispassionate. Suddenly, satori comes and they are liberated, like the phoenix soaring up from its golden

cage, like the crane breaking free of its pen. They release their hands from the cliffside, die the great death, and are reborn into life anew. These are students who have bored through, who have penetrated all forms and all sounds and can see their self-nature as clearly as if it is in the palm of their hand. After painstakingly working their way through into the final barrier koans set up by the patriarchal teachers, their minds, in one single vigorous burst of effort, abruptly transform. Such students possess deep discernment and an innate ability that enables them to achieve liberation at a single blow from the iron hammer. They are foremost among all the outstanding seeds and buds of our school. The only thing they still lack is the personal confirmation of a genuine teacher.

“Next there are students who move forward in their koan practice until they attain a strength that is almost mature. Thanks to a word or phrase of the Buddha-patriarchs or perhaps some advice from a good friend, they suddenly break through into satori. Let us call them *initial penetrators*. Their penetration is complete in some areas, but not in others. They have a sure grasp of Dharma utterances of the *hosshin* type, words such as ‘White waves rise on the mountain peaks. Red dust dances at the bottom of the well.’¹¹² But when they come up against the important matter of the more advanced koans, they are as if deaf and dumb. As long as they are sitting quietly doing zazen, the principle of true reality is perfectly clear and the true form of things immediately manifested, but the minute they return into the everyday world and begin dealing with some troublesome matter or other, this serenity instantly disappears. It withers away amid the constant disparity that exists between their meditative and quotidian life, their inner wisdom and daily activity.

“There are also students who spend much time and effort tenaciously engaging in hidden practice and secret activity until, one day, owing to the guidance of a teacher, they finally are able to reach a state of firm belief. We can call them the *believers*. They understand without any doubt whatsoever about principles such as the self-nature being apart from birth and death and the true body transcending past and present. But the great and essential matter of the Zen school is beyond them. They can’t even see it dimly in their

dreams. They are not only powerless to save others, they are unable to bring their own liberation to completion either.

“It was for students of the second and third type, those who are engaged in the practice that one of the ancients described as gradual practice followed by sudden realization, that the step-by-step process set forth in *the Ten Ox-herding Pictures* and the precious norms laid out in the Five Ranks were devised.¹¹³ If they continue to practice assiduously, it is possible for them to advance into the ranks of those who have bored through to the ultimate source.

“Finally, there are students who come to believe in a teaching they hear, accepting it as true even though it has no more substance than a shadow, and cling tightly to it until the day they die. These are the *self-deceivers*. They have been bamboozled by words, yet continue to follow them scrupulously. They have neither penetrated the wondrous and perfect self-nature that exists within their own minds, nor are they able to understand the true reality of the external world. Following arbitrarily the movements of their own minds and perceptions, confounding them for manifestations of truth, they pick up various plausible notions and spout them to everyone they meet: ‘It’s like a precious mirror that reflects unerringly a Chinese or a foreigner in all his perfections and imperfections when he comes before it; like a mani gem set out on a tray reflecting all shapes and all colors without a single trace remaining behind. Intrinsically, your mind is like that. There is no need to refine it. No need to attain it through practice.’ Having no doubt that they belong to the ranks of the genuine priests who have achieved final cessation, if they hear of someone engaging in secret training and hidden practice, they fall about clutching their bellies in paroxysms of laughter.

“Ahh, they are plausible, all too plausible. The trouble is, they haven’t yet broken free of the indestructible adamantine cage, they are wandering ever deeper into the thicket of thorn, and they have mistaken, and accepted, a thief for their son. It is because of this that the great master Ch’ang-sha said, ‘The reason practicers fail to attain the Way is because they confound the ordinary working of their minds for truth. Although *that* has been the source of birth and death from the beginning of time, the fools insist on calling it their original self.’ They are like Temple Supervisor Tse before he visited

master Fa-yen, like Chen Tien-hsiung before his encounter with Huang-lung.¹¹⁴

“We might compare the ones who have fully penetrated this matter to a prince of royal blood who is heir apparent to the throne. Born of noble stock, with intrinsic nobility that has no need of those benefits others must obtain through practice, he is universally acclaimed in all lands, and brings peace and prosperity to the world. The *initial penetrators*, those who attain realization for the first time, and the *believers*, those who achieve a firm conviction, are like the Chinese Emperors Liu Hsiu and Su Tsung, who strove to establish their authority,¹¹⁵ but being surrounded on all sides by rebellious tribes who refused to bring them tribute, could never afford to neglect thoughts of armament and defense. Those I termed the *self-deceivers* resemble rebels like Wang Mang and An Lu-shan, both of whom proclaimed themselves emperor but were unable to maintain their grip on wealth and power.¹¹⁶

“As the priest Nan-t’ang declared, ‘You must see your self-nature as clearly as if you are looking at it in the palm of your hand, so that each and every thing becomes perfectly and unmistakably your own wondrously profound field of Dharma truth.’¹¹⁷ This is a matter demanding the greatest caution. Because of this, the Zen school declares: ‘Clarifying your self but not the things before your eyes gets you only half, and clarifying the things before your eyes but not your self gets you only half as well. You must know that if you press on, the time will come when it will all be yours.’¹¹⁸ It is also said, ‘If students of the Way want to confirm whether they have truly entered realization, they must examine their mind thoroughly both in the activities of everyday life and amid the tranquility of zazen. Is the mind in the realm of active life different from the way it is during meditation? Do they hesitate or have any trouble in penetrating the various meanings of the words of the Buddha-patriarchs? How could someone who has thoroughly grasped the marrow of the Buddha-patriarchs possibly fail to understand their words and sayings?’¹¹⁹

“Therefore to patricians engaged in boring into the secret depths, I say: ‘Those of you who have already achieved *kenshō* should place yourselves in the hands of a genuine teacher and follow and seek

occasional advice from seasoned monks with deep experience as you continue the day-to-day practice of refining your attainment, concentrating yourself singlemindedly on fully exhausting the secret mysteries and penetrating completely through the bottomless source. Those who have not yet achieved *kenshō* should be grappling with one of those meaningless koans. You might concentrate on Lin-chi's 'person who is standing right here listening to me preach.'¹²⁰ Bore into him at all times, whether you are in a quiet place doing zazen or actively engaged in the activities of everyday life. Grasp the person who is engaged in this nonstop seeking. Where is he? What is the mind that at this very moment seeks him? As you enter ever deeper into these matters, you will reach the point when the mind ceases to function, when words and phrases are exhausted. You should then attack him from the sides, attack him from the front and from the rear, keep gnawing away at him, gnawing, gnawing, until there is no place left to gnaw.

"You may feel as though you are clinging perilously to a steel barrier towering before you, as though you are gagging while trying to down a soup of wood shavings,¹²¹ as though you are grasping about at clouds of green smoke or probing through a sea of red mist. When all your skills have been used up, all your verbal resources and reason utterly exhausted, if you do not falter or attempt to understand and just keep boring steadily inward, you will experience the profound joy of knowing for yourself whether the water is cold or warm. The practice of Zen requires you to just press forward with continuous, unwavering effort. If you only exert yourself every other day, like a person experiencing periodic fits of undulant fever, you will never reach enlightenment, not even with the passage of endless kalpas.

"There is a sea beach only several hundred paces from my native village of Hara. Suppose someone is troubled because he doesn't know the taste of seawater and decides to sample some. He sets out down to the ocean beach, but stops and comes back before he has gone even a hundred steps. He starts out again, this time returning after taking only ten steps. He will never get to know the taste of seawater that way, will he? Yet if he keeps going straight ahead and doesn't turn back, even if he lives far inland in a landlocked province

such as Shinano, Kai, Hida, or Mino, he will eventually reach the ocean. By dipping his finger in the ocean and licking it, he will know instantly the taste of seawater the world over because it has the same taste everywhere, in India, in China, or in the southern or northern seas.

“It is the same for the Dharma patricians who explore the secret depths. Proceeding straight ahead, pushing steadily forward, they bore into their minds with unbroken effort, never slackening or regressing. When the breakthrough suddenly arrives, they penetrate their own nature, the nature of others, the nature of sentient beings, the nature of evil passions and enlightenment, the nature of the Buddha-nature, the nature of the gods, the Bodhisattva-nature, the nature of sentient and non-sentient beings, the hungry-ghost nature, the contentious spirit nature, the beast nature — they are all of them grasped in a single instant of thought. The great matter of their religious quest is completely and utterly resolved, and there is nothing left for them to do. They are freed from birth and death. What a thrilling moment it is!

“But a matter of particularly bowel-wrenching intensity still remains, and that is the very heart of the matter that has been personally transmitted from one Zen patriarch to another and carefully maintained without alteration or diminution to the present day. Even for students who have succeeded in breaking free of the adamantine cage and negotiated their way through the thicket of razor-edged briars, unless they also encounter a genuine teacher along the way and receive his personal instruction, they will be unable to grasp this great matter, even in their dreams. Why? Because from the very beginning, the sage teachers have been like celestial dragons grasping the precious night-shining pearl tightly in their claws, not allowing turtles, sea urchins, fish, or other inhabitants of the deep to observe it. They are like venerable dragons, masters of the clouds and rain, whose essential role is totally beyond the ken of frogs and earthworms and others that inhabit the waters. I speak of Zen masters like Nan-ch’uan, Ch’ang-sha, Huang-po, Su-shan, Tz’u-ming, Shao-shih, Chen-ching, Hsi-keng, Daiō, and Wu-hsueh.”

Now, I don’t want you to think I’ve been spinning out these stories just to impress you and brother Boku with my insights and learning. I

myself heard them thirty years ago from my teacher Shōju Rōjin. He was always lamenting the fading Zen transmission, which he said now hung by a few thin strands. These concerns of his became deeply engrained in my bones and marrow. They have been forever etched in my liver and bowels. But being afraid that if I spoke out I would have trouble making people believe what I said, I have for a long time kept my silence. I have constantly regretted that you, Mr. Ishii, and the two or three other laymen who study here with you were never able to meet master Shōju. For that reason I have taken up my brush and rashly scribbled down all these verbal complications on paper. Having finished, I now find my entire back bathed in a profuse sweat, partly in shame, partly in gratitude. My only request is that after reading this letter, you will pass it on to the Fire God with instructions to consign it to his eternal storehouse. *Hahahah!*

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Supplementary Notes

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 1

It is like passing through a region infested with venomous insects. The following story appears in *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 17: “Asked by a monk, ‘How should a monk comport himself throughout the twenty-four hours?’ Ts’ao-shan replied, ‘As if passing through a stretch of country filled with poisonous insects [*ku*] and not letting a single drop of water pass his lips.’”

Understanding this dialogue requires an explanation of the meanings attached to the word *ku* (“poisonous insects”). In *Tso-chuan (Tso’s Narrative)*, the oldest of the Chinese narrative histories, we read: “Chao-meng asked, ‘What is the meaning of the word *ku*?’ The physician answered, ‘It refers to anything that causes excess, agitation, delusion, or trouble. The ideograph *ku* represents a jar filled with insects. The grub that insinuates its way into grain stock is also a destructive *ku* insect. In the *Book of Changes*, women who seduce men and winds that topple trees in the mountains are also described as *ku*.’”

The word also occurs in the *Record of Hsu-t’ang*: “In the Fu-chien district there was a custom prevalent since the T’ang dynasty of throwing insects [*ku*] such as venomous snakes and lizards and spiders together, waiting until only one of them remained alive, and then mixing its venom and blood into a potion to ward off evil spirits or to cast a magic spell on people to kill them.”

In the Yuan dynasty medical treatise *I-fang tai ch’eng lun*: “It is said that on the fifth day of the fifth month, people living deep in the mountains of Min-kuang put three kinds of poisonous insects into a container and bury it in the ground. They allow the insects to devour each other until only one remains. It is called a *ku*. They extract poison from this insect and when they want to harm someone, they put some of it into their food or drink.”

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 2

If those who call themselves teachers all behave like dead otters. Dead otter (*shi-katsudatsu*) Zen, according to a glossary of Zen terms dating from shortly after Hakuin's time, refers to the quietistic practices of "silent illumination" (*mokushō*) Zen employed in the Sōtō school. The Sung Rinzai master Ta-hui speaks of "bands of miscreant shavepates who have not yet opened their own eyes but who nonetheless strive to lead others into a state of quietistic stagnation in the realm of the blind otters" (*Ta-hui's Letters*; Third Letter to Cheng Shih-lang). In *Kōrōju*, his commentary on *Ta-hui's Letters*, the Tokugawa priest Muchaku Dōchū concludes that the term does not refer to an otter. He suggests instead a red-haired, wolf-like animal: "Although I have been unable to discover precisely what this creature is, it is said to 'play possum,' pretending to be dead, in order to draw people near so it can seize and devour them."

Those who call themselves their followers all behave like dumb sheep. Dumb sheep (*ayōji*) Zen is said to refer to monks who are unable to tell good from bad and lack the sense to correct their mistakes. Hakuin generally applies the term to "do-nothing" Zennists: i.e., those who do not actively seek *kenshō* through koan study.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 3

Box-shrub Zen. The growth of the box tree or shrub (*tsuge no ki*) is so slow that it was said to sometimes cease growing altogether and, during intercalary years, even shrink in size. Ta-hui uses the term to describe students who not only cease making headway in their practice, but by attaching to satori actually backslide (*Ta-hui's General Discourses*, ch. 2).

Carry the day roughly paraphrases the expression "bare the left arm," referring to a gesture that is made to show one has been won over and will support another's cause. "Marquis Chou Po, before setting out to subjugate the Lu family, issued an order to his army, saying, 'Those who are for the Lu family bare their right arms, those for the Liu family bare their left arms!' They all bared their left arms, and he was able to launch an attack and gain the upper hand" (*Records of the Grand Historian*, p. 280).

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 4

Yet Lin-chi went three times to ask Huang-po . . . thirty blows with this stick of mine! In the *Record of Lin-chi* account (also *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 11), the head monk in Huang-po's assembly tells Lin-chi to ask Huang-po about the essential meaning of the Buddha Dharma. He goes to Huang-po three times, each time receiving blows, and decides to leave the temple. The head monk tells Huang-po, "That young monk who's been coming to you [Lin-chi] is a genuine vessel for the Dharma. If he shows up and tells you he's going to leave, please use your skillful means in dealing with him. If he continues to bore his way through, I'm sure that he will become a great tree that will provide cool shade for all the world." Huang-po suggests to Lin-chi that he might visit master Ta-yu. At Ta-yu's temple, Lin-chi explains why he left Huang-po, adding that he wasn't sure whether he was at fault or not. Ta-yu says, "Huang-po spared no effort. He treated you with utmost tenderness and grandmotherly kindness. Why do you talk about fault and no fault?" Lin-chi suddenly experienced a satori, and said, "There's really not much to Huang-po's Dharma." Lin-chi returned to Huang-po and related what had happened at Ta-yu's place. Huang-po said, "I'd like to get hold of that fellow and give him a good dose of my stick!"

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 5

Zen master Tao-wu responded to a monk . . . 'I won't say. I won't say,' replied Tao-wu. This story appeared before, #82, p. 103. "Once Tao-wu Yuan-chih [769–835] and his student Chien-yuan went to pay their respects to a man who had passed away. Chien-yuan rapped on the coffin and said, 'Living or dead?' Tao-wu replied, 'Won't say living. Won't say dead.' 'Why won't you say?' asked Chien-yuan. 'Won't say,' replied Tao-wu. On their way back to the temple, Chien-yuan declared, 'If you don't say it right now, I'm going to hit you.' 'Go ahead and hit me if you want. Won't say living. Won't say dead,' replied Tao-wu. Chien-yuan struck him. When they were back at the temple, Tao-wu told Chien-yuan that if the temple supervisor found out what he had done he would surely give him a beating, and suggested that Chien-yuan go away for a while. Chien-yuan left and,

while studying under Shih-shuang, attained a realization upon hearing Shih-shuang repeat the words, ‘Won’t say. Won’t say’” (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 15; also *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 55).

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 6

Like Temple Supervisor Tse before he visited master Fa-yen. “A monk named Hsuan-tse was supervisor monk in the brotherhood of Zen master Fa-yen Wen-i. The master said, ‘How long have you been here with me?’ ‘It’s been three years now,’ he replied. ‘As a member of the younger generation that is responsible for carrying on the transmission, why haven’t you ever asked me about the Dharma?’ ‘To tell the truth,’ Tse replied, ‘I already entered the Dharma realm of peace and comfort when I was studying with Zen master Ch’ing-feng.’ ‘By what words did you attain that realm?’ Fa-yen asked. Tse replied, ‘I once asked Ch’ing-feng, “What is the self of a Buddhist monk?” He answered, “Ping-ting t’ung-tzu [the fire god] comes for fire.”’ ‘Those are fine words,’ said Fa-yen. ‘But you probably didn’t understand them.’ Tse said, ‘I understand them to mean that since Ping-ting is a fire deity, looking for fire with fire would be like looking for the self with the self.’ ‘Just as I thought,’ said Fa-yen. ‘You didn’t understand. If that were the extent of the Buddha Dharma, the transmission could not have lasted down to the present day.’ Indignant, Hsuan-tse left the monastery, but on his way down the mountain he reflected, ‘The master is known throughout the land as a great teacher. He has over five hundred disciples. There must be some merit to his words.’ Returning penitently to the monastery, he performed his bows before Fa-yen, and asked, ‘What is the self of a Buddhist monk?’ ‘Pin-ting t’ung-tzu comes for fire,’ the master replied. At the words, Hsuan-tse attained great enlightenment” (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 17). The same story, based on the commentary in Case 7 of the *Blue Cliff Record*, is told in the fourth note to #71.

Like Chen Tien-hsiung before his encounter with Huang-lung. Chen Tien-hsiung is Ts’ui-yen K’o-chen (n.d.), a Dharma heir of Tz’u-ming (Shih-shuang Ch’u-yuan, 986–1039); he acquired the nickname “Breast-beater Chen” because on experiencing

enlightenment he began elatedly pummeling his chest. “As a student living on intimate terms with Tz’u-ming, Chen grew convinced of his superior talent. But when Tz’u-ming’s senior disciple Attendant Shan [later Huang-lung Hui-nan, 1002–69] was accompanying Chen on a summer practice retreat, he soon saw that Chen’s attainment was incomplete. One day when they were walking in the mountain, he picked up a pebble, put it on top of a large boulder, and said, ‘If you come up with a good turning word for this, I’ll believe that you truly understand master Tz’u-ming.’ Glancing to his left and right, Chen seemed on the verge of replying, but Shan gave a loud shout. ‘You haven’t even overcome mental discrimination yet! You hesitate and lack resolution! How can you ever hope to grasp Tz’u-ming’s inner meaning?’ Realizing the truth of Shan’s words, Chen was thoroughly ashamed. He immediately returned and resumed his practice with Tz’u-ming, and was finally able to achieve complete enlightenment” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 12).

188. TO THE PRIEST OF EIGAN-JI

This letter dates from 1727, Hakuin’s forty-third year. The recipient cannot be identified, but the temple where he served, Eigan-ji, was the site of a dramatic episode in Hakuin’s religious career. It was at Eigan-ji, located in Takada in Echigo province, that twenty-three-year-old Hakuin achieved his first significant breakthrough into enlightenment. Hakuin’s autobiographies Wild Ivy (pp. 22–26) and The Tale of My Childhood (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 25–6) describe the experience as so powerful that he was sure he had attained the final, decisive awakening he had been seeking. He went to the head priest Santetsu Soran (d. 1727) — the person whose death prompted the present letter — and set forth his understanding, but neither Santetsu nor Buttō, the senior priest at Eigan-ji, would give him the confirmation he was expecting. It was after this practice meeting ended that Hakuin went to neighboring Shinano province

and encountered Shōju Rōjin, the man he came to regard as his true teacher.

Santetsu is referred to in this letter as the priest of Hōsen-ji, a temple in eastern Suruga province near Hakuin's Shōin-ji that Santetsu had established in 1709, while still head priest of Eigan-ji, as a place of retirement. When he had served at Eigan-ji for thirty years, Santetsu turned the temple over to his Dharma heir Buttō and retired to Hōsen-ji, where he apparently continued to teach as well. When Buttō died in 1726, Santetsu was obliged to return to Eigan-ji, which had in the meantime been moved to Utsunomiya in Shimofusa province (present Tochigi prefecture), where he passed away several years later. It was thought until recently that the Chinese characters for Santetsu's name were pronounced Shōtetsu, however furigana (syllabic guidance to pronunciation of kanji characters) printed alongside the name in one of Hakuin's printed works shows the correct reading to be Santetsu.

The praise Hakuin lavishes on Santetsu in this letter, written in his forties, is in marked contrast to the harsh portrait he paints of him in the autobiographies he wrote in the final decade of his life (see the portrayal of Shōtetsu in Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 25–7 and pp. 165–6).

WHEN SHAKAMUNI WAS born an auspicious ray of light appeared which was still seen in faraway China a thousand years later. It is said that the rainbow of white light that appeared when the World-Honored One entered Nirvana also reached to China. When First Patriarch Bodhidharma left one of his boots behind in Northern Wei and set out to return to India, the lapels of Emperor Liang's robes were soaked with tears.

When word arrived that the great priest of Hōsen-ji [Santetsu] had passed away at Eigan-ji in Utsunomiya, priests and monks from dozens of temples in western Suruga province gathered at Hōsen-ji to express their deep sadness and regret. The virtue of the man was such that people felt the same kind of grief that was experienced at the deaths of Shakamuni Buddha and Bodhidharma.

When Santetsu left Hōsen-ji and returned to Eigan-ji in Utsunomiya, the temple where he had originally resided, we in

Suruga waited for him to return to Hōsen-ji for three years. How could we have known that this shattering news would come instead? A great ridgepole has suddenly broken in the house of Zen. A towering Dharma shade tree has fallen. The leaves and moss in Eigan-ji's gardens have been drained of all their color. Zen groves throughout the country wither and fade. Santetsu possessed a lofty Zen spirit that had been refined to the utmost purity. He possessed a mind with a trenchancy that could cut through steel. Losing such a teacher has saddened us all deeply.

Utsunomiya is such a great distance from here, we were not able to go to Eigan-ji and take part in the sutra recitations in his memory. We could do no more than face toward the temple and express our deep sorrow gazing up into the clouds and mist. Santetsu Oshō was a great Dharma vessel, someone whose eye had fully opened. After teaching at Eigan-ji for ten years, he produced a genuine Dharma heir [Buttō], and thanks to that he was able to retire to Hōsen-ji here in Suruga. Zen monks from all over the province hastened there to study under him, and many lay parishioners became his devout followers as well.

We are now entering the eleventh month. It becomes colder by the day. We hope that you will all take good care of yourselves.

189. REPLY TO PRIEST REMPŌ OF KEIRIN-JI

Rempō Chishō (d. 1770), a Dharma heir of Ranshitsu Tōiku (d. 1743; see #68), was the head priest of Keirin-ji in Kai province, a temple Hakuin visited on various occasions to conduct practice meetings. An annotation tells us that Rempō "studied with the master for many years, even after he became head priest at Keirin-ji," making him one of a number of Zen teachers in Suruga and the surrounding provinces of Kai, Tōtōmi, and Izu who continued their post-satori training under Hakuin while training students in their own

temples. According to Tōrei, Rempō applied himself to koan study under Hakuin “with the greatest determination” (Draft Biography).

Since it is known that Rempō succeeded Ranshitsu at Keirin-ji on the latter’s death, this letter can date no earlier than Hakuin’s late fifties, and since he refers to “enjoying the years left” to him, possibly even a decade or so later.

YOUR LETTER DATED the twelfth day of the fourth month reached my hands on the twelfth day of the fifth month. Reading it over several times, I felt as though I were actually here conversing with you. Wonderful. Wonderful.

I was concerned that you may have wondered why I had not answered your letter. It was not due to conscious neglect on my part: the letter you sent took an entire month to reach me.

I am afraid that I didn’t accord you proper hospitality when you visited Shōin-ji at the end of the third month. Now, sitting in my room, the shame I feel makes beads of perspiration trickle down my spine.

I was very glad to hear that you have enjoyed good health since your return. For myself, I am still enjoying the years left to me, living like a simpleton, without care or trouble. I potter about in the temple gardens, checking to see how my eggplants are doing. I am happy to be able to tell you that you need not be concerned about me.

You say you are boring day and night into the impassable koan I gave you, that you are thrusting it right down inside you and attacking it as relentlessly as you would a mortal enemy, not even stopping to eat. Splendid! Bravo! Such is the incomparable joy of the Zen Dharma!

These days in temples throughout the country people are immersing themselves in the dead, stagnant waters of quiescent silent illumination Zen. Making no headway whatever, achieving nothing at all, they just dilly-dally their lives away in that state, half-alive, half-dead. They reject the essential matter of koan work, shoving it aside without a thought, having no more use for it than a merchant would for a mattock or plow. One of their teachers says things like this: “Don’t look at the koan stories; they are a muddy quagmire that will only suck your self-nature under. Don’t look at words or letters; that is a dense thicket filled with entangling vines

that will strangle all the life from your Zen spirit. Your self-nature has no love for words and letters. It has no fondness for koans. It wants simply to retain an easy tranquility, a free and unrestricted state of mind. That is the true and authentic meaning of Zen's direct pointing. The self-nature that is inborn in each and every person is originally perfectly clear, free, and unrestricted. It doesn't mistake a heron for a crow. It doesn't mistake the sky for the earth. It feels fire as hot and water as cold. It works perfectly well, with no lack whatsoever, without recourse to Shakamuni's teachings, without borrowing from Bodhidharma's Zen. Why do you need to go seeking anything beyond that?"¹²²

It certainly sounds plausible, all too plausible. The trouble is, by following such a path you are mistaking the workings of your mind for ultimate truth and turning yourself into a piddling little imp. The patriarchs characterized such a person as the Great King Stuck-in-the-Mud, slumbering away all by himself in the back room of a deserted old shrine.¹²³ The ancients — people who rejected fame and profit and without a thought for their own well-being devoted themselves singlemindedly to pursuing the Way — are as different from such priests as a cloud is from mud.

But at a future date some monk will come along who is so bold and shameless he won't even acknowledge his own teacher. He will grab one of those koans, the kind that resembles a stick of flaming hot steel or a deadly poisonous chestnut burr, and thrust it under this fellow's nose, demanding, "What is the principle of this!" It will be like a dauntless warrior rushing at the priest headlong flourishing an enormous upraised sword intent on cleaving his head in two. At that moment, not a word or phrase will issue from his lips. That priest won't be able to gurgle out a simple sound like "*gu*." There is nowhere he can escape. The slightest hesitation means certain death. This is something he can't swallow down and can't spit out either. He won't have the strength to muster any anger or summon up any tears. He'll just stand there with glazed and goggling eyes, his mouth turned down in a frown. There won't be even a spark of life. He won't be able to lift up his head. All that talk, all the big sermons he'd been making to people in the hinterlands won't do him a bit of good now. He'll be like a sick horse under a heavy load

stumbling down an endless road on a scorching day — his whole body will be bathed in thick, shame-induced sweat. Can someone like that be called a descendant of the Zen patriarchs? And later on, when he is charged with training a group of monks, true heroes who have come to him from all over the land, how can he possibly deal with them and provide the guidance they need?

The reason he finds himself in this predicament is simply because he has mistaken the unmoving stillness of the storehouse consciousness for his original face. If he had genuinely clarified the heart and mind of the Buddha-patriarchs, how could he fear the old koans that transmit their sayings and doings? In the past, a Zen teacher of the true stripe did not trouble students with the ramifications of Buddhist doctrine or with the study of words and phrases. He just gave them a short and venomous koan and had them bore steadily into it. If a student commits himself to authentic Zen practice, throwing his entire being into a koan with singleminded focus that does not allow previous notions, views, or emotions to intrude, and he keeps boring into it — gnawing from the top, gnawing from the bottom, and from all sides — he will reach a point when words and logic are totally exhausted. All at once, everything will suddenly fall away, and he will then grasp the true meaning of “words and letters.” He will strut through the world with the complete and utter freedom of the lion king, responding to whomever he meets with the speed and force of lightning. This is a level of attainment those idle, disembodied spirits of silent illumination Zen, lying open-eyed like zombies in their coffins, could not even glimpse in their dreams.

After hearing only a single utterance, worthy teachers of the past would set out on long and perilous journeys in order to pay respects to the person who spoke it, prostrating themselves and offering incense to the teacher. Students as well thought nothing of traveling a thousand leagues and enduring untold hardships to visit a true teacher. Hence the saying, “The single phrase, ‘Together with it’ caused a Zen monk to walk through a thousand mountains.”¹²⁴ Yet the sightless shavepates of today regard the old koan stories as no more than needless words, unnecessary entanglements.

What runs through those minds of theirs? How sad that the groves of Zen have been reduced to such an unprecedented state of decay. Rempō Oshō, how truly praiseworthy that in the midst of this sorry state of affairs you alone have girded up your spirit, set your jaw, and vowed to penetrate the great matter that furrows such deep creases in Zen monks' brows. Ahh! It is rarer than an Udumbara flower blossoming amid the flames.¹²⁵ Your efforts are certain to be rewarded with marvelous results. Your attainment of the claws and fangs of the Dharma cave is near at hand. This is my earnest, my most earnest prayer.

The great matter is achieved in the same way that a red-finned carp butting its way upstream plunges through the hundred leagues of black-cloud barriers blocking off the Dragon Gate to become a dragon; in the same way that the golden Garuda plummets into the vast sea to seize its dragon prey beneath the waves. It is an altogether formidable undertaking, possible only for someone of genuinely great stature. Even to attempt it is beyond the hopes of a student with only middling talent.

Long ago, Chen of Ts'ui-yen and Supervisor Monk Hsuan-tse¹²⁶ contracted difficult maladies similar to the one we see in today's priests. Finding themselves unable either to die or to stay alive, they visited the great priests Fa-yen and Tz'u-ming. When those teachers pointed out their errors, they were like sick monkeys that had broken free of their golden chains.¹²⁷ Su-shan was another monk who toppled back down into the comfortable old nest he had created for himself, remaining lodged inside it for a long time, rising and falling like a drowning man, until Lan-an's old wisteria vines encircled him, squeezed the life from him, and freed him from all his shackles.¹²⁸

At the beginning of his career, master Kao of Mount Ching, "the Reviler of Heaven," was content to remain within an initial, rudimentary understanding. He later engaged in extremely difficult practice for several years, until one morning a lethal wind sweeping in from the south bowled him over and all the obstructing and impeding spikes and wedges finally vanished from his mind.¹²⁹

At the beginning of Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu's career, when he was a monk in the assembly under Zen master Yun-an, he was given the

story “Nan-ch’uan Kills the Cat”. He offered the vital turning words, “Not even the great earth could hold it.” Yun-an accepted these words with a faint smile. Hsu-t’ang, still not satisfied, spent the next four years working on the story of “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower”. One day, blundering into a poisonous flame that issued from the old Buddha of Ta-ling, he lost both home and country. Now when he reexamined the koan stories he had penetrated before, he found his understanding of them was altogether different.¹³⁰

Hsu-t’ang’s example is an invaluable one. Although he went on to serve as the head priest at ten leading Zen temples, while residing in them he comported himself as though he were dwelling alone in a small grass hut. The least syllable that spilled from his lips was like the deadly milk of the lion king,¹³¹ the tail feathers of the *Chen* bird.

Driving away students with deafening roars, he was like a ferocious tiger eyeing a lame sheep, like a starving falcon drawing a bead on a limping hare. But if he had stopped and remained like a dead man, fastened to the words, “Even the great earth cannot hold it,” none of these remarkable achievements would have been possible. How grateful we should be that our Zen school is possessed of these marvelous prescriptions [koans] that can transform your very bone and marrow. At the same time, there were among the followers of Zen also those who were never able to cure themselves completely until the day they died — two prime examples are master Tun of Lung-ya and master Tsung-i of T’ien-p’ing.¹³²

You wrote in your letter that if I had some shortcut for penetrating koans you would like me to send it to you as quickly as possible. I have no shortcut or other expedient I would consider smearing over your face. If I agreed to your request and doused you with a dipper of such vile ordure, you would revile me mightily for it later on. And, Rempō Oshō, if you possess any such shortcuts yourself, I want you to bundle them right up and toss them into another world.

I look forward with eager anticipation to hearing a *Ka!* [the shout emitted at the moment of enlightenment] issue from you that will rattle the walls of my ramshackle little hermitage. I stand on tiptoe, with pricked ears, waiting for that sound.

All my best wishes to you, and please, for the Dharma's sake, take care of yourself during these noxious rainy months.

Supplementary Notes

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 1

Su-shan was another monk . . . freed him of all his shackles. Su-shan Kuang-jen (837–909) had an initial attainment that gave him supreme self-confidence. On hearing that master Kuei-shan Lan-an had said that being and nonbeing are like a vine clinging to a tree, he immediately set out and visited him. “Where do being and nonbeing go if the tree suddenly falls down and the vine withers?” he asked. Without answering, Kuei-shan gave a loud laugh and started for his quarters. Su-shan said, “I sold my belongings and traveled over three thousand leagues to ask you this question. Won’t you at least give me an answer?” Kuei-shan told his attendant to give Su-shan two hundred coins. “Later on,” he told Su-shan, “you’ll meet a one-eyed dragon who will rid you of your problem.” Later, when Su-shan heard about a teacher named Te-ch’ien who was blind in one eye, he immediately set out to visit him. He told Te-ch’ien about his encounter with Kuei-shan, and then asked him, “If the tree falls and the vines wither, where do being and nonbeing go?” “You’re only going to make Kuei-shan laugh even harder,” Te-ch’ien said. At those words, Su-shan attained great enlightenment. “Kuei-shan’s laugh had a dagger in it all along,” he said, regretting his mistake, and performed a bow in the direction of Kuei-shan’s temple far away (abridged from the account in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 13).

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 2

At the beginning of his career, master Kao . . . vanished from his mind. One day when Ta-hui was studying at Yuan-wu’s temple, Yuan-wu ascended to the teaching seat and said: “A monk asked Yun-men, ‘From whence come all the Buddhas?’ Yun-men said, ‘The eastern mountain walks over the water.’ If it were me, I wouldn’t say

that. If someone asked me, 'From whence come all the Buddhas?' I would say to him, 'A fragrant breeze sweeps in from the south, a refreshing coolness pervades the halls and pavilions.'" When Ta-hui heard those words, he was suddenly severed from before and after. Yuan-wu said, "It's not easy, is it? You've reached the fundamental ground, but unfortunately, though you've succeeded in dying, you're unable to get reborn. Not being able to doubt words and phrases is a grave illness. Remember the saying, 'Release your hands from the edge of the precipice and affirm it in enlightenment. Once you come back to life after you die, I won't be able to deceive you again.' You must believe that such a principle exists." Putting Ta-hui in the hall where prominent lay visitors were lodged, he appointed him an attendant at large. He was allowed to enter Yuan-wu's quarters daily, as freely as the great laymen did. Yuan-wu brought up the phrase, "Being and nonbeing are like a vine clinging to a tree," and asked him about it. As Ta-hui was about to open his mouth to speak, Yuan-wu said, "That's not it! That's not it!" After six months passed, Ta-hui finally decided to ask Yuan-wu about his enlightenment. "I've heard that you asked about that phrase when you were studying with master Wu-tsu. I want to know how Wu-tsu answered your question." Yuan-wu smiled but did not answer. Ta-hui continued to press him. Finally, Yuan-wu reluctantly answered, "I asked him the meaning of 'being and nonbeing are like a vine clinging to a tree.' Wu-tsu said, 'Try to draw it and you'll fail. Try to paint it and you'll fail.' Then I asked him, 'What about when the tree falls and the vine withers?' He said, 'It follows the form.'" At those words, Ta-hui [interrupted Yuan-wu and] said, "I understand." When Yuan-wu gave him some koans to test him, Ta-hui responded to them without any hesitation whatever. "Now you know," said Yuan-wu, "that I was not deceiving you" (adapted from *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 19, section on Ta-hui).

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE 3

At the beginning of Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu's career . . . his understanding of them was altogether different. "I [Hsu-t'ang] chanced to meet some of Yun-an Rōshi's followers as I was passing through Cha-

shang, and they asked me to join their assembly. I was allowed to enter the master's chambers, but was not able to make any comments or capping words. Whenever I tried to say something, he would say, 'Take it easy, just remain mindless and unfettered by words.' In his chambers he invariably brought up the koan 'The Old Sail Not Yet Raised', but the moment I opened my mouth, he would begin reviling me. One day when I was in the attendants' quarters, it occurred to me: 'The Old Sail Not Yet Raised' is not all that difficult to grasp. It refers to what is prior to the formation of the bubble, prior to the arising of thought. The Rōshi is just being arbitrary in his behavior. I'm going to lay a trap and turn the tables on him. Master Yen-t'ou sized a person up just seeing him approach, then launched an attack that left the person wordless. It was like the saying, 'receiving a cow and giving a horse in return' [i.e., returning a great favor with an even greater one]. Why won't this priest allow me to utter even a single word?

"Bearing my understanding in mind, I went to Yun-an's quarters and presented it to him. Before I had finished asking my question, he said, 'Why can't you just keep your mouth shut and find a quiet place to reflect privately on your own self? Spending day after day debating in your mind the pros and cons of the old teachers — where is that going to get you?'

"I left. By the time I returned to my quarters I was feeling extremely uneasy. Then, suddenly, I understood the words in 'The Old Sail Not Yet Raised' about a monk who lives a life of purity not entering Nirvana. I also felt that I had finally penetrated the other, easier koans as well. The next day, at the first beat of the drum announcing *sanzen*, I entered Yun-an's chambers. One glance at me told him that something had changed, so he didn't mention 'The Old Sail Not Yet Raised'. He asked instead about the story of Nan-ch'uan killing the cat. I offered the capping words, 'Even the great earth cannot hold it.' He lowered his head with a faint smile [acknowledging it]. Half a year later, however, my mind was as uneasy and unsettled as before. When people greeted me, I could no longer respond as I previously had. For the next three or four years I worked steadily on 'Su-shan's Memorial Tower'. One day, in a state of no-mind, I suddenly grasped the meaning of the old Buddha

of Ta-ling's emitting a shaft of light, and I entered a state of totally unrestricted freedom. From that time on, I was never deceived by others. When I took up koans I had previously penetrated and examined them again, I realized at once that my understanding was now completely different. I also knew with certainty that the great matter was something that had nothing to do with words or letters" (*Record of Hsu-t'ang*, ch. 4).

190. REPLY TO PRIEST REMPŌ OF KEIRIN-JI

Another letter to Rempō Chishō of Keirin-ji in Kai province (see above, #189). This one can be dated to 1741, Hakuin's fifty-seventh year. It seems that a monk named Zen Zennin (n.d.; Zennin means "Zen man") had brought a set of three scroll paintings that depicted the "Three Buddhas" (san sonbutsu) to Shōin-ji to have Hakuin write inscriptions for them. Later in the Poison Blossoms collection (#229), Hakuin describes these same scrolls in a verse titled "Verses Inscribed over Images of Three Buddhas Drawn Using Three Thousand Buddhas' Sacred Names," in which he says he saw the images for the first time hanging on the wall of the Keirin-ji during a visit he made there in 1741. The images of the three Buddhas depicted on the scrolls were done in the moji-e or "calligraphic picture" style, in which the artist produces images by using words and phrases instead of the usual lines and washes. In this case, the figures of the three Buddhas would have been made up of the sacred names (myōgō) of the three thousand Buddhas of past, present, and future, written out in minute Chinese characters.

ZEN ZENNIN ARRIVED here after a long trip in the sweltering summer heat, bringing your letter and the two gifts you sent, which I accept with deep gratitude. I don't know how to thank you. I am extremely glad to hear that you are healthy and that the situation at your temple

is unchanged. Fortunately, I too am in fine fettle with no physical complaints whatever, so please don't waste time worrying about me.

I have finished inscribing the words you requested on the scrolls. I am afraid it is a very sorry performance indeed. I hummed the verse you sent me on the fifth day of the fifth month over and over, then tried my hand at matching it, using your rhymes, but again the result was so poor I'd rather you not even see it.

I was so moved by the genuine sincerity I felt from your letter that even after reading and rereading it several times, I was reluctant to put it down. When I came to the part about Hsueh-feng investigating the senior monk I was pleasantly surprised. But I was not without some sense of doubt as well. I regret that this is a matter that cannot be expressed adequately in a word or two in a letter. Let us open our minds to each other when we meet this autumn and thrash it out together.

You find a great many so-called Zen teachers these days who will say whatever pops into their heads as they spout irresponsible nonsense about Zen. It is a pernicious custom that began appearing thirty or forty years ago. A man of your natural modesty and sincerity bears those teachers little resemblance.

Nonetheless, the matter in question here is difficult in the extreme. Hsuan-sha, when he heard that Ling-yun had attained satori on seeing some peach blossoms, said, "He hadn't fully penetrated it." Yuan-wu was very slow in acknowledging Fo-teng's satori. These are examples that show how careful and circumspect the ancient teachers were when it came to confirming the great and essential matter.

I will entrust a few additional thoughts to Zen Zennin to pass along to you. For the Dharma's sake, please take good care of yourself in this terrific heat.

Yours, [Hakuin]

.....

Hsueh-feng investigating the senior monk. "Hsueh-feng asked the senior monk, 'The two words you have spoken are both subordinate words. What is the essential word?' The monk couldn't reply"

(*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7). “Rempō had apparently given his own answer in place of the monk” (annotation).

But I was not without some sense of doubt as well. “I am pleased you have been so diligent in your practice but am dubious about your satori” (annotation).

Hsuan-sha, when he heard that Ling-yun . . . “He hadn’t fully penetrated it.” Hsuan-sha said, “It is all fine and good, fine and good, but I guarantee you brother Ling-yun still hadn’t got it all” (the full dialogue is found in the fourth note to #82, p. 104).

Yuan-wu was very slow in acknowledging Fo-teng’s satori. The story is told in the *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 19, section on Fo-teng:

Fo-teng studied with Kuang-chien Ying, but he left without achieving a satori and entered the brotherhood under Zen master Fo-chien to avail himself of that master’s guidance. Still failing to gain entrance into satori, he left the assembly, saying, “Even if I do not break through into satori until the end of my life, I vow that I will never cease trying.”

With that, he began doing zazen throughout the days and nights. He carried out his practice with the diligence he would have shown in mourning his deceased parents. He continued for forty-nine days. Fo-chien addressed the assembly and said [quoting words from the *Dhammapada*]: “Everything in the universe, every one of the myriad phenomena, is imprinted with the seal of the One Dharma.” Hearing them, Fo-teng attained sudden enlightenment. He went to Fo-chien for an interview. Fo-chien said, “A pity to have the one bright pearl picked up by this madman!”

He then proceeded to check Fo-teng’s attainment. “Ling-yun said, ‘From the time I saw those peach blossoms right up until the present, I’ve had not a single doubt.’ What about that ‘having no doubts’?”

Fo-teng replied, “How could I possibly grasp Ling-yun’s nondoubting now, not to mention understand all its

particulars?”

Fo-chien then asked, “Hsuan-sha said, ‘It is all fine and good, fine and good, but I guarantee you brother Ling-yun still hadn’t got it all.’”

Fo-teng said, “You must deeply understand the extent of Hsuan-sha’s grandmotherly kindness.”

Fo-chien approved his understanding. Fo-teng bowed, got up, and presented a verse:

All day gazing at the sky, his face did not look up.
Not until the heavens filled with peach blossoms did
he lift his gaze.
Even if he had a net that encompassed the whole sky,
Once he had burst free of the cage, he should cease.

After exhorting Fo-teng to keep and protect his attainment, Fo-chien that night addressed the assembly and said in a loud voice, “Senior Monk is sleeping easy now.” Yuan-wu, hearing about this, suspected that Fo-teng’s attainment was not yet complete. “I won’t acknowledge it until I’ve investigated him myself,” he said.

Yuan-wu sent someone to bring Fo-teng to his temple. One day Yuan-wu and Fo-teng happened to be walking around the monastery precincts together, and they approached the edge of a pond. Yuan-wu suddenly pushed Fo-teng into the water. “What about when Niu-t’ou had not yet seen the Fourth Patriarch?” he asked.

“When the pond is deep, fish gather,” replied Fo-teng.

“What about after he saw the Patriarch?” asked Yuan-wu.

“When the tree is tall, the breeze is summoned,” said Fo-teng.

“What about the time of seeing and nonseeing?” asked Yuan-wu.

“When you stretch your leg, it contracts and shortens,” replied Fo-teng.

Yuan-wu extended great praise to Fo-teng’s replies.

191. TO ATTENDANT KŌ

In this letter, Hakuin urges a monk named Kō, who had recently served as his personal attendant, to return to Shōin-ji so Hakuin could help him bring his training to a successful conclusion. Attendant Kō is identified in an annotation as Daikyū Ebō (1715–74), who became one of Hakuin’s most important Dharma heirs. For a biographical sketch of Daikyū, see the first note that appears after the letter. This letter may be more or less typical of the correspondence Hakuin kept up with senior students around the country, some of whom had left at the finish of their training, while others had been obliged by circumstances to cut short their training and return to their home temples.

Typically, Hakuin would offer these students words of encouragement and keep them up to date on the latest doings at Shōin-ji. But his primary concern, seen throughout the letters, seems to have been keeping tabs on his students’ progress. He often issued warnings to those who had achieved an initial kenshō, cautioning them to be aware of the dangers of lapsing into the “do-nothing” passivity of “silent illumination Zen,” which would occur if they did not continue to devote themselves to their koan practice.

THE NEW PRIEST at Daikei-ji dropped your two letters off when he passed through here. I read them through several times. I was glad to learn you are in good health and earnestly engaged in your practice. Life here at Shōin-ji is poor and simple as always, but not one of my veteran monks has left for other parts. There are now nearly seventy men in the assembly. Monks Chū, Yaku, Gu, Goku, Tetsu, Sha, Rin and Ro, Chō and Tō, are still here. Mon and Shō are intermittently in attendance, and Ryū and Soku continue to bore steadily onward. Everyone is resolutely bent on refining and polishing their attainment. They endure the bitter cold and other privations without complaint, never slackening their efforts at all.

At the beginning of spring, seven or eight seasoned monks of superior talent arrived. We accepted them into the brotherhood, and everyone gathered together and engaged in “pure talk” about the

Way. I found them to be splendid religious seekers of the greatest ability, sincere and generous, humble and compassionate, possessed of strength, courage, and wisdom. For a doddering old monk like me, it was a joy that would be hard to match. You were the only one missing. When you finish your lectures on *Treatise to Assist the Teachings*, be sure that you bend your steps back here and give your decrepit old teacher some help.

I never could understand why you had to run off alone to some remote province thousands of leagues from here. You never linked up with a single good companion or teacher. Never acquired the slightest spiritual benefit from leaving here whatsoever. You've just wasted your time — your most precious asset — and for what? People tell me, "He shifts from one beautiful spot to another." "He's well settled." "He has plenty of food and good lodgings." "He's looking for a place where he can live out the rest of his days." "He goes and performs devotions at temples and shrines." If that is indeed the extent of your religious aspiration, you truly are a doubtful sort of monk. They also say that what you really want is to spend three, five, maybe seven years ensconced quietly in some solitary retreat where you can devote yourself without interruption to nurturing and maturing your attainment. If that is your intention, it is equally misguided. For someone in your present situation, now is the time to make certain that the seedling is nurtured and brought into full flower. Why would you want to cling mulishly to this "withered sitting" style of Zen, hunkered dubiously down in some hinterland, turning your mind to ash, extinguishing thoughts and feelings, blinding your wisdom, blundering your life away? Time, you will realize, passes by at great speed. You continue inanely frittering away the months and years like a young girl sewing up piles of diapers and buying mortars and pestles and other kitchen equipment before she's even found a husband. What a terrible, shameful waste!

It's said you should acquire friends who are superior to yourself. The outstanding seekers of the past were determined from the moment they took up their traveling staffs and set out on pilgrimage to locate a teacher of superior attainment, someone who would be able to help them bring their training to completion. Once that

teacher was found, they invariably remained with him to receive the benefits of his personal influence.

Today's students are not like that. Lacking the clear eye of wisdom, they linger about, worshipping the dust of some worthless, toothless old bonze. They dawdle aimlessly over here, poke blindly around over there, roaming this way and that, not stopping for a moment. They are ridiculous. In the past, Bodhidharma, a man possessed of profound innate wisdom, stayed with his teacher for forty years. Wise priests like the Ferryman Monk and Yang-ch'i stayed and served Yueh-shan and Tz'u-ming up until the day those teachers passed away. Only then did they leave and engage in solitary retreats by themselves. The same was true of Ma-tsu's eighty Dharma heirs, and of superior priests like the "three Buddhas" — Fo-kuo, Fo-chien, and Fo-yen — who studied under Wu-tsu Fa-yen. They all stayed with their teacher until they had completed their training.

The priest Chueh-fan Hui-hung left his teacher Chen-ching too soon, thinking to himself, "I've made off with Chen-ching's precious green rug." Ta-hui later rebuked him for those words. "Chueh-fan attained something," he wrote, "but there was also something he didn't attain." Tou-shuai Ts'ung-yueh also left Chen-ching too soon, thinking, "I've smashed to dust the secret jewel Chen-ching received from his teacher Huang-lung." Only later, when Senior Monk Ch'ing-su took him to task for those words, did he finally understand that the temple hall also has an inner sanctum. "It must be," he realized, "that I am still unaware that I have contracted an illness from my teachers. Why is that? Because when I try to work for the sake of others, I find I am unable to pour forth everything I have inside me."

Genuine patricians of the secret depths, in order to be able to undertake the teaching of the true Dharma, enter the training hall, mingle with the brotherhood, sit silently at the rear of the hall, work on koans they haven't yet passed, engage in practice sessions with their comrades, and in this way gradually accumulate Dharma assets and mature into great Dharma vessels. They are then able to uplift the great teaching, raise the Dharma torch, and lead others to liberation, sustaining the life-thread of wisdom and requiting the

enormous debt they owe the Buddhas and patriarchs. Such is the ancient, time-honored reality in the groves of Zen.

Think about it. You will have plenty of time later to hide yourself in the boondocks and investigate the matter of your self, but only limited time remains to me in which to sit in these broken-down old chambers laughing and chatting with my monks. I just wait, counting the days and nights off on my fingers, until you return. After I leave on my final pilgrimage, you will be free to go anywhere you want, hide yourself from the world if that is what you desire. It won't be too late then.

On the other hand, if you want to forget your fundamental purpose, turn your back on your old teacher's wishes, and follow in the footsteps of failures like Shan-hsien of Hsueh-tou or Sheng-chiao of Tung-shan — even if you bury yourself in some mountain fastness, deserted moorland, or empty valley, or hide away inside a cave and remain there for three, five, or even ten years refining and maturing your attainment — you will never acquire the ability to teach even a dunce of the poorer sort.

Recently, word reached me that the Kyoto priest who ordained you has been seriously ill for some time now and may die at any moment. This is another matter of great importance that you cannot ignore.

When this letter reaches you, don't waste any more time. Hang up your traveling staff that keeps taking you farther and farther away from here. I look forward with keen anticipation to seeing you again. I have entrusted the rest of what I want to say to the Daikei-ji priest, who will transmit it to you in person.

My best wishes, [Hakuin]

.....

Like Tōrei and a number of Hakuin's other leading students, Attendant Kō (Daikyū Ebō) came to Hakuin after first studying with Kogetsu Zenzai, a highly regarded Rinzai teacher in Hyūga Province on the southern island of Kyushu, who was about ten years older than Hakuin.

According to the entry for Daikyū in *Biographies of Zen Priests of Modern Times*, he was born in Iwakura village north of Kyoto and ordained at the age of five by a priest named Jikuden Den'ō (n.d.) at Shōfuku-an in the neighboring village of Kino. At fifteen he was made an attendant of Zōkai Etan at Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto, and when Zōkai died the following year, Daikyū moved to Hōfuku-ji in Bitchū province (modern-day Okayama Prefecture), an important temple in the Tōfuku-ji line. At twenty-two Daikyū traveled to Hyūga to study with Kogetsu, then set out several years later (exactly when is unclear) on a pilgrimage to eastern Japan that eventually led him to Hakuin at Shōin-ji. (For an anecdote describing Daikyū's first meeting with Hakuin, see *Precious Mirror Cave*, p. xxv).

Although there is a reference in Hakuin's *Chronological Biography* to Daikyū as Hakuin's attendant as early as 1739, according to the account in *Biographies of Zen Priests of Modern Times*, Daikyū first arrived at Shōin-ji in 1742. The latter account also has Daikyū being appointed an attendant, achieving a decisive enlightenment that was confirmed by Hakuin the next year, and then leaving Hakuin not long after that to return to Hōfuku-ji.

Since the letter addresses Daikyū as "Attendant Kō" (a title Hakuin could have used until 1755 when Daikyū was installed as abbot at Hōfuku-ji) and was sent when Daikyū was no longer at Shōin-ji, we may suppose that following confirmation of his satori, Daikyū left the temple to engage in further practice on his own. This was a course Tōrei and Suiō adopted as well, also in the face of Hakuin's opposition. If so, the writing of this letter can be narrowed down to between 1743 (or 1739) when Daikyū was appointed Hakuin's attendant and achieved his enlightenment, and 1747, which is the year that the monk Tō (later Reigen Etō), who is mentioned in the letter as studying at Shōin-ji, is known to have returned to his home temple. Hakuin's comments about Daikyū having been away for a long time seem to suggest a date closer to 1747.

In any event, despite the fears Hakuin expresses in the letter, Daikyū evidently fulfilled his promise and developed into a powerful teacher. In his spiritual autobiography *Wild Ivy* (p. 68), Hakuin describes attending a large lecture meeting that Daikyū conducted at the great Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto. According to the *Annals of Tōfuku-ji*,

eight hundred and thirteen priests and monks, including Tōrei and other students of Hakuin, participated in the meeting. Through assemblies such as this, Daikyū introduced Hakuin-style Zen to the large Gozan monasteries in the capital.

Modern Rinzai historians have ranked Daikyū with Tōrei and Suiō as one of Hakuin's three chief disciples. Suiō, who succeeded Hakuin at Shōin-ji, is reported to have said, "Among the students that came under old Hakuin's hammer, Tōrei alone was able to enter his chambers and make off with all his Dharma assets; and only Daikyū penetrated deeply to the Dharma source" (*Chronological Biography*, Katō Shōshun, p. 32). Daikyū was awarded the posthumous Zen master title Daihi Myōgyō Zenshi.

There are now nearly seventy men in the assembly. . . . The only monks in this list about whom anything significant is known are *Yaku*: Gen'yaku (n.d.); *Chō*: Bunchō (n.d.); *Tō*: Reigen Etō (1721–85); and *Ryū*: Ishin Eryū (1720–69).

Treatise to Assist the Teachings (Fu-chiao pien) is a work by the Rinzai teacher Fo-jih Ch'i-sung (1007–72) that criticizes the anti-Buddhist thought of Han Yu and others and attempts to show the harmony of Confucian and Buddhist teachings.

The priest Chueh-fan Hui-hung left his teacher Chen-ching too soon . . . something he didn't attain." Ta-hui's comments about Chueh-fan Hui-hung (1071–1128) are quoted in the *Record of Hsu-t'ang*, ch. 4: "Chueh-fan had a satori while he was with Chen-ching [K'o-wen], but soon thereafter circumstances arose that obliged him to leave. He left Chen-ching much too soon and because of that, although he did attain something, there was also something he did not attain."

In Zen records, "precious green rug" appears as a metaphor for one's most treasured possession: the Buddha-mind. It is based on a story in the *Annals of the Chin State*: "Thieves entered the study where a scholar was sleeping. As they were about to make off with all his belongings, he called out from a corner of the dark room, 'Burglars, please do not take the green rug. It is an old and precious family heirloom.' The burglars were so startled that they bolted out the door" (*Chin Shu*, ch. 80).

*Tou-shuai Ts'ung-yueh also left Chen-ching too soon . . . everything I have inside me.” Hakuin relates the story of Tou-shuai Ts'ung-yueh (1044–91) in *Talks Introductory to Lectures on the Record of Hsu-t'ang* (*Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 95–6).*

*Failures like Shan-hsien of Hsueh-tou or Sheng-chiao of Tung-shan. Anecdotes about these two priests in *Ta-hui's Arsenal* have them leaving their teachers after an initial realization and failing to complete their training.*

192. TO THE HEAD PRIEST AT ZUIHŌ-JI

Zuihō-ji was a Zen temple in the city of Sendai in northeastern Honshū which was supported by the ruling Date clan. Nothing more is known about its head priest, not even his name, nor about Hakuin's connection with him. The content suggests that Hakuin wrote the letter in the latter part of his life.

AT THE BEGINNING of spring, Seki Zensha of Kai delivered the letter and the other two articles that you most graciously sent me. Reading the letter over, I was very pleased to learn that you are vigorously engaged in your teaching efforts and enjoying good health. I can happily report that I too am in fine fettle. I spend my hours whiling away the time remaining to me chatting and laughing with one or two friends.

Word has reached me here in faraway Suruga province of the Dharma meeting you have planned next spring on *Treatise to Assist the Teachings*. People say that the guardian Naga deities have joined forces and helped you to complete your preparations for the assembly. It will be an achievement of great importance for modern-day Zen to see the Buddha Sun brightly illuminating the northern lands and dispelling all the clouds and mist.

At night no doubt there will be many offering incense and standing staring eastward like stacks of brushwood as they dream of traveling to Sendai. I am only sorry that I will not be able to attend

the meeting and hear your Dharma teaching. A two-week trip all the way to Sendai is a bit too much for me now. I detest having become so fat and useless. I rage at the towering mountains that lie between us.

Fortunately, the newly-named head priest at Daikei-ji, who will be leaving for home shortly to take up his new post, has said that he will visit you next spring. I am going to give him two gold *ryō* for you, to convey in some small measure the joy and admiration that your undertaking has given me. Please accept them. And, for the sake of men and devas alike, please take good care of yourself in the severe winter season that lies ahead.

For now, [Hakuin]

.....

Seki Zensha of Kai. An annotation identifies Seki Zensha (Zensha means “Zen man”) as Daiun Zenkō (n.d.) of Hōseki-ji in Kai province.

The Dharma meeting you have planned next spring on Treatise to Assist the Teachings . . . the Buddha Sun brightly illuminate the northern lands. . . . Hakuin is playing on the name Fo-jih (“Buddha Sun”) in Fo-jih Ch’i-sung, author of *Treatise to Assist the Teachings*.

The newly-named head priest at Daikei-ji. This Daikei-ji priest, also referred to in the letter to Senior Monk Kō (above, #191), cannot be identified.

193. TO THE RETIRED RŌSHI AT RYŌSEN-JI, THANKING HIM FOR A STONE OX

The retired Rōshi Rokuin Etsū (1685–1756) was born the same year as Hakuin and accompanied him on some of his early travels, leading to what was apparently a lifelong friendship. Ryōsen-ji is

located in Shimizu, a village just east of Numazu, about eight miles from Hakuin's temple. Since Rokuin died in 1756, and we may assume that he had retired not too many years before that, we can date Hakuin's letter tentatively to his mid to late sixties.

The ox, white ox, and water buffalo appear frequently in Zen literature as symbols of the ultimate principle, supreme Buddhahood itself. While its appearance in the Ten Ox-herding Pictures is best known (and this letter contains several allusions to that work), the ox appears frequently in various contexts across Zen literature. In Classified Collection of the Zen Forest there are more koans listed for the ox or water buffalo (including some stone oxen) than for any other animal.

A STONE OX has made an appearance at Shōin-ji. A burly water buffalo, pushing himself forward flapping his tail till he's right beneath my nose. He will no longer be wandering off into the winds and mists, entering other people's fields and nibbling their fragrant grasses.

He is a loyal and gentle beast. But given the whip, he won't budge. Call out to him, his head won't turn. His horns are small, still pushing their way upward, but his nostrils proclaim a proudness of spirit that reaches to the very heavens. He is perfectly straight and true, utterly distinct, completely open, and totally unbarred. Even the most experienced herdsman could find nowhere to apply a whip, the most skilled butcher nowhere to insert a knife.

This is a water buffalo that would shock Nan-ch'uan into silence.

It would set Kuei-shan's teeth rattling with fear.

Rumor has it he bolted from one of the temple patrons at the foot of the mountain.

Chinese characters are discernible on his lower left flank. What could they say?

No one's going to put a cord through this fellow's nose.

Every day I'll see his full and perfect rotundity, his majestic, solitary dignity.

As a splendid example of the Zen groves, he could have no equal.

I do not know how to thank you for your kindness in sending such a gift. It transcends all worldly measurements. I find myself dancing joyfully about, humming one of those songs the young village ox herders sing.

I have much more to say, but for now . . . [Hakuin]

.....

But given the whip, he won't budge. Hakuin alludes to words Ch'ang-ch'ing Ta-an addressed to his assembly: "I lived with my teacher Kuei-shan over thirty years, eating his food, passing his excrement — but I didn't study his Zen. All my time was spent looking after an ox. Whenever he left the path and got into the tall grass, I pulled him back. If I caught him trampling people's rice fields, I flogged him with my whip to make him stop. Things continued for a long time like this. It was a pitiful existence for him, always being ordered about. But now he has transformed into the White Ox on the Open Ground [*Lotus Sutra*]. Now, all day long he is utterly unbared beneath my very nose. He doesn't budge an inch, even if I try to chase him off" (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 9).

This is a water buffalo that would shock Nan-ch'uan into silence. It would set Kuei-shan's teeth rattling with fear. Both Nan-ch'uan and Kuei-shan appear in well-known koans on the ox theme. One well-known example: "Chao-chou asked Nan-ch'uan, 'When a person has grasped the Way, where should he go?' 'He should become a water buffalo at the layman's place down the hill,' replied Nan-ch'uan" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4).

194. REPLY TO THE TWO MONKS KIN AND KOKU

In this letter Hakuin declines an invitation by two monks, known only as Kin and Koku, to lecture on the Vimalakirti Sutra. This is one of a

handful of early letters that enable us to gain valuable glimpses into Hakuin's first years as head priest of Shōin-ji (he was installed in 1717). He describes these early years in his other writings as ones of great privation and impoverishment, with the temple "in an incredible state of disrepair." During this time he was still focused on his own religious quest, yet a few students, mostly laypeople, were evidently coming to him for instruction. In autumn of 1726, amid this practice-oriented life, he finally achieved his decisive enlightenment. As he says here that he has been at Shōin-ji for twelve years, the letter must date from his forty-fifth year, 1729, a little over two years after that enlightenment experience.

In view of the frenetic round of teaching Hakuin engaged in later in life, and especially during his sixties and seventies, it is interesting to find him here at forty-three, at the start of his teaching career, reluctant to take on such a lecture assignment. His first such lecture, according to the records, was on the Blue Cliff Record, and took place eight years after this.

MY HUMBLEST APPRECIATION for the letter Brother Rai recently brought me containing your request to conduct a lecture meeting on the *Beyond Comprehension Sutra*, together with a list of the expected participants. I doubt seriously whether you should expect a shuffling jackass to perform like a thoroughbred stallion, or assume that an old crow will begin caroling like a celestial phoenix. I am nevertheless sincerely grateful to you for even remembering this boorish rustic and deeming it worthwhile to make a sincere effort to assist in his upbringing. I have no doubt that you were inspired by a deep aspiration to advance the teaching of the Dharma.

I, alas, am not a superior man, possessing neither wisdom nor virtue. I am sure you have heard about the adversities we've been experiencing here at Shōin-ji. After the first eight years here as head priest, and a great deal of trouble, we finally succeeded in striking a vein of water and restoring the dried-up old well. Now four years and much additional hardship later, we have managed to finish rethatching the leaky roofs. I still do not have a student capable of helping me run the affairs of the temple, and there are no parishioners to turn to for financial help.

More to the point, even after scrutinizing my heart from corner to corner I am unable to come up with a single notion that I could communicate to the participants at such a lecture meeting, much less hold forth on the *Vimalakirti Sutra's* marvelous teaching of nonduality. In view of this, and after repeated and agonizing self-examination, I am afraid I have no choice but to decline the high honor you have sought to bestow upon me. Even as I write this, my eyes are wet with tears and my shame drenches my body in thick sweat. Certainly there is no lack of veteran priests in your own area, any one of whom I am sure would be capable of carrying out the task you propose.

Asking your deepest forgiveness in this matter, I am, yours truly,
[Hakuin]

.....

Beyond Comprehension Sutra. Hakuin refers to the *Vimalakirti Sutra* using the title of one of its central chapters.

195. TO THE PRIEST OF SEITAI-JI FROM MONKS ASSEMBLED FOR A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD* AT HŌTAI-JI, REQUESTING A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *RECORD OF HSU-T'ANG*

The next four letters (#195–98) all date from Hakuin's mid-twenties, probably from the same year, 1710, making them the earliest-known examples of his writing in any form that have survived. He was at this time midway through the fifteen-year pilgrimage around the country that began when he was eighteen. He had achieved an initial satori, which he had succeeded in deepening and clarifying a year later while practicing with Shōju Rōjin in Shinano province. Hakuin

now seems to have been continuing his training more or less on his own, focused on what he would later refer to as the “post-satori” phase of Zen practice.

These four letters lend a new perspective on the later part of Hakuin’s pilgrimage. His portrayals of this period in his autobiographical writings and the Chronological Biography convey the picture of a young man proceeding with his religious search pretty much on his own, even when he may be in the company of other monks. Here we see him as the leader of a troupe of young monks actively engaged in ferreting out teachers who could further their understanding of Zen texts, and brashly attempting to test the teachers’ mettle in the process.

The first two letters, which Hakuin wrote on behalf of his fellow monks, are addressed to the same person, referred to only as the head priest of Seitai-ji in Mino province. He is probably Gugaku Fukaku (d. 1723), who was the priest at Seitai-ji (located in the present city of Mino) at the time and who seems to have had a reputation for the formal lectures (teishō) he delivered on Zen texts. According to Biographies of Zen Priests of Modern Times (section on Jakuji Jōsan), Gugaku had several years earlier conducted meetings at Seitai-ji on the Record of Lin-chi and the Blue Cliff Record.

Hakuin sent the letters from Hōtai-ji (the name is also given as Hōdai-ji) in Suruga province, where he and his group had gone to take part in a lecture meeting. The account in the Chronological Biography for 1710 has: “Hakuin traveled in the spring with monks Daigi, Shōgan, and Rokuin to attend Jōsui’s lectures on the Blue Cliff Record at Hōtai-ji in Sumpu, Suruga province” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 176). A priest named Jōsui Tōiku (1653–1720) was head of Hōtai-ji at the time. The mention of pomegranate blossoms in the first letter suggests a date in late spring or early summer.

In this letter and the next, Hakuin requests lectures on the Record of Hsu-t’ang, a ten-fascicle collection containing the Zen records of the important Chinese Lin-chi teacher Hsu-t’ang Chih-yu (1185–1269). As the teacher of Nampo Jōmyō (Daiō Kokushi), Hsu-t’ang assumed great importance in the Japanese Rinzai school, and especially in the Yang-ch’i line to which Hakuin belonged. The Record of Hsu-t’ang was the text Hakuin chose some thirty years

later when he decided, in his mid-fifties, to conduct his own first full-scale lecture meeting at Shōin-ji. The meeting is described in the introduction to Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin.

THE RECORD OF Hsu-t'ang is an old mirror that distinguishes the true from the false, a precious sword that slashes all Buddha-patriarchs to death. It thrusts directly out at students with devilish, bloodthirsty purpose. It possesses a marvelous illuminative power that never fails to totally reveal a person's vitals. In the vast storehouse of the Dharma King, it is a truly great treasure. *Comments on One Hundred Koans*, contained within the record, are especially esteemed for their power to take veteran monks by the nose and drag them off to forage in the weeds. Their standard of wisdom is solemn and awe-inspiring, their meaning dark and profound. Trying to grasp them is like clawing your way up a wall of solid steel ten thousand feet high. Zen practitioners today find working on them like dangling for something down a thousand-foot well with a short rope. They are never able to moisten their throats and their thirst becomes increasingly unbearable. This priceless gem has thus been left untouched and forgotten, buried away among common stones and pebbles.

Master, we know that you stand shoulder to shoulder with the Buddha-patriarchs, a true model for our Zen school. There is absolutely no reason to hold back, to not use all the power at your command in dealing with young monks like us. You must be aware of the desolation that prevails in present-day Zen. Why have you remained silent? We fervently hope that you will bless us with a lavish Dharma rain, one that will return the school once again to the splendid springtime that was seen in Hsu-t'ang's day, and fix for all time the teaching that emanated from the ten temples where he resided. You should not be concerned about losing your eyebrows. You must not abandon over a hundred young monks who are thirsting for your teaching. The destiny of the Zen school rests in your hands alone. We beg you to sympathize with our plight and send us a favorable reply. If you do, ten of our number will be immediately dispatched to you. They will work under the guidance of your temple supervisor to help prepare for the meeting. Do not be

concerned about a lack of space in your residence hall. If necessary, we will quarter ourselves in cowsheds or find nooks and crannies somewhere in your bathhouse. If you need more hands in the kitchen, we offer our assistance, humble as it is, there as well. We implore you to understand. If this meeting takes place and one lamp transfers its light to ten thousand others, what could be more wonderful than that?

We enter that marvelous time of year when rain brings forth the pomegranate's flaming red blossoms and turns the barley shoots a lovely green. We fervently hope for the Dharma's sake that you will take good care of your health.

With deepest respect and greatest reverence, very sincerely yours, [the monks at Hōtai-ji]

.....

Comments on One Hundred Koans (Hsu-t'ang po-tse sung-ku) is a collection included in the *Record of Hsu-t'ang* that contains Hsu-t'ang's verse comments on one hundred koans.

This priceless gem has thus been left untouched and forgotten is an allusion to the famous jade stone of Pien Ho. The story is told below, in a footnote to #385, p. 580.

You should not be concerned about losing your eyebrows means to not be concerned about descending to the level of using explanations to teach students.

If necessary, we will quarter ourselves . . . in your bathhouse. There is a reference in the *Record of Hsu-t'ang* (ch. 4) to monks causing trouble for farmers by entering their farm buildings to practice zazen.

One lamp transfers its light to ten thousand others is a well-known image from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*.

196. SECOND LETTER TO THE PRIEST OF SEITAI-JI FROM MONKS ASSEMBLED FOR

A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD* AT HÖTAI-JI, REQUESTING A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *RECORD OF HSU-T'ANG*

We may assume that this second letter to the priest of Seitai-ji was written the same year as the previous one, in the summer or perhaps the autumn of 1710. There is no evidence to suggest that Hakuin and his colleagues were able to reverse the decision expressed here by the Seitai-ji priest to reject their proposal.

YOUR LETTER ARRIVED yesterday, the evening of the sixth. We assembled, offered incense, and opened it with reverence. When we were unable to find a single word that suggested you had accepted our request, we were so astonished that our tongues popped out. However, we were able to talk with the messenger who delivered the letter and are extremely glad to learn of your continued good health.

Why has a person of such deep compassion and benevolence spurned the sincere aspirations of a hundred young monks, casting them aside like clods of dirt? In seeking a reason, we decided that it was because a teacher with your severe teaching style did not want to “ride his cloud down to earth” and undertake expedient teachings for a group of such callow young monks. This has made us thirst even more for your teaching.

We also received a letter from a monk in the attendants' quarters of Seitai-ji addressed to Tōya, an attendant at our temple. It says, “Because our teacher is advanced in years, he is unable to agree to your request.” But each and every word in Zen master Hsu-t'ang's records transmits the bone and marrow of successive generations of Zen patriarchs. How can anyone but a great and veteran teacher such as yourself, with a deep and vast store of experience, hope to expound its profound meaning? That is why we addressed our request to you. Why would we seek out an ordinary priest, the kind

you find everywhere you go these days, someone who spends his life pounding and eating green rice?

The Zen school is on the verge of total collapse. If you refuse us because of your age, would that not be the same as a faithful minister ignoring a great and imminent peril he knows is threatening his country? We are convinced that by grasping a single *shippei* in your hand, you could deliver talks that would have the power to subjugate even Buddhas and Zen patriarchs.

Please, master, for our sakes, strike hard with your uplifting mallet and smash the words and phrases that ensnarl young students in Hsu-t'ang's Dharma cave. Even if we do not receive a positive reply, on the day the present lecture meeting on the *Ch'in-tou Sutra* is completed, we intend to set out toward the Dharma banners that fly over Seitai-ji. Once there, we have resolved to burn our sedge hats, leggings, and other travel gear and settle down for good. Our feelings cannot be fully explained in a letter, not even a long screed like this that extends a full yard in length! We respectfully appeal to the supervisor monk and guestmaster at Seitai-ji to exert every effort on our behalf.

With deepest respect and greatest reverence,
Very sincerely yours, [the monks at Hōtai-ji]

.....

Our tongues popped out is said to express self-reproach for a shortcoming or failure.

"Ride his cloud down to earth" alludes to a teacher descending, like a Taoist sage on a white cloud, from the realm of the absolute, the so-called "first principle," where verbal explanations are impossible, to the level of the relative, everyday world and employing expedient means to explain things using verbal means.

Tōya, an attendant at our temple. Nothing is known of this monk.

Someone who spends his life pounding and eating green rice alludes to a priest whose understanding is still immature. "Hsu-t'ang poured abuse on [bogus] priests around the country for merely pounding and eating green rice" (*Record of Hsu-t'ang*, ch. 1).

Ch'in-tou Sutra. Hakuin creates this tongue-in-cheek title for the *Blue Cliff Record* by drawing a character from the names of each of the two authors, Yuan-wu K'o-ch'in and Hsueh-tou Ch'ung-hsien.

197. TO THE PRIEST OF HŌUN-JI FROM PARTICIPANTS ASSEMBLED AT HŌTAI-JI FOR A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD*

This and the following letter (#198), like the previous two (see headnote to #195), were apparently written in 1710, Hakuin's twenty-sixth year. He had traveled to Hōun-ji in Suruga the previous winter to help head priest Keirin Eden instruct students and stayed over until the following spring. He then set out with fellow monks Daigi, Shōgan, and Rokuin to attend the lecture meeting on the Blue Cliff Record at Hōtai-ji in Sumpu mentioned in the previous letters (Chronological Biography; Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 176–7). During this meeting, Hakuin and his fellow monks must have hatched a plan to ask Keirin to deliver lectures on the Record of Lin-chi at Hōun-ji. As Hakuin had just come from a fairly long stay at Hōun-ji, it seems likely that the idea originated with him. In any case, as the other monks were no doubt aware of Hakuin's literary talent and also considered him their de facto leader, he was delegated to compose these two letters to Keirin.

AFTER LIN-CHI ROARED a final shout seated astride a blind donkey, his comings and goings ceased forever. Ma-tsu's marvelous Zen style was on the verge of a total eclipse. Ahh! What a truly dazzling feat old San-sheng performed when he gathered up his teacher's fox slobber and turned it into a book! The resolute determination he demonstrated, issuing from his Bodhisattva vow, has come to assume a truly vital importance!

But the *Record of Lin-chi* is filled with such steep and forbidding words and phrases it is impossible for us to get our teeth into them! Each time we open it and start to read, we are immediately thrown into the most desperate straits and become uncertain and confused. The only recourse left to us, master, is to run to you and seek your help. We are now all assembled here. We beg you fervently to lecture on Lin-chi's records so that we can hear your great lion roar. In the coming days, when we visit your temple, we hope you won't chase us off and drench us with freezing water like Yeh-hsien did.

.....

After Lin-chi roared a final shout . . . Ma-tsu's marvelous Zen style . . . put it together in a book! San-sheng Hui-jan (n.d.) was a disciple of Lin-chi and is credited with compiling the *Record of Lin-chi*. According to that record, Lin-chi's final words before dying came in a famous exchange with San-sheng: "When the master was about to pass away, he seated himself and said, 'After I die, do not let my True Dharma Eye disappear. . . . Later on, when someone asks you about it, what will you say?' San-sheng gave a loud shout. 'Who would have thought that my True Dharma Eye would disappear when it reached this blind donkey!' said Lin-chi. After speaking these words, the master, sitting erect, entered Nirvana."

Ma-tsu Tao-i (709–788) was an important teacher three generations prior to Lin-chi in the same Nan-yueh line. He is regarded as the first priest in that line to use the teaching methods that later came to be associated with the Lin-chi school.

(Wild) fox slobber (koen, or yako-enda) is a virulent poison, used metaphorically for the poisonous words used by Zen teachers.

Yeh-hsien Kuei-hsing (n.d.) is reputed to have been an extremely strict teacher, much feared by monks. "Once, at the coldest time of the year, Yuan of Ching-shan and Huai of T'ien-i came to stay at his temple and went to Yeh-hsien's chambers to pay him a formal visit. He reviled them and drove them away, and then chased after them dousing them with water. By the time they reached the guest quarters, their robes were drenched through. The other monks, angered at their teacher's behavior, left the temple. Yuan and Huai,

however, put their robes in order and began doing zazen. Yeh-hsien came and reviled them. 'You'll just get a beating if you stay around here!' he yelled. Yuan approached him. 'We've traveled several thousand leagues to come here and study Zen,' he said. 'Do you think we'd leave just because you threw a few dippers of water over us? Go ahead, beat us to death if you want, but we're not going anywhere else.' Yeh-hsien laughed and said, 'If you two are really that committed to studying Zen, you might as well stay here a while.' He appointed Yuan head of the kitchen" (*Ta-hui's Arsenal*).

198. A SECOND LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PRIEST OF HŌUN-JI FROM MONKS ASSEMBLED AT HŌTAI-JI FOR A LECTURE MEETING ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD*

Here Hakuin reiterates the request he made for lectures on the Record of Lin-chi in the previous letter. Pulling out all the rhetorical stops, he insists that whether Keirin agrees to their proposal or not, he and his fellow monks are going to visit his temple and stay there, permanently if necessary, until Keirin relents. It is not known if they followed through on this threat or if Keirin finally agreed to do the lectures. The records do show, however, that a few months later Hakuin got his lectures on the Record of Lin-chi, but they were delivered at Shōin-ji by another priest, Setsu Jōza, from nearby Ketsujō-ji (Chronological Biography, 1710; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 181).

WE RECEIVED YOUR prompt reply, which arrived with unexpected dispatch only days after we had sent our letter. When we humbly and respectfully broke the seal and read the letter, the deep kindness of your words made us feel as though we were being granted a personal audience and hearing them directly from your own lips. It

has increased the deep reverence and admiration we feel toward you.

With unassuming modesty you cite “a lack of virtue or wisdom” as reasons for refusing our request. Surely that reflects a larger, more far-reaching vision, a desire to yield to priests of the younger generation in the performance of such duties. How wonderful when the aspiration to promote and uplift the Zen teaching rises to such heights! It is yet one more reason to increase our reverence and admiration for you.

The spring sun now extends its rays over the southern fields; planting will soon begin in the western quarter. In declining our request you mentioned how busy you were readying the temple gardens for planting. When veteran Zen teachers of the past like Po-chang and Ti-tsang went into the fields with plows and rakes in their hands and labored side by side with their monks oblivious of the frigid cold of winter or blistering summer heat, they set sterling examples for the students who flocked to their temples from all over the country. We will gladly assume responsibility for any work that needs to be done at your temple. I myself am determined to exert all my meager efforts. I will work like a blind donkey to that end. But we can no longer just remain languishing here in the visitors’ quarters of this temple awaiting a reply.

Master, there is not a Zen monk in the country who does not know your name. You are an example to us all. If you refuse us, saying you want to attend to your fields and gardens, where else can we go for help? We beg you to consider that. Excusing yourself by saying that you are only a drowsy tiger like Hu-ch’iu, or by feigning illness like Vimalakirti, just gives us more cause to revere you.

You are a Dragon King, with power to control the movement of the rains and mists. Would not refusing our request mean that you are unwilling to allow the Dharma rain and mist to fall? Why will you not consider the predicament of budding young Zen saplings that wish to flower and bear fruit? We beg you to act as a bright mirror to us, a flaming torch in the paths of darkness.

Whether we hear some word of agreement from you or not, we are resolved to visit your temple, break our traveling staffs, and stay there for good. Please show compassion for our plight. It is difficult

with brush and paper to truly and fully express our most earnest thoughts to you. When we sit, poised to write, our features grow rigid and solemn.

Spring is near, but the days still alternate between warm and cold. For the Dharma's sake, please take good care of your health.

.....

Po-chang and Ti-tsang. Po-chang Huai-hai (720–814) is known for his saying, “A day without work is a day without food.” Several anecdotes depict Ti-tsang Kuei-ch'en (867–928) working in the fields together with his monks.

A drowsy tiger like Hu-ch'iu is apparently a reference to Hu-ch'iu Shao-lung (1077–1136). The name Hu-ch'iu means “Tiger Hill”; his teacher referred to him as “Drowsy Tiger.”

Feigning illness like Vimalakirti. Layman Vimalakirti used his skillful means to make it appear he was sick so that people would come to inquire about his health, enabling him to teach them.

Dharma rain and mist to fall. To bestow beneficial teachings on students.

199. REPLYING TO GIN AND NYŪ, IMBIBERS OF BUDDHA'S AMBROSIA, AT A LECTURE MEETING CONDUCTED AT SHŌJU-JI

Shōju-ji is a Zen temple in Morioka, a town in the then-remote northern area of the main Japanese island. Nothing is known about priests Gin and Nyū. References in the letter suggest it was written relatively early in Hakuin's teaching career, perhaps in his late forties or early fifties. As there is no record of any meeting on the Heroic

March Sutra (Shurangama Sutra) during this period, it is possible that, despite what Hakuin says in the letter, the plan never materialized.

“*Imbibers of Buddha’s Ambrosia*” (kanro-mon) is an elegant way of describing especially capable priests.

I RECEIVED YOUR letter on the sixth day of the ninth month. I am grateful to you for asking me to conduct a lecture meeting. But the text you suggest, the *Heroic March Sutra*, contains the Buddhas’ supreme secrets. Only a priest who has grasped the essential core of the Zen school and has the capacity to preach it as well could even hope to get his teeth into it. A callow bonze of my meager abilities would be incapable of carrying out such an important mission. On top of that Shōin-ji is an extremely poor temple, with no space or other means of taking in a large number of visiting monks.

Because of these reasons, I reached a decision to refuse your request. Then some of the temple priests in the neighborhood came by and began urging me to accept. Considering that you have resolved to come here all the way from Morioka, and since temples in this area have promised to give their help, I have no choice, unworthy as I am, but to humbly accept your request. Though an ignorant priest with lazy habits, I vow to do everything in my power to make the lecture meeting a success. Overcome with emotion as I write this down, I am yours truly, [Hakuin]

200. TO THE PRIEST OF RINZAI-JI, WELCOMING THE APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR PRIEST EDAN AS HEAD PRIEST OF MYŌŌ-JI

At the time this letter was written, in Hakuin’s thirties, the head priest at Rinzaï-ji was Yōzen Soin, so we may assume that he was the

recipient. Details of Yōzen's life and relationship with Senior Priest Edan are unknown. Senior Priest Edan, Kyōsui Edan (d. 1743), studied with Kogetsu Zenzai and later with Hakuin's teacher Shōju Rōjin, whose Dharma transmission he is reported to have received. Although Kyōsui was apparently quite a bit older than Hakuin, he accompanied him on many of his youthful peregrinations around the country and the two men became lifelong friends. Kyōsui was with Hakuin at Eigan-ji in 1708 when Hakuin achieved his first enlightenment. He served at Myōō-ji in Chiyoda village (incorporated into present-day Shizuoka city) and in 1723 was installed as head of Rinzaï-ji.

THE BEGINNING OF summer, the wisterias are displaying their beautiful purple blossoms, the pomegranate trees are bursting into scarlet bloom. I am extremely glad to hear that you are in good health, and that everything is running smoothly at your temple. Nothing is more important than a vigorously prospering Dharma teaching. Things are pretty much unchanged here at my little hermitage too. I take things easy. I enjoy ambling through the vegetable garden and looking over the field of barley.

When I met the retired Rōshi of Myōō-ji recently, I learned that Senior Priest Edan is to be installed as head of the temple. It made me very, very happy. It is entirely due to your benevolence and the special efforts you have made on his behalf. Nothing can compare with such generosity and compassion. My only regret is that I am unable to cross the pass and visit Rinzaï-ji to thank you in person. For the sake of men and gods alike, I ask that you take good care of your health.

.....

The retired Rōshi of Myōō-ji. This priest has not been identified.

201. TO THE NEWLY APPOINTED HEAD PRIEST OF REISHŌ-JI IN MINO PROVINCE

An annotation identifies the recipient of this letter as Mugoku Shusui (n.d.), a Dharma grandson of Reishō-ji head priest Bankyū Echō (d. 1719), a person who makes a number of appearances in Hakuin's autobiographies. Since Hakuin mentions here that Bankyū had died the previous year, this letter can be dated to 1720, Hakuin's thirty-sixth year, not long after he had returned from his pilgrimage to reside as head priest at Shōin-ji. Nothing is known about Mugoku or his relationship with Hakuin, although since Hakuin suggests that Mugoku had been a student of Bankyū, it is possible that the two men met in the Reishō-ji training hall during one of Hakuin's stopovers there in his twenties.

Hakuin first met Bankyū in 1705 when he visited Reishō-ji (also referred to as Reishō-in) in Mino province during the first years of his pilgrimage in central and western Honshu. Later, in the autumn of 1714, toward the end of the pilgrimage, he revisited the temple, staying on into the winter. He took part in the rōhatsu training session, during which he achieved satoris, deepening his understanding. "One day, as he was doing kinhin, everything heretofore attained suddenly fell away, and he 'roamed totally free and unrestricted beyond the mundane world'" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 187).

It is interesting that in Wild Ivy, the spiritual autobiography Hakuin wrote in his eighties, he is critical of Bankyū and the method of Zen training at his temple: "When I took up residence in the Monks' Hall of the Reishō-in in Iwasaki there was a large contingent of more than fifty monks in training. Sad to say, they were all pursuing the dry and lifeless methods of 'Unborn Zen' that had taken such a hold on people's minds in those days. Old monks and young monks alike did an admirable job on their morning and midday meals, but aside from that they spent all their time seated like lumps in long, lifeless ranks, nodding away like oarsmen. At night, they waited, listening with pricked ears for the bell to announce the end of the sitting period.

Then they lined their pillows up in long rows and laid themselves down to sleep, chanting loudly back and forth, ‘Great happiness and peace. Great happiness and peace.’ I alone mustered a dauntless spirit, swearing with great resolve that I would not lie down even to rest. . . . Looking back, I can see now that those nightly choruses of ‘Great happiness and peace’ worked to excellent advantage by increasing my determination to forgo all sleep or rest. [When I took these matters up with Head Priest Bankyū] he told me that this was all ‘unwanted meddling’ on my part: that poking my nose into others’ affairs would only distract me from my own practice, and I should stop it” (Wild Ivy, p. 55–6).

WHEN CONFUCIUS DIED, three thousand heroic admirers were stricken with grief. When Shakamuni passed away, eighty thousand saints and sages wailed in lamentation. With the death of Bankyū Oshō on the nineteenth day of the sixth month last summer, a bright torch was extinguished which had illuminated the paths of darkness, a ferryboat vanished which had been a boon to those stranded on the shores of delusion. I myself have a longstanding debt to your teacher’s kindness and compassion. I should like to be able to travel to Mino and join you and the other mourners at his funeral rites, but the distances are so great, the mountain trails so steep and perilous, I am unable to do more than sit here grieving and lamenting, gazing futilely eastward at the evening clouds. I beg your forgiveness. A thousand apologies.

I can imagine the sorrow even a person of your determination and ability and finely tempered Zen mind must feel at this time. Nonetheless, I must say how happy I am to hear that you have kept the Dharma banners flying steadfastly, and the same wondrous means and the same severe manner — a hundred rules, a hundred regulations — are being used in teaching your monks as before.

Zen monk Nin was on his way home, so I am entrusting him with a small sum to give you as an offering for the deceased. We are now enjoying balmy autumn weather, the chrysanthemums are fragrant, the buds on plum trees are swelling. For the Dharma’s sake, please take good care of yourself.

.....

I can imagine the sorrow . . . must feel at this time. “This because your sorrow is different from that of people in the ordinary world, arising from the fact that Bankyū’s Dharma teaching has now been lost” (annotation).

Zen monk Nin (Nin Zenkaku) cannot be identified. The term *Zenkaku* normally refers to a monk in training.

BOOK SEVEN

Prefaces (*Jo*)

Postscripts (*Batsu*)

Inscriptions (*Mei*)

Book Seven is made up of prefaces and postscripts (colophons) that Hakuin composed for writings and collections of various kinds, as well as inscriptions he wrote for temple bells, memorial stupas, stele, and grave tablets.

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PREFACES (JO)

As a literary term, Jo includes inscriptions affixed to documents and collections of various kinds in addition to prefaces and introductions in the Western sense.

202. PREFACE FOR A SEA OF ASSORTED POISONS

The Zen phrase “sea of assorted poisons” (zōdokkai) is used as the title for several koan collections. Annotations tell us that this Sea of Assorted Poisons was a booklet containing excerpts of Hakuin’s sayings and teachings: “Layman Sen made this miscellany of things I had said and brought it out to show me” (annotation). Layman Sen is unidentified.

PRIEST PO-YUN SHOU-TUAN said, “It was because I knew a great many words and deeds of Zen teachers of the past that I was able to complete my religious quest.”

This statement inspired my old friend Layman Sen to compile a booklet of my words. He thought it would be an aid to his practice. He came and asked me to give it a title. I decided on *A Sea of Assorted Poisons*. Layman Sen was uncertain about the meaning and asked me to explain why I chose that title.

I replied: “Ever since Shakamuni came into contact with the cold flames of that sea of assorted poisons, his countrymen in untold numbers have had their livers ripped asunder and their minds shattered into pieces. The most outstanding among these men was a blue-eyed foreigner by the name of Bodhidharma, who transmitted his Zen teaching to China. In time a horse emerged that went by the name Ma-tsu, and a blind donkey that called himself Lin-chi. Their school shone as brilliantly and loftily as the sun, with a purity as

immaculate as finest jade. In responding to various conditions and circumstances they encountered, its teachers advanced with nimble, clear-sighted steps. A single phrase from their mouths was like a raging mass of fire, their every word a white-hot iron staff. They struck like lightning bolts, they skipped angrily along like deadly whirlwinds. Some of these men were geniuses of the first order possessing deep inborn understanding. Some reached attainment only after endless trials and tribulations. Some were able to plunge straight into the inner sanctum. Some could not and dropped out along the way. In India and China such men were as numerous as the stars in the sky, like the counters on a Go board.

“As good monks and outstanding teachers gradually disappeared, the Buddha Dharma fell into decline. Autumn came to the groves of Zen. Cold frost formed on its gardens. A student lacked a good friend to help him as his training progressed. No wise teacher was on hand to lend a hand when he fell behind. All that remained were the words and deeds the ancient teachers had left behind. The words became a student’s traveling staff, the records of their doings his straw sandals. They were like a bright lamp given on a dark path, or a ferry discovered at a perilous river crossing.

“If you practice diligently day and night and you keep at it until you forget self and others, ordinary people and sages, you finally reach a point where you forget everything and then forget forgetting as well — all thoughts and passions are exhausted. At that point you will know that all the words you have learned from the teachers of the past — a thousand of them, or ten thousand — are a single pill of marvelously refined elixir that exists within the realm of enlightenment.

“But if you just continue filling your head with plausible phrases and hauling them around with you, priding yourself on your eloquence and sharp wit as you discuss them, nurturing your ego until it soars higher than the mountain peaks, then even a single word of those sayings can be more harmful than a violent sea smashing against an ocean cliff.

“Once you grasp the true nature of a monstrous phantom, it can do you no harm. The same with words. Once you discern that they are harmful, they become an ambrosial nectar. Start thinking of them

as ambrosial nectar, however, and they become a lethal poison. This is something you must give the most careful scrutiny.”

Emitting a sigh of pleasure, the Layman asked me to write this down for him. I willingly agreed and transcribed this preface.

.....

Priest Po-yun Shou-tuan said, “It was . . . my religious quest.” In the preface to *The Tale of My Childhood*, Hakuin quotes this passage from *Precious Lessons of the Zen School*, a Sung collection of Zen anecdotes: “Zen master Yuan-wu K’o-ch’in said to Fo-chien, ‘In whatever he did, my former teacher Po-yun always took the sayings and actions of former masters into consideration. He was often heard to say, “Things not found in the ancient records are not in accord with the Buddha’s Dharma. It was because I was acquainted with a great many of the words and deeds of former teachers that I was able to complete my religious quest”’” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 242–3, note 5).

“When as a young man I heard about the words and deeds of the ancient teachers, it filled me with confidence and aspiration” (annotation). “When it is a matter of your own understanding alone, mistakes occur. Each word these old teachers spoke strikes deep into your vitals” (annotation).

A single pill. An allusion to a magic elixir refined nine times over. All who consume it turn into immortal sages. A Zen student refines the elixir in the crucible of the *tanden* below his navel to achieve enlightenment. Here the sense is that each word an enlightened teacher utters becomes such an elixir. See *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 91).

Once you grasp the true nature of a monstrous phantom . . . they become an ambrosial nectar. “However if you can grasp their fundamental essence, even deluded thoughts cannot obstruct you” (annotation) “Even the most monstrous apparition will not become your enemy if you understand it. If you can just grasp the true nature of those phantoms, you will not be deluded by them” (annotation).

203. PREFACE FOR A ROSTER LISTING DONORS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BRIDGE AT YATSUYAHATA, COMPOSED AT A LECTURE MEETING ON *PRECIOUS LESSONS OF THE ZEN* SCHOOL

In 1742, in his fifty-eighth year, Hakuin traveled to Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province to conduct a lecture meeting on Precious Lessons of the Zen School (Chronological Biography). Tōrei's Draft Biography informs us that the lectures were occasioned by services commemorating the six-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Fujiwara Sadasato, a local ruler who had established Ryōtan-ji, and that the head priest at Ryōtan-ji at this time was Dokusō Hōun (n.d.).

Ryōtan-ji, also referred to here by its "mountain" name Banshōzan, was located on the eastern side of Lake Hamana, seventeen stops west on the Tōkaidō road from the Hara post station. Hakuin's trip there would have necessitated a number of river crossings, including one over the particularly hazardous Ōi River, as well as a steep climb over the Satta Pass.

As Precious Lessons of the Zen School, unlike most Zen texts, is concerned largely with practical virtues, Hakuin's decision to use it was no doubt influenced by the assembly he would address, and perhaps also by the bridge fund he started.

IN AUTUMN OF the second year of Kampō [1742] I set out for Banshōzan Ryōtan-ji in Inoya, Tōtōmi province, responding to a request from the priests of the temple to deliver lectures there. After a journey of three days, covering forty leagues [approximately one hundred miles], we finally arrived at our lodgings at Hōju-ji in Rokutō. We set out the following morning and proceeded at a leisurely pace until we arrived at the plain of Mikatagahara, where a teahouse

under an ancient pine tree provided weary travelers a shady place of rest. The Ryōtan-ji priest [Dokusō] was waiting for us with food, tea, and cakes. He had made a special trip there, a gesture of hospitality I little deserved.

In due course, our palanquins set out in a northwesterly direction. We came to the banks of the Yahata River, which flows southeast from the foothills of the high mountains. Eight sturdy porters, four to a side, lifted the palanquins onto their shoulders to carry us over the river. Monks and laymen hiked their robes up round their waists and came wading out to greet us from the far bank. As they entered the swiftly rushing river, which soon reached to their thighs, I noticed that their jaws were firmly set and their brows furrowed apprehensively. “Why isn’t there a bridge over this river?” I thought to myself.

When I visited Jissō-ji in Tōrin three or four days later, we had to cross the river again. The porters said, “It’s a dangerous crossing. The river often overflows two or three times in a single month. People are carried away and sometimes drown.” Again I thought, “Putting up a bridge here is of vital importance, and would be a deed of the greatest virtue as well. If lay people and priests from this area were to combine their efforts, such a project should not be too difficult to accomplish. Done little by little, in small steps, it should not take too long to complete. An undertaking such as this, which would provide great relief to people, can also be seen as a kind of skillful means, promoting the salvation of sentient beings.”

With that in mind, I made up a small booklet to serve as a roster in which to list the names of people who contribute donations to the project. As a start, I donated the four strings of coins I had received for the lectures. I also composed a verse, which I inscribed on the roster as a preface. I made copies to give to the priests of four of Ryōtan-ji’s subtemples: Daitsū-an, Jikō-an, Genkai-an, and Entsū-an. A small start, the first step in a journey of a thousand leagues, but my hope is that the project will eventually grow and assume mountainous proportions. The verse:

Erecting a bamboo bridge to span a raging mountain
torrent
Far excels the merit of building pagodas throughout the
land.

Hearing of the flooding during the spring and autumn rains,
How could anyone sit by knowing people will come to harm?

.....

The plain of Mikatagahara is the site of a famous series of battles in 1573 between Takeda Shingen and Tokugawa Ieyasu. An annotation supplies some incidental information: “An elderly couple was selling rice cakes at the teahouse.”

The four strings of coins I had received for the lectures. Each string of coins consisted of a thousand *mon*; four thousand *mon* made up one *ryō*.

Daitsū-an and *Genkai-an* also appear below, #208.

204. PREFACE FOR A NOTEBOOK (KAKOCHŌ) CONTAINING NAMES OF THE DECEASED

Kakochō are notebooks listing the names of deceased family members, friends, and acquaintances along with their dates of death. Priests and lay followers use them to keep track of the dates for commemorating their deaths at daily sutra recitations or other services. This particular kakochō, described as a small pocket-sized booklet, is still preserved in a private family collection in Numazu.

Mr. Ayabe, the layman who asked Hakuin to write the preface, was from Ōhira village in eastern Suruga province. An unpublished inscription Hakuin wrote awarding him a posthumous Dharma name identifies him as Ayabe Den'uemon (d. 1764) and praises him as an advanced lay student who had attained a splendid realization.

ON AN AUTUMN day in the twentieth year of Kyōhō [1735], the recluse Ayabe came to me with a small booklet and asked if I would write a preface for it. It was a so-called “ghost roster,” a list of the names of deceased family members and friends, people with whom he had been on intimate terms, that he had compiled to remind him when to offer morning and evening sutra recitations on their behalf. He had conversed intimately with these people in small rooms, had eaten and drunk with them on festive occasions, and had formed friendships as strong as those of Chen-tsung and Lei-i or Kuan-chung and Pao Shu-ya. When close relatives and friends are taken from us and we begin to lament them, our grief and sorrow know no bounds. Yet as time passes the memories dim, and even their death anniversaries and memorial days tend to be forgotten. This holds true even of one’s own flesh and blood, one’s parents and brothers and sisters. It is in the nature of things.

It is indeed commendable that Mr. Ayabe made such a request to me. However, I thought to myself that as praiseworthy as his act was, it was not good enough. It was good but still insufficient. Why do I say this? Each human being has direct links to the four Buddha wisdoms; and is endowed with the Mirror Wisdom that yields the three kinds of transcendental knowledge. This is called the matter of great importance, also the treasure of the true Dharma eye, for which Buddhas appear in the world. Grasp it and you are a Buddha-patriarch, possessed of boundless virtue. Lose it and you are immersed in the suffering of birth and death. In all the infinite lands in the universe, nothing is so wonderful and precious as this. It is, in itself, the mind that at this moment cherishes the memory of its family members and friends. It is a precious thing that each of us is born with. To understand this precious matter and grasp its true sublimity, you must focus your efforts on examining with singleminded diligence, in whatever you do, throughout the twenty-four hours of the day, the questions: What is this activity I am undertaking? What is this discussion I am engaged in? Is it my spleen and stomach, my liver and gallbladder? Is it blue, or yellow, or red, or white? You must seek it constantly in each and every thing you do, confident in the knowledge that you will grasp it.

If you continue in this way, investigating it here, there, and everywhere, you will in one or two days, whether you give up sleeping and eating or not, find rising within you a spirit of dauntless inquiry which will break through without fail into satori. Once this intense spirit of inquiry takes even slight hold in your mind, before many days are out the breakthrough into satori will occur.

And when the breakthrough occurs, you see at a single glance, without any doubts or uncertainties, your own mind, others' minds, the Buddha-mind, the mind of gods, and the mind of sentient beings. This is what is known as "the pure mind knowing the minds of others." Once you see others' minds, you realize beyond doubt that the mind inherent in us all is infinitely vast and lofty, perfectly clear, as tranquil as a piece of pure incarnate emptiness, without a trace of birth-and-death or illusion, subject or object, or any vestige of passion or delusive thought. This is called "the pure mind freely destroying evil passions." Once you realize this capacity to destroy

the passions, you discern at a glance your own world, the world of others, the worlds of Buddhas and of devils, Pure Lands in all directions, and all the impure lands of the six paths of samsaric existence as though you are looking down at them in the palm of your hand. This is called “the pure heavenly eye that discerns all things everywhere.”

When the heavenly eye opens, you see all beings throughout the past and future being born and reborn in the endless cycle of birth and rebirth with perfect clarity, as though they are reflected in a precious mirror. This is called “pure knowledge of the lives of self and others.” When past, present, and future are perceived in this way, you hear, freely, instantaneously, and without any lack, the voices of Shravakas, Bodhisattvas, Buddhas, and gods, the voices of the Devil King, sentient and non-sentient beings, the voices of hungry ghosts, fighting spirits, beasts, and the voices, both high-pitched and low, of the human world — tearful, mournful, joyful, wrathful, abusive, and praising. This is called “the pure heavenly ear that hears all sounds.” Once this heavenly ear opens, you know that everything you do — eating rice or rice gruel, or any other activity — is something that is neither acquired through practice nor learned. It all takes place within the samadhi of free and unrestricted activity that is inherent in us all. This is called “the pure ability to transform oneself and objects at will.”

When that moment arrives, the infinite Buddhist teachings, their boundless and ineffable meaning, and all the world’s accumulated merit, all its precious Dharma adornments — they are all of them perfectly complete in your mind, not a single one lacking. Is this not what Yung-chia meant when he wrote, “The six *paramitas* and myriad good deeds are all complete and perfect within you yourself”? What reward in either the human or heavenly realms can exceed this! Not even the joy of obtaining the three vehicles or four fruits is greater!

Ah, how difficult it is to acquire human form. How difficult to encounter and hear the Buddha’s teaching. And even after a person has acquired human form and heard the Buddha’s teaching, because of the difficulty in believing in it, he yearns after illusory fame and profit, he frets and suffers amid the realm of delusion, and

in his careless stupidity he ends up returning once again to his former abode in one of the three unfortunate realms of samsaric existence. What a terrible pity, and how terribly sad. Believing in it and not believing in it are separated only by a single instant of thought, but are as different as cloud and mud, as different as rising up and falling down.

Long ago, the great teacher Shakamuni gave up a throne and a home in an imperial palace to enter the priesthood and assume a life of poverty and privation. Why should we, so greatly inferior in our capabilities, be so doggedly attached to the world? What reason can we give? Some of the ancient sages managed to live tens of thousands of years, yet even lives as long as these are mere flowers in the air, more fleeting than a galloping horse glimpsed through a chink in a wall. Compared to their lives, ours are as brief as a mayfly's, ephemeral as a fleck of foam on the water. Buddhism teaches us that it is wise to believe in cause and effect and fear the suffering of karmic retribution, that a wise person is someone who seeks to see the self's true nature by grasping his own mind. These are not words meant to deceive us, nor are they illusory teachings. They are the absolute truth, genuine and unadorned.

I certainly do not mean that you should discontinue the meritorious acts you have been engaged in. What I am suggesting is that you should engage in continuous self-examination even as you devote yourself to cherishing and caring for your grandchildren and children, and once every morning read these words I have written. If doing this enables you to establish a firmly rooted faith, it will be better than eighty thousand individual good deeds of whatever kind. How splendid it would be!

I did not take up my writing brush merely to show off my literary skills. I did it because when I saw signs of faith taking firm root in your mind, I was so overjoyed that without realizing it I just started scribbling away. My scribbling was solely to nurture those roots and make them grow deeper and stronger. I would like you to reflect on that.

.....

Chen-tsung and Lei-i or Kuan-chung and Pao Shu-ya. Two celebrated friendships that appear in the *Book of Lieh Tzu* and the *Book of the Later Han*, respectively.

The three kinds of transcendental knowledge (sanmyō) are three kinds of knowledge attained by Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats that enables them to understand and remove the evil passions that cause suffering and to know the former lives and future destinies of themselves and others.

Is it my spleen and stomach, my liver and gallbladder? This is presumably a reference to a passage in the *Record of Lin-chi*: “Your physical body is made up of the four great elements, spleen and stomach, liver and gallbladder, empty space — none of these are able to preach the Dharma or hear the Dharma. What is it, then, that knows how to preach the Dharma and hear the Dharma? It is you who are right here before my eyes; this solitary brightness without shape or form. If you can see it in this way, then you are no different from the Buddhas and patriarchs” (adapted from *Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi*, p. 25).

And when the breakthrough occurs, you see at a single glance. . . . In this paragraph and the next, Hakuin refers to the six supernatural or transcendental powers (*roku-jinzū*) said to be possessed by Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats (Hakuin’s order is different than the traditional sequence): *tashinzū*, the ability to know others’ thoughts (“the pure mind knowing the minds of others”); *rōjintsū*, the ability to destroy any and all afflicting passion (“the pure mind freely destroying evil passions”); *tengenzū*, the ability to see all things wherever they are (“the pure heavenly eye that discerns all things everywhere”); *shukumyōzū*, the ability to know the former lives of oneself and others (“pure knowledge of the lives of self and others”); *tennizū*, the ability to hear all sounds at any distance (“the pure heavenly ear that hears all sounds”); and *jinkyōzū* (also *jinsokuzū*), the ability to go anywhere and transform oneself or objects at will (“the pure ability to transform oneself and objects at will”).

What Yung-chia meant when he wrote, “The six paramitas . . . you yourself”? Yung-chia Hsuan-chueh (665–713) in *Verses on Realizing the Way*.

The three vehicles or four fruits. The three vehicles (*sanjō*) are those of Bodhisattva, Pratyeka-buddha, and Shravaka; the four fruits (*shika*) are four stages of sainthood in the Hinayana tradition.

The three unfortunate realms of samsaric existence are hell, the realm of hungry ghosts, and the realm of animals.

205. PREFACE ON SENDING IYŪ OFF ON HIS RETURN TO THE WESTERN PROVINCES

The work for which Hakuin wrote this preface is unstated here, but it was evidently a collection of verses that friends of a person named Iyū presented to him when he departed for western Japan. Iyū is identified in one annotation as a priest named Ensō of Ryōsen-ji in Nagase village, Izu province. Other annotations, however, point out that the content of the piece indicates that Hakuin wrote it for a layman who had studied under him, whose name he has changed due to the delicate nature of some of his remarks. One annotation intimates that he was a retainer of high rank from a clan in the Osaka area.

FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE are not something that suddenly appear one day out of the blue. Slandering people secretly while flattering them to their face, acting with the greediness of a wolf or with the stealth of a pilfering rat, are practices that may gain you growing profit and honor in worldly terms, but they have no real worth or meaning, no more substance than a mirage that appears at sea. Men of base character may engage in such affairs, but never a man of honor. If you awoke one morning to find that your machinations had been discovered and your schemes had all fallen through, you would then be totally alone in a vast universe with no place at all to lay your head.

However, if you make your way through life with a pure heart and singleminded devotion, doing what is impossibly difficult to achieve and refraining from doing what others view with contempt, and you obtain a truly priceless treasure as a result, there will be no need for either regret or resentment. It is this to which a man of great stature, whose influence places him above his fellows, should aspire. Add integrity to these cardinal virtues of benevolence and righteousness, and it would be even better.

Considering how drinking saké undermines proper behavior, you should not let even a drop pass your lips. Considering how playing cards or dice undermines genuine aspiration, you should stay clear of both. Considering how a lot of talk invariably invites misfortune, you should refrain from criticizing or finding fault with others. And considering how frequenting brothels and tea-houses disorders your life, you should not visit such places.

I am convinced that your failure to observe any of these counsels will mean that you have embarked on a course that will forever be contrary to the hopes I have for you. You shouldn't try to pull the wool over my eyes, because even if you did succeed, your misdeeds would not remain unknown to the gods and Buddhas. Since we will probably never meet again, I am writing this down to send it to you.

206. PREFACE FOR AN ESSAY ON THE MOON REFLECTED ON THE WATER

“The priest of Daisen-ji in Ishu village [Suruga province] composed an essay on the theme of the moon reflected on the water and asked the master to write a preface for it” (annotation). There were two Zen temples in Ishu village named Daisen-ji, one belonging to the Rinzai school, the other to the Sōtō school. Since Hakuin states that the author of this essay transmitted the traditions of Sōtō sect co-founder Tung-shan Liang-chieh, it is no doubt the Sōtō temple, located at the foot Mount Ashitaka on the southern slopes of Mount Fuji, not far

from *Shōin-ji*, that is being referred to here. Keikei Oshō cannot be identified, though the name Keikei, literally “friendless, friendless,” was apparently a sobriquet.

WE ARE INDEED living in the period of the Latter Day Dharma. Old traditions are forgotten. Sham priests pursue gain and profit as though it was nectar from the sweetest blossoms, clutch their emoluments to them as doggedly as a cicada clings to a leaf in late autumn. Anyone who truly aspires to the Buddha Way can only deplore such a state of affairs.

Old Keikei Oshō, who lives in the forest at the southern foothills of Mount Ashitaka, is a person who transmits the ancient traditions of master Tung-shan. He has always deplored these corrupt and evil practices and preached a return to the old traditions of sect founder Dōgen. Keikei Oshō is not satisfied merely to preach it, he recently took up his brush and wrote an essay on the subject, *Discourse about the Moon on the Water*. His keen and eloquent brush tip has a power to effect transformation and distinguish right from wrong that surpasses even the mirror of Ch’in. It has a radiance that penetrates through light and dark and eclipses even King Ch’ao’s precious jade. Although his essay is brief, less than a thousand characters, it is a perfectly refined pill of divine elixir that cannot be compared even to many mule-loads of ordinary medicine. How could anyone who genuinely aspires to the Way not applaud its message and the soundness of its arguments?

As to the title, “Moon Reflected on the Water,” is this water inherent in us all? Is this moon full and perfect in us all? When it comes to Keikei Osho’s remarks about the repentance ceremony, however, I must defer any comment to others better informed in such matters.

.....

Clutch their emoluments. . . . “Once they get their hands on something they never let go” (annotation).

The mirror of Ch’in was a mirror used by the first Ch’in emperor that was said to reflect good and evil in the heart of anyone who stood

before it (*Hsi-ching tsa-chi*, ch. 3).

King Ch'ao's precious jade. “The King of Ch'ao acquired the legendary jade of Pien Ho, a priceless treasure that was said to shine luminously in the dark, to keep a room warm in winter and cool in summer. The powerful King of Ch'in offered him fifteen cities for it. Not trusting the King of Ch'in to keep his promise but unable to refuse the exchange, the King of Ch'ao, on the advice of Lin Hsiang-ju, accepted the offer and appointed Lin to take the jade to Ch'in. When the King of Ch'in, after receiving the jade, made no mention of the promised cities, Lin realized he did not intend to keep the bargain. Lin told the king of a flaw in the jade which he would show him. When the jade was brought out, Li grabbed it and threatened to smash it against the pillars in the palace. Deciding it was in his best interest not to press the matter further, the King of Ch'in allowed Li to return to Ch'ao with the jade” (*Records of the Grand Historian*, ch. 81).

Perfectly refined pill of divine elixir. “The pill of refined elixir severs at once all the roots of the illness that have plagued you for countless lives. But this attainment is not something that can be known by ordinary, unenlightened people” (annotation).

Repentance ceremony (shushō-senma; also sanma). “This is the Kannon *senbō* ceremony” (annotation), performed to the accompaniment of ritual chanting before an image of Kannon Bodhisattva.

207. PREFACE FOR INASE NO TOKIKUNI ON HIS RETURN TO EDO

Inase no Tokikuni (Shōuemon) was evidently a magistrate (daikan) with jurisdiction over a district in southern Izu province. Hakuin's preface was written for an unspecified work or collection of some kind, perhaps a group of verses that Inase's friends had written when they sent him off on his return to Edo. According to Machida Zuihō,

Shōji Norifusa (also Shōji Rokubei) was a cousin of Hakuin. Born the same year, they were childhood playmates (“Hakuin monka no josei zensha no shōsoku,” Zen Bunka, #103).

A feature of this piece is the deep concern, seen throughout Hakuin’s writings, for the suffering of the peasants and an entreaty to those in positions of power to treat them with benevolence and compassion.

LONG AGO A man named K’ou Shun put down a rebellion in a place called Ying-ch’uan while he was serving under Emperor Kuan-wu of the Later Han. He was later appointed magistrate of the district. When he had completed his term of office and was preparing to return to his home, the people blocked an imperial procession as it was passing through Ying-ch’uan and petitioned the emperor to lend them K’ou Shun’s services for one more year.

At a place called He-p’u there were rich pearl fisheries, but a local administrator’s greed in collecting taxes virtually destroyed this valuable source of income. Meng Ch’ang took over the post, abolished his predecessor’s evil practices, and the pearl trade soon revived. When Meng Ch’ang’s term of office ended and he was leaving He-p’u, crowds of people blocked the road, begging him to stay. Stories such as these indicate the proper conduct for a person entrusted with the reins of government.

In the fourteenth year of Kyōhō [1729], Inase Tokikuni, a samurai from Mino province, arrived to administer a domain in southern Izu province. He governed in a just and compassionate manner. Miscreants feared him, and ordinary people followed and obeyed him as though he was their father or mother. Whenever a complaint arose or arbitration was needed, Mr. Inase took care of it personally, so there was no need to refer the matter to Edo for a ruling. He resided in southern Izu for ten years and governed with great success.

This year, the third of Gembun [1738], Mr. Inase will return to Edo. It was sad news for the people of southern Izu, who knew they would be losing a fine, upstanding gentleman, bringing tears to the eyes of young and old alike. In fact, it is just such a man to whom the reins of

power should be entrusted, even though it is perhaps a pity to waste talents such as his in a relative backwater.

My old friend Shōji Norifusa asked me to write a few parting words for Mr. Inase. “During the six or seven years I have been acquainted with him, I got to know him quite well,” I replied. “It is rare to find such an individual in this day and age. What words do you think would be appropriate?”

Norifusa replied, “Mr. Inase once told me, ‘A samurai who has been entrusted with the great authority of a provincial magistrate cannot devote much thought to making provisions for his descendants. I often worry whether I will be able to leave my family sufficient means to enable them to live in appropriate circumstances. An even greater concern is to avoid any lapse of propriety as I attempt to insure their future security. It is for that reason I always try to listen to good advice from others and act in a spirit of benevolence.’”

“Mr. Inase’s aspirations are indeed splendid ones,” I replied. “Yet it must be said that it is easy to receive good advice but difficult to carry it out. And that is true even for someone who has renounced his home and family to become a Buddhist priest. In the present day when honesty is increasingly devalued, there are magistrates who act ruthlessly in governing their domains. Interested only in achieving further advancement or gaining praise from their superiors, they oppress the common people with onerous taxes, earning their deep resentment. Few of them have any concern at all with good words or deeds. As a consequence the great majority of the men who advance to the lofty position of local magistrate leave their children nothing but trouble and misfortune — though it may be that I overstate the case.

“A government official is in a position to bequeath his descendants either happiness or misfortune. If he performs benevolent acts in his official capacity, his descendants will surely partake of the blessings that come from those actions. But if he is greedy and covetous in private life and treats the common people harshly, he will certainly leave his descendants trouble and misfortune. Many examples may be found in the historical records of

China and Japan of officials whose descendants prospered because they faithfully carried out their duties.

“If someone governs in a spirit of wise benevolence so that the benefits extend to the common people, they will be loyal subjects, he will be a sage ruler, and an ideal state of harmony will prevail in his domain that is in accord with the way of the gods and Buddhas. The gods will protect such a ruler, and wealth and happiness will naturally increase under him. As a ruler’s deeds, both good and bad, form the foundation of his private and official life, celebrated rulers of the past have advocated making benevolence the foundation of one’s every act. Indeed, benevolence is the true treasure of a king or noble, the very lifeblood of the nation as a whole. If the ruler is not benevolent, the kingdom will not long endure. If the common people are not benevolent, their security and happiness will not long continue.”

Norifusa said, “Please tell me how to cultivate benevolence. I have read that feelings of compassion, shame, modesty, and right and wrong are the four entrances that lead to the four fundamental principles of benevolence, dutifulness, propriety, and knowing right and wrong. But how are those feelings cultivated? If I attempt to cultivate all four of them at once, I am sure to get them all mixed up. Should I act with compassion one day, and cultivate feelings of shame the next?”

I replied, “No. One of the ancients said, did he not, that nothing must be added to man’s intrinsic nature? The four fundamental principles all exist within the mind, arising in response to circumstances and conditions. If you attempt to cultivate them separately, one by one, or to cultivate them together all at once, they will be like lumps in your mind clogging its working. Such an attempt is liable to result in an illness of some kind. I am just a country priest. I have only a nodding acquaintance with the Confucian teachings. However I will do my best to answer your question.

“All living things from human beings down to the lowest insect are originally endowed with a wondrous virtue. This virtue is neither benevolent nor righteous, sage-like nor ordinary, and yet it acts benevolently and righteously, and it can produce both a saint and an ordinary person. We may call it the mother of the four fundamental principles, the father of all existence, yet it itself is nameless, existing

prior to any distinctions. Shakamuni Buddha referred to it as the one great matter for which Buddhas appear in the world. Confucius called it the doings of supreme Heaven. Lao Tzu called it the great Way, wonderfully smooth. Mencius described it as a vast, inexorable, flood-like vital breath. Chuang Tzu said it was a divine pearl found north of the Red Water.

“It is inherent in each of us, but because we become immersed in greed, and that greed in turn permeates our own nature, it ceases to function as it should. The four fundamental principles may appear in us, but only briefly, like flying mist, so their inherent strength is lacking. Even if you want to act benevolently and righteously, you cannot.

“If you want to cultivate benevolence and righteousness, you must abandon thought in all its forms and maintain purity of mind. Your mind will gradually clear; your seeing, hearing, and other perceptions will break through and be liberated. You will become one with the universe and you yourself, though neither benevolent nor righteous, sage nor ordinary man, will perceive that you are a solitary mass of divine radiance. This is what *The Great Learning* means by ‘abiding in the highest good.’ It was for this that Confucius’s disciples Yan Hui and Yuan Hsien lived in circumstances of great poverty. Until you reach this point, whether you are engaged in scholarship or in religious practice, you will feel that you still have a long way to go. If you do reach it, however, the four fundamental principles will appear without your having to cultivate them. You will be benevolent and righteous, your insight and courage will naturally increase, and you will be able to see and discern all things with clarity. In governing others, you will never fail to do what is appropriate. How wonderful that will be! Norifusa, I want you to transmit what I have said to Mr. Inase.”

Norifusa performed a bow and said, “I’ll never be able to remember all that. Could you please write it down for me?” I tried to decline, but he refused to listen. So with a prayer for Mr. Inase’s far-reaching ambition, I jotted this down.

.....

K'ou Shun was a general under Emperor Kuan-wu, founder of the Later Han Dynasty. After quelling a peasant revolt at Ying-ch'uan during the Yellow Turban Rebellion (184), K'ou Shun stayed on as district commander of Ying-ch'uan. When his term of office expired and he was about to return home, the people blocked the road as he was accompanying the Emperor into the city and begged the Emperor "to lend them K'ou Shun for one more year." The Emperor granted the request, and the words "lending K'ou" became proverbial for district officials who performed their job so well their subjects did not want them to leave.

Meng Ch'ang, also known as Po Chou (2nd century), was governor of Shang-yu in Chekiang. Finding on taking up his post that his predecessor's greed and corruption had just about destroyed the valuable pearl fisheries, he did away with the evil practices and the fisheries soon revived. When forced by ill health to retire, the people would not let him depart, crowding the streets and hanging on to his chariot, obliging him to run away at night and hide in the marshes (Herbert Giles, *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary* #1513).

Four fundamental principles (shi-tan). "The heart of compassion is the entranceway to benevolence; the heart of shame, to dutifulness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, to observance of the rites; the heart of propriety, to knowledge" (*Mencius*).

One of the ancients said . . . man's intrinsic nature? No source for this saying has been found.

Confucius called it. . . . Hakuin cites a quotation from the *Book of Poetry* that appears in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (#33): "'His virtue is as light as a hair.' Still, a hair will admit of comparison as to its size. 'The doings of supreme Heaven have no sound or smell' — they represent perfect virtue."

Lao Tzu. "The great Way is very smooth, But people like rough trails" (*Tao-te ching*).

Mencius. "I am skillful in nourishing my vast, flowing *ch'i*" . . . It is surpassingly great and surpassingly strong" (*Mencius* IIA.2).

Chuang Tzu. "The Yellow Emperor went wandering north of the Red Water, ascended the slopes of K'un-lun, and gazed south. When he got home, he discovered he had lost his Dark Pearl. He

sent Knowledge to look for it, but Knowledge couldn't find it. He sent the keen-eyed Li Chu to look for it, but Li Chu couldn't find it. He sent Wrangling Debate to look for it, but Wrangling Debate couldn't find it. At last he tried employing Formless No-Mind, and Formless No-Mind found it" (*Chuang Tzu*; adapted from Watson, p. 129). "The Dark Pearl is the Way that cannot be obtained through knowledge, insight, or eloquence, but which is found in a state of mindlessness" (annotation).

This is what The Great Learning means by 'abiding in the highest good.' *The Great Learning (Ta Hsueh)* opens with the words: "What the Great Learning teaches is to clarify bright virtue, to renovate the people, and to abide in the highest good." See #395 on p. 647.

208. PREFACE ON SENDING MITANI SOCHIZUMI OFF TO EDO

This piece, like #203, was composed in Hakuin's fifty-eighth year, at the time of the Ryōtan-ji lecture meeting on the Precious Lessons of the Zen School. Although presumably written as a preface for a work or collection of some kind, we are not informed of its origins. Perhaps it was a collection of verses friends had written for the recipient. In any case, this piece is characteristic of inscriptions Hakuin wrote on various occasions for and about daimyō and lesser officials in his native Suruga and the surrounding provinces, and it is interesting in revealing the close relationships he had with these important figures.

Mitani Sochizumi (n.d.) was apparently the Karō or Chief Counselor of Kondō Chikazumi (1694–1788), the Daimyō of Inoia Castle in Tōtōmi province (the site is now incorporated into the city of Hamamatsu). Chikazumi was a descendant of Kondō Hidechika (also Yasumochi), celebrated as one of the "Three Stalwarts of Inoia" for the role he played in helping Tokugawa Ieyasu complete

his conquest of Tōtōmi province in the second half of the 16th century on his way to founding the Tokugawa Shōgunate.

KONDŌ CHIKAZUMI OF Inoya Castle in Tōtōmi province is a descendant of Kondō Iwami-no-kami Hidechika, a military retainer of the first Tokugawa Shōgun Ieyasu. He uses the sobriquet Genkai-sai. By nature a man of noble character, Chikazumi has for many years been a devoted follower of the Buddha Way. He constructed two hermitages, Genkai-an and Daitū-an, at sites of great scenic beauty, one located several miles to the east, the other to the west, of Inoya. In each of these hermitages he enshrined a statue of the Bodhisattva Kannon. His vassal Mitani Sochizumi assisted him in carrying out these projects.

In autumn of the second year of Kampō [1742], when I was at Ryōtan-ji to conduct a large Dharma meeting, Mr. Mitani invited me to one of these hermitages. I was able to spend several days amid its beautiful natural surroundings. He told me, “My lord did not build these hermitages because he hoped they would someday become large and splendid temples. His true purpose was simply to provide a place where people sincerely interested in Zen practice — even one person, or two — could come and stay in order to concentrate on investigating the matter of their self.”

I responded to this with a sigh of admiration, saying, “Lord Chikazumi is a truly wise man. With his inherent aptitude for pursuing the way of Zen, he may be the person with the deep aspiration needed to raise up the fortunes of our school. If this aspiration rouses a Zen stalwart to come here dragging a battered old cooking pot, and he hangs around chewing on nothing but vegetable stalks, and he proceeds to quietly and rigorously engage in hidden practice and thoroughly investigate the great matter, then you mustn’t speak of this hermitage as if it were a crude hut made from a few handfuls of reeds. It would surpass by a thousand million times any great monastery with its splendid golden halls. I well know that his vision is one that far transcends the ideas held by others who occupy similar positions. I have also heard that Lord Chikazumi’s everyday behavior is straight and true, that he upholds the precepts, performs zazen, and recites sutras with rarely seen

devotion and vigor. It is as rare as a lotus flowering amidst the flames. My only wish is that he takes his practice just one step further.”

Mr. Mitani said, “What would that be? Please tell me.”

“In the *Sutra of the Bequeathed Teaching*, the Buddha enumerated twenty difficulties humans must overcome if they are to reach attainment. One of them is the difficulty for the wealthy and famous to develop an affinity for the Way. Everyone is inherently capable of directly attaining the four Buddha wisdoms. Who is there that does not have a liking for the Way? But to enter that Way is extremely difficult. Unless a person enters the Way and realizes the oneness of all things in himself, even though he takes only one meal each morning and spends his days and nights engaged in a life of rigorous practice, even though that becomes known to the heavenly gods and they shower him with flowers and fill the air with the scent of marvelous incense, it is all meaningless, nothing more than an indication that he is mired within birth and death on a grand scale. But there is a single word or phrase that can sever even the finest, most minute roots of delusion. It is like a fine sword of enormous length that stands leaning against the sky always ready to destroy the old nests of illusion, or like an iron hammer of untold weight that will smash illusory thoughts to finest powder.

“A monk asked Chao-chou, ‘All things return to the One. Where does the One return to?’ Chao-chou replied, ‘When I was in Ch’ing-chou, I made a cloth robe that weighed seven pounds.’¹³³ These words can work with a marvelous effectiveness. If you take them and apply yourself to them in your practice, if you bore into them when you are meditating and when you are engaged in daily activities, when you are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, bore into them from the sides and from the front and from the rear, and continue boring into them until there is no place left to bore, no place to put either a hand or foot, nothing whatever you can apply thought or understanding to — at that time, if you keep pushing steadily forward without faltering, the time will come when everything suddenly falls away and satori opens up. The joy you experience at that time will be something you have never known before. No beneficial act you could perform would produce a result of such magnitude. How could

anyone who aspires to become a person of great stature think it worth his while to engage in any good or beneficent acts apart from this?”

Mr. Mitani said, “I would like you to write this down and give it to me as a parting gift before I leave for Edo.” I did as he requested.

209. PREFACE CONGRATULATING LAYMAN KUBOTA SŌUN ON HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

Nothing whatever is known of Layman Kubota. Ba Shigesada is also difficult to identify. Since Hakuin uses a short form of his surname, he could be Mr. Ōba or Mr. Baba, both of whom were government officials in Suruga province at this time.

LAYMAN KUBOTA SŌUN, who lives near the old marketplace in the southern foothills of Mount Fuji, is a man of noble character and aspirations. He is truly one of the finest gentlemen in the entire county. This year, the sixth of the Gembun era [1741], he attained the ripe old age of seventy. To celebrate this, his many friends got together and presented him with a hand-scroll containing a collection of verses and other writings. Some of the words in it were divinely inspired; others demonstrated amazing turns of phrase. The scroll was already inscribed with a large assortment of verses. “Hakuin alone has not made a contribution,” they said, so they asked Ba Shigesada, an elder from a neighboring village, to come here and request a piece from me.

I said to Mr. Ba, “Do you suppose that after Layman Sōun receives these congratulatory verses, he will take care of his health and live to be eighty?”

“Entirely possible, if he keeps taking good care of himself,” he said.

“If he keeps on doing that, do you think he can reach the age of ninety?”

“That would be much more difficult — maybe only one or two chances out of ten.”

“How about a hundred? Do you think he could reach that?”

“Reaching ninety would be quite difficult, so the chances of him reaching a hundred are not very good,” said Mr. Ba.

“Precisely,” I said. “But even if he did, even if he lived for eight hundred years like P’eng Tsu, or for a thousand like the sages Chih-sung and Huang-shih, he would eventually die. His life would still be as transient as the shadow from a lightning flash, or a fleck of foam on the vast sea. Even if your life does happen to extend for a long period of time, it is not something you want to place your trust in.

“But there is one person who exists even before the creation of heaven and earth, his beginnings completely unknown. When the universe is destroyed, he will continue on. He is always there with the utmost clarity right before your eyes. His vast immensity is inexhaustible. He has been called the fundamental principle of all existence, what Lao Tzu called ‘Tao.’ He has also been named the True Man of timeless age. Even the gods of heaven and earth do not fail to worship him.

“Layman Kubota’s mind at this moment, as he is busy greeting and seeing off guests, thanking them for congratulations and compliments received, holding and playing with his grandchildren, is just like this. If he fully grasps that mind and the eye of wisdom opens wide in him just as he is, he is a timeless, undying sage. If he does not grasp it, he remains an ignorant, deluded man, and however long he lives, he will one day ultimately perish.”

Layman Kubota, seek out the whereabouts of this mind. What is the true substance of the person who is now seeing and hearing and perceiving? If you continue to bore into this constantly, one day you will experience a joy much greater than any you have ever known. This is the marvelous Dharma that Zen says “transforms your bones.” It is the wondrous art that the father cannot transmit to the son.

It is this that I offer you in response to your request for some words to celebrate your seventieth birthday.

210. PREFACE FOR A COLLECTION OF VERSES ON A *BONSEKI* WRITTEN BY THE MONKS AT DAICHŪ-JI

This is an early piece, dating from Hakuin's thirty-eighth year. An annotation tells of a verse entitled "Bonseki" that Hakuin contributed to the Poison Blossoms collection; it is found in #347. Bonsan ("tray mountains") and bonseki ("tray stones"), miniature landscapes of stones, sand, or flowers, evolved as part of the culture in Japanese Zen monasteries during the Muromachi period. These pastimes, which priests engaged in with special zeal, are a recurring theme in the literature of the Five Mountains, the five principal Zen temples that flourished in the 14th and 15th centuries. For a discussion of the Zen school's connection with bonsan and bonseki, see The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, Chapter Three, "Rocks, Pumpkinhead, Toys, and Birds."

The identities of "Not Come" (Burai) Sensei and the Master of "Not Reside" (Fujū) Hermitage, assuming they are based in any way on actual persons, are unknown.

NOT COME SENSEI brought a rock to the Master of Not Reside Hermitage. "Mount T'ai is a larger version of this One Fist Rock," he said. "This One Fist Rock is a smaller version of Mount T'ai. There is fundamentally no difference between them in size, though people deludedly see one as large and one as small. The names One Fist Rock and Mount T'ai are themselves only provisional ones. Seeing as both One Fist Rock and Mount T'ai are non-sentient, one should not give rise to false, deluded notions about them. In which case One Fist Rock must possess some hidden teaching which is totally inexpressible."

When the Master of Not Reside Hermitage showed no sign of being pleased by these words, Not Come Sensei tried to draw him out using other means. He took One Fist Rock, placed it in the middle of the tray, and sat straight and erect, facing it without uttering a word. Not Come Sensei nodded his head. One Fist Rock nodded

its head as well. With that, the Master of Not Reside Hermitage danced the “dance of long life.”

Not Come Sensei never comes or goes, that is his nature. The same is true of the Master of Not Reside Hermitage, who never dwells anywhere. This rock alone remains on its tray throughout past and present, serene, brilliantly vivid, beloved and cherished by all.

I told my monks to compose verses on the *bonseki*. I joined them by adding a verse of my own:

After Empress Nu Kua created heaven and earth,
And shooting stars transmogrified into mountains,
I rolled down winding valleys looking for my home,
Tumbling from rugged peaks, clambering up again.
I came to this small scrap of land, a sage-like realm,
Evoking the time all things first emerged into being.
Sitting mindlessly across from two gaping old men,
Clouds rising up at the alcove come sailing my way.

In summer of the seventh year of Kyōhō [1722] Tetsu, the temple steward at Daichū-ji, brought a scroll to my temple. Producing it, he said, “The Rōshi had the monks compose verses on a *bonseki*. He wants you to evaluate them.”

“Ah, did he say that?” I replied. “Come nearer and listen closely. In forests where the phoenix roosts, lesser fowl swallow their cries and peeps. On the savanna where the lion dwells, the other animals crouch down in fear. Now, Daichū-ji is a wealthy temple with a fine crop of ‘good fields’ [monks], many of them ripened and ready for the harvest. Why come to a lazy good-for-nothing like me, a man who spends all his time dozing as if his eyelids had become glued shut, who doesn’t read a single word, who has forgotten nine-tenths of everything he was ever taught or learned? Compared to those ‘good fields’ of yours, I am no more than a weed or tare. You must winnow out the worthless, ill-formed grains and select only those that have ripened to maturity. I am completely unqualified to judge the quality of your verses, so please don’t ask me.”

But Tetsu persisted. “I didn’t mean that our own roost is lacking in phoenix monks. How could a lion’s den be devoid of lions? No, the idea to ask you was mine. Didn’t the quail, a bird unable to fly even

eight feet, approach the great *P'eng* bird, which can soar a hundred thousand *li*? Why do you insist on refusing me?"

"Ah! I see that you are resolved to force a mongrel dog to roar like a lion, to compel a butcherbird to warble like a phoenix." So I drafted this short piece containing my clumsy attempts to evaluate the verses. No doubt it will provide some hearty laughs for the brothers at Daichū-ji.

.....

After Empress Nu Kua created heaven and earth. The sister and successor to the legendary Fu Hsi, Nu Kua is said to have created the earth when it first emerged from chaos.

Didn't the quail, a bird . . . a hundred thousand li? "The little quail laughs at the *P'eng* bird [which has a back like Mount T'ai, wings like clouds filling the sky . . . and can soar ninety thousand *li*], saying, 'Where does he think he's going? I give a great leap and fly up, but I never get more than ten or twelve yards before I come down fluttering among the weeds and brambles. That's the best kind of flying anyway.' Such is the difference between big and little" (*Chuang Tzu*, p. 31).

POSTSCRIPTS (*BATSU*)

211. POSTSCRIPT FOR A COLLECTION OF VERSES ON A *BONSEKI* WRITTEN BY THE MONKS AT DAICHŪ-JI

This postscript was written for the collection of verses that is the subject of the previous piece, #210.

THIS SCROLL CONTAINS verses with qualities seen in the ancient poetry of the Han and Wei dynasties, with the elegance of compositions from the T'ang and Sung. It is invested with the hidden mysteries of the mountains and forests, and the splendid flavor of the rocks and springs. Here are the secret arts of Wang Ch'ang-ling; the wonderful world of Chia Tao. I found myself unable to put these verses down. I hummed them over and over, rambling slowly through them while taking my midday nap.

In my dreams a Taoist priest appeared. Standing casually with spiky hedgehog hair and a reptilian snout, he was clad in rags and looked altogether down and out. With an insistent voice that seemed tinged with anger and resentment, he said, "A monk can kill a rock, or he can give it life."

"Please tell me what you mean," I asked him.

Pointing to a small stone on a desk, he said, "This miniature mountain has untold grace and beauty. Long ago I transformed myself into the consort Pao Ssu, the favorite of Emperor Yu of the Chou dynasty. I rode with his majesty in a palanquin around the country, visiting all the great and celebrated mountains. I saw the rugged beauties of Mount Tai-hua, the incomparable Mount Chiu-i, the splendors of Mount Li, and the wonderful peaks of Mount Lu. But

this little piece of stone right here possesses all their virtues. Not even the gods and demons could create such a miraculous shape.

“If a group of monks were to wrinkle their brows and expend a bit of effort, they could surely produce wonderful verses of pure gold that would give a brilliant radiance to this rock and increase its fame by tenfold. It is only an ordinary insentient lump of stone, but it can acquire greater and more auspicious virtues if it encounters a good man.

“Once I was sojourning in your country. I congealed myself into a huge boulder, becoming a solid piece of resentment and anger, truly murderous in my purpose. I rose up more than twenty or thirty feet in height. I killed indiscriminately, dispatching those of both high and low estate, crushing birds and animals and humans. I continued killing, over and over, until the entire landscape was covered with rotting corpses. I was sure that not even the gods or demons could oppose me. How was I to know that I would encounter a staff wielded by an old priest and be broken to pieces, smashed so completely that not even a small particle would be left? Although a rock or stone is inanimate, when it brings harm to humans and other beings it becomes an evil and accursed thing.

“I was referring to myself when I said that ‘a monk can kill a rock, and a monk can give it life.’ A priest, appreciating that his debt extends even to the earth and its rocks, is unable to ignore them and pay them no heed. That is the reason I want you to add a verse of your own to this collection, one which will bestow its luster on me.”

“Ahh,” I said, “Now I understand. It was you who received the arrow from Miura’s bow in the Genryaku era [1184–5] long ago.”

The Taoist priest dipped his head and smiled. When I had finished writing my verse, I looked around. He was nowhere to be seen.

.....

Wang Ch’ang-ling and *Chia Tao* are well-known T’ang poets.

“Once I was sojourning in your country. . . .” The final part of the story is based on an account in the *Honchō Kōsō-den* #36 (*Lives of Eminent Japanese Priests*): “In Nasu county in Shimotsuke province there was an evil rock. Any man or beast that incurred its enmity

died. People called it the Life-taking Rock. One day, the Sōtō priest Gen'ō Genmyō went up to the rock and said, 'You are originally a solid lump of stone. Where does your fundamental nature come from? Whence does your spirit arise?' He rapped the stone three times with his staff. The stone is said to have ceased its evil deeds from that time forth."

In the Noh play *Sesshōseki* (*The Life-taking Rock*), which is based on this story, Gen'ō is passing through Nasu no Hara (the Field of Nasu) and sees a bird fall dead from the sky as it flies over a large, strange-looking rock. A woman appears and tells him that the rock is called the "Life-taker" because it kills all living beings that approach it. She further explains that at the time of the Emperor Toba-no-in, there was a lady of great beauty and talent at the imperial court who won the emperor's affection, but who was revealed by a diviner to be an evil fox demon in disguise. She ran off and hid in the Field of Nasu in the northern provinces but was hunted down and killed by a band of men led by Miura-no-suke Tsunetane, an archer of great skill. Her spirit took possession of the gigantic rock where she died, which came to be known as the Life-taker. The woman who tells Gen'ō the story disappears, but not before revealing to him that she is the spirit of the rock. When Gen'ō performs Buddhist rites on behalf of the spirit to lead it to the way of Buddha, the boulder splits in two, the fox spirit is revealed in its true form and promises the priest it will do no more harm.

212. COLOPHON FOR A COPYBOOK AT THE REQUEST OF A ZEN MAN

According to an annotation, this was a postscript (okugaki) for a copybook (tehon), a collection consisting of models of handwritten calligraphy for students to imitate.

BEING A COUNTRY priest of dismal talents, I have grasped my clumsy brush and scrawled some words into this booklet. I did so with a rather hopeless feeling, as I recalled the fine, spirited compositions, vying for supremacy like dragons and phoenixes, it contained, and the sublimity of the calligraphy, all those startled snakes slithering through the weeds. Although I have defiled several immaculate sheets of paper in this heedless manner, I did it only because you were so insistent in requesting it.

When a stone carver polishes a jadestone, he has to continue polishing it steadily over a very long period of time, devoting all his strength and effort to the task, otherwise he will never be able to give it the marvelous luster found in a splendid night-shining stone. You should remember this if you hope to attain that truly sublime beauty in your own literary efforts and calligraphy.

.....

All those startled snakes slithering through the weeds. A description commonly used for cursive-style calligraphy.

213. POSTSCRIPT FOR A COLLECTION OF LINKED VERSES

This early piece dates from Hakuin's thirty-seventh year. He was taking his first steps as a Zen teacher at Shōin-ji while striving at the same time to complete his own training.

Linked poetry (renku) was a popular form of collaborative Chinese verse in which two or more poets composed alternating lines or couplets of verse.

Of the three people who appear in the inscription — the priest of Daichū-ji, the “master of Jōsetsu-an,” and Attendant Kin — only the first can be identified. He is Kōga Chidan (d. 1735), the head priest of the Rinzai temple Daichū-ji, located near the city of Numazu.

ON A BEAUTIFUL moonlit night in the sixth year of Kyōhō [1721], the master of Jōsetsu-an and the old priest of Daichū-ji were sitting bathed in the radiance of the autumn moon, reflecting each other's light like two bright gems, and composing a series of splendid linked verses. Attendant Kin, who was there jotting down their efforts, later brought the verses to my temple and privately showed them to me.

As I began reading them, I felt as though the morning sun had swept away the mist, as though the autumn moon had burst from behind the clouds. Such matchless elegance! Such singular genius! It was as though I was browsing through the halls of the imperial library itself, or gazing at the boughs in a grove of precious red coral. The surprising shifts they took, their abrupt transitions, brought to my mind a tiger suddenly transforming into a dragon and soaring off into the heavens. Powerful beauty. Untrammelled freedom from start to finish. It was dazzling to my eyes and invigorating to my heart. I was completely enthralled. I thumped my knees over and over in admiration.

Attendant Kin produced a small sheet of writing paper. “I am under orders from the two priests to receive your appraisal of their verses,” he said.

With deepest respect for the worthy stature of these priests, and quaking before their stern severity, I replied, “Ahh, such earnest men. Such ardent men. It is they who bear the destiny of our school upon their shoulders. Theirs are the hands that will wave high the great Dharma standards. I will revere them to the end of the world, love and respect them until my final breath.

“But (*ahh*) how could the great and special favor I have received from them have brought me to the present embarrassing predicament? I have heard it said that when a clumsy person tries to do carpenter work he is sure to cut his hands. It is best that I emulate disciple Min and respectfully refuse your request.”

Attendant Kin bowed his head and said, “Do not refuse. Do not refuse. Do not be like the donkey of Ch’ien-chou. Be like the tiger cub at the foot of the cliff.” Thereupon I made two bows and proceeded to mark up the manuscript with my notations. In making red check marks above the verses, I am like a rootless vine twining around an old and venerable pine tree. In scribbling clumsy comments underneath the verses, I am guilty of offering a common shell as if it were a precious jewel.

.....

When a clumsy person . . . cut his hands. The reference to a clumsy person doing a carpenter’s work is from the *Tao-te ching*.

Disciple Min is Min Tzu-ch’ien, a disciple of Confucius. When someone wanted to appoint him to a high position, he said, “Will someone kindly refuse this offer for me? If they continue to press me, I will have to retire to the banks of the Wen River” (*The Analects of Confucius*, p. 43).

“*Do not refuse . . . the foot of the cliff.*” Attendant Kin alludes to a story told by the T’ang poet Liu Tsung-yuan. A donkey was taken to Ch’ien-chou, where donkeys were unknown. A tiger that chanced to see it was frightened by its size; hearing it bray, the tiger ran off and hid in the forest. After observing the donkey for many days from a place of concealment, the tiger, growing accustomed to its braying, came out of hiding and approached it. The donkey kicked angrily out at him. The tiger, rejoicing in the knowledge that this was the extent of the donkey’s power, promptly pounced and devoured it. Attendant Kin is telling Hakuin not to worry about being like the donkey of Ch’ien-chou that was thought to have a capacity it didn’t really have. He does have the capacity, and should act instead like a fearless young tiger.

I am like a rootless vine . . . as if it were a precious jewel. “Rootless vine,” *nenashi-kuzura*, is a specific reference to the dodder. Hakuin compares the markings he makes with his notations on the verses to this wiry, twining vine that is parasitic on other plants. The “precious jewel” is the fabulous jewel of Lu, which appears in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

INSCRIPTIONS (MEI)

The term Mei originally applied to inscriptions containing succinct formulations of some fundamental principle or rule of conduct that were engraved on stone, metal, or wooden surfaces. In time, it came to refer generally to maxims or other similar elegant compositions. Four of the mei included in the Poison Blossoms collection were composed for temple bells, four for memorial stupa towers and grave tablets, and several more for commemorative occasions.

214. INSCRIPTION FOR A BELL

We learn from the text that this piece was written in “a hinoto-i year.” This cyclical date could be either the fourth year of Hōei (1707), Hakuin’s twenty-third year, or the fourth year of Meiwa (1764), his eighty-third. The first seems implausibly early, the second, given the placing of this piece in Poison Blossoms, implausibly late. The local historian Machida Zuihō has suggested that the cyclical date hinoto-i may be a mistake for hinoto-u, which would be the fourth year of Enkyō (1747), Hakuin’s sixty-third year.

CHŌSHŌZEN-IN IN NAGASAKI village is deeply venerated in this part of northern Izu province as a site sacred to the Tathagata of Emerald Radiance. It is surrounded by flowing streams, and affords splendid views of the nearby mountains.

In autumn of this *hinoto-i* year a new bell was cast, and the head priest Chikuin Zogen came to me and asked me to write an inscription to engrave on it. The bronze bell, pealing with the voice of the Western quarter, will ripen crops for the autumn harvest, though of course it is an instrument that embodies many other excellent virtues as well. I was so pleased on learning that the bell had been cast that I was unable to refuse his request. I wrote this inscription to

celebrate the completion of a project whose ramifications will be truly vast and far-reaching:

Before this bronze bell had even been cast
Its peal swallowed up the unbounded void.
It is not a *shō* tone, it is not a *u* tone either,
It's not pitched too low, it's never too loud.

.....

The Tathagata of Emerald Radiance is Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaisajyaguru), the Lord of the World of Pure Emerald in the East, the Healing Buddha who vows to cure all illnesses, including that of ignorance.

Chikuin Zogen. Nothing is known about Chikuin. The title Zogen (also Zagen) is used for a Senior Priest.

The bronze bell, pealing with the voice . . . for the autumn harvest. The ancient Chinese concept of the Five Elements or Phases (*go-gyō*) — Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water — had applications in all areas of Chinese thought and culture. Metal (such as bronze) corresponds in terms of direction to the west, and seasonally to autumn. “It is said that a person who hears the sound of a temple bell on entering Nirvana will avoid falling into hell and gain rebirth in the Pure Land in the west” (Yoshizawa note).

Before this bronze bell . . . the unbounded void. “The sound of one hand” (annotation).

It is not a shō tone, it is not a u tone either. Ancient Chinese music, performed on drum, gong, flute, and cither, was composed of five notes or sounds: *gu*, *shō*, *kaku*, *mi*, and *u* in their Japanese pronunciation.

215. INSCRIPTION FOR A TEMPLE BELL AT KETSUJŌ-JI

Ketsujō-ji is a Rinzai temple in the hills west of Sumpu (present-day Shizuoka city). Hakuin's words about the "soundless sound" of the temple bell parallel those he used when exhorting students "to hear the sound of the single hand."

The preachings from your gaping golden mouth
Transcend the vast ocean of Buddhist scripture,
Boom the darkness from sentient beings' minds,
And produce fields of merit of unlimited virtue.
If your ear makes even a slight attempt to hear it,
You sink into the abyss of mere sight and sound.
If you turn within and locate the sound's source,
You fill the immense void together with its voice.
Buddha intoned his Dharma with a single tongue,
But a snowy egret's shrieking proclaims it as well.
All one hundred eight of your tunes are uncreated,
Like the Dharma preaching from a croaking crow.
[A person who hears your subtle, soundless sound]
Falls under the protection of countless demon hosts,
Is extolled and praised by all the thousand Buddhas.
Your sound razes the caverns where demons skulk,
Obliterates the dark dens of the discriminating mind.
It once stopped a recluse from partaking of his wine,
And once saved a fish tortured by a collar of swords.
It brings all the six perfections to immediate fruition
While eliminating all forms of illness and infirmity.
It swallows up that cold chaste moon on your right,
Then it spits out the radiant sun shining on your left.
Mind, Buddha, and sentient beings are a single reality,
So too your gold, silver, and copper are a single truth.
All the various merits and virtues I've set forth above
Are merely lingering echoes of your golden sounds.

.....

Gaping golden mouth. The Buddha's teaching is said to issue from his "golden mouth."

Fields of merit (fukuden) refers to people whose attainment, like a fertile field, produces a bountiful yield of merit and virtue.

If your ear . . . to hear it. Instead of being deluded by sensory perceptions, investigate their fundamental source in your own mind.

Buddha intoned his Dharma . . . single tongue. “Although the Buddha preaches the Dharma with a single voice, sentient beings [owing to their differing capacities] understand it differently” (*Vimalakirti Sutra*). But on achieving oneness with the bell’s sound in the attainment of satori, all sounds, including the cries of egrets, are the Buddha’s golden voice preaching the Dharma.

One hundred eight of your tunes. The temple bells rung in Buddhist temples at the year’s end are said to dispel human illusions, which are said to be one hundred and eight in number. When the sound of this bell is truly heard, i.e., through attainment of satori, one knows that illusions are no different from enlightenment, that all things are constantly preaching the Dharma.

It once stopped a recluse . . . wine. The recluse is the famous poet and wine bibber Tao Yuan-ming (365–427), whose friendship with Hui-yuan (334–416), a famous priest of early Chinese Buddhism, is referred to in several Buddhist collections. According to an account in *Yao-shan t’ang wai-chi*, ch. 12, when Hui-yuan and his fellow devotees formed the White Lotus Society, Tao was not invited to join. One day Tao set out to pay Hui-yuan a visit. As he was passing a large temple, he heard the temple bell boom out. His brow knitted into a frown as he realized he would not be able to imbibe in the temple’s sacred precincts. Being confirmed in his habit, he immediately ordered the litter bearers to turn around.

And once saved a fish . . . collar of swords is an allusion to a story involving Candakaniska, a famous Scythian king, who in the course of conquering northern India is said to have massacred millions of its inhabitants. Evil deeds of such magnitude destined him for the depths of hell, but thanks to the teachings he received from the Bodhisattva Asvaghosa, this fate was meliorated to rebirth as a fish. It was, however, a fish with a thousand heads, and it suffered the endless torment of having a wheel of swords growing from its body that constantly swirled about severing the heads, which were then

immediately replaced by new ones. An Arhat who appeared to him in the guise of a Buddhist monk saved him from this misery by ringing a small temple bell (*Fu-fa tsang-chuan*, ch. 5).

Are merely lingering echoes . . . sounds. “You must begin by turning within to investigate and fully grasp the source of the bell’s sound” (annotation).

216. INSCRIPTION FOR A SMALL TEMPLE BELL

This inscription is for a small temple bell (hanshō, literally “half bell”) that hung in the main hall at Shōin-ji. It is dated 1724, Hakuin’s fortieth year.

THIS IS NOT mind. It is not a thing or object, either. It is created neither by causes and conditions nor by human handiwork. Even Li Lou would be unable to discern its true shape. Shih K’uang would be unable to hear its voice. Such is the nature of this small “half” bell. If you investigate the meaning of the word “half,” you find that its body encompasses the entire immensity of empty space throughout the ten directions of the universe. If you investigate this immensity, you find that it is devoid of sound or smell and yet leaves no aftertraces whatever. Truly, it is the greatest tool in the Dharma King’s storehouse.

In spring of the ninth year of Kyōhō [1724], a foundry was commissioned to cast the new bell. The bell is now finished and hangs in a corner of our Main Hall. Whenever you strike it, a vast and marvelous sound rings out with utter freedom. Pressing my palms together in celebration, I say:

Before you were even cast *Gon gon gon gonnn*
And after you were cast *Gon gon gon gonnn*
The most exacting of all is *Gon gon gon gonnn*.

.....

Li Lou lived at the time of the Yellow Emperor. His sight was so acute he could see the filament at the tip of a stalk of autumn grass at a distance of a hundred paces.

Shih K'uang was a celebrated court musician of Duke P'ing of Chin.

Verse: "Given that its marvelous sound exists both before and after it is created, I want to ask my monks: 'Where do you suppose *Gon gon gon gonnn* comes from?'" (annotation).

217. INSCRIPTION FOR THE STUPA TABLET OF THE ZEN NUN KYŌSHIN CHISHŌ

Aside from the information contained in this piece, nothing is known about either the Zen nun Kyōshin Chishō or Zen man Ken.

ZEN MAN KEN from Buzen province lives in a hermitage several leagues distant from here. As he has been commuting from there to pursue his study at Shōin-ji for several years now, it almost seems as though he is a resident of the temple. In autumn of the second year of Gembun [1737] he received news that his mother had passed away. He was beside himself with grief, but he acted commendably by making a donation to conduct several ceremonies at Shōin-ji for the brothers in residence. This autumn, the fourth of Gembun, is the third anniversary of his mother's death. Both Suruga and Izu provinces have experienced serious crop failures this year, but Zen man Ken set out on begging expeditions, hoping amid the great difficulties to gather donations to use for his mother's rites, a *segaki* ceremony, and a vegetarian meal for the monks in training. I was inspired by his filial devotion to write this inscription for her stupa tablet:

Under the veranda a cricket churrs beneath a rising
moon,
Under a leafless tree a filial quail stands in an ancient
nest,
Don't think of Zen man Ken as the Wu Ch'i of our school,
Three years of hard practice surpass by far any stupa
tablet.

.....

A *segaki ceremony (segaki-e)* is a ceremony at which food and drink are offered to beings in the hungry ghost existence and the other realms of samsaric rebirth.

I was inspired by his filial devotion . . . for her stupa tablet. A stupa (Jap. *sotoba*, Sk. *stūpa*) is a shrine, sometimes a pagoda, often used to mark the remains of the dead. Here it refers to a tall wooden tablet, shaped like a stupa or pagoda at the top, which was used during the *segaki* ceremony and later transferred to the gravesite. Hakuin probably inscribed these words and the posthumous name of the deceased on the stupa tablet.

Under the veranda . . . in an ancient nest. “This is the divine amulet of the Hakuin school that divests you of your life. With these two lines, hell becomes dust. They are the Pure Land of Tranquil Radiance. [With this,] the memorial service is complete” (annotation). After leaving the nest, quail are said to take bits of food back to their mother and are thus regarded as “filial.”

Don't think of Zen man Ken . . . Wu Ch'i of our school. Wu-ch'i (d. B.C. 381), a celebrated general of the Chin dynasty, is said to have studied as a young man under the philosopher Tseng Ts'an, one of the most famous of Confucius's disciples, to whom is attributed the *Canon of Filial Piety (Hsiao-ching)*. When Wu Ch'i did not return home on his mother's death, Tseng banished him from his presence (*Records of the Grand Historian*, ch. 65).

218. INSCRIPTION FOR THE SUTRA TABLET OF JIJŌ-INDEN GYŌKI-JAKUMEI DAI-KOJI

Jijō-inden gyōki-jakumei dai-koji is the posthumous name of li Tomoyasu (d. 1093), a samurai who is regarded as the founder of the prominent li clan of Hikone. He also established Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi. “In the summer the master acceded to a request from Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province and went there to lecture on Precious Lessons of the Zen School” (Chronological Biography, Precious Mirror Cave, p. 207).

ON THE FIFTEENTH day of the eighth month in the second year of Kampō [1742], Lord Fujiwara Naosada [1689–1760], the twenty-second head of the li clan of Hikone in Ōmi province, held services at Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi to commemorate the six hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of clan founder Jijō-inden Gyōki-jakumei Dai-koji. For fifty days I conducted a practice meeting and lectured on the *Precious Lessons of the Zen School*. Services were held, prayers were offered for the repose of the Layman’s soul, and offerings of food and drink were presented to the more than one hundred priests in attendance. Zazen sessions and sutra recitations were carried out in accordance with the strictest standards. It was one of the most successful Zen gatherings in recent memory. A sutra tablet was prepared for the memorial service. On it I inscribed the following words:

Meritorious acts yet radiant after six hundred and fifty
years,
A mind of purity that will aid his progeny far in the future.
A stupa emblematic of his virtue towers thirty thousand
feet.
In gratitude, one hundred Zen priests practice zazen
together.

.....

A mind of purity. The word *Jijō* in the founder's posthumous name, literally "purifying your own mind," appears in the well-known *Verse of the Seven Buddhas of the Past* (*Shichi-butsu tsūkai no ge*): "Do not commit any evil, Perform many good deeds; Keep purifying your own mind, That is the teaching of the Buddhas."

One hundred Zen priests practice zazen together. "Just doing zazen won't bring any merit. If they're really Zen priests, no different from Shakamuni or Bodhidharma, they'll be able to bundle up 'Who is the true master?' 'Hear the sound of one hand,' and heaven and hell together and wipe their butts with them. This is a place where the devil, his heretical minions, and the cow-headed and horse-headed lictors and demons of hell must never show their faces. Because of that . . . [undecipherable]" (annotation).

219. INSCRIPTION FOR A BELL AT YŌDEN-JI IN OGAWA

Yōden-ji, a Rinzai temple belonging to the Myoshin-ji line, is located in present-day Shimizu city, Shizuoka prefecture. All that is known of donor Fukazawa Masahiro is that he resided in nearby Okitsu, suggesting a connection with the important Rinzai temple Seiken-ji in that village.

DONOR FUKAZAWA MASAHIRO, working together with friends in the area, had a small bell cast to accompany the zazen and sutra recitations performed day and night at Zuisen-zan Yōden-ji, Zuisen-zan meaning "the mountain [temple] of the pure springs." Placing my hands together in *gasshō*, I celebrate this by saying:

Two dragon bodies half exposed, with gems in their jaws,
Their figures cast in bronze but their bellies totally empty,
They awaken sleepers from a long dark night of
ignorance,
Eliminating endless barriers that birth and death throw up.

Sounds that permitted a monster to reach the Other Shore

Peal from its golden mouth, echoing over a pure mountain.

Who have we to thank for such exceptionally good karma?

Who but Mr. Fukazawa, also known by the name Masahiro.

.....

Sounds that permitted . . . other shore alludes to the story of the Scythian king Candakaniska, who massacred millions of people in his conquest of northern India. For that crime he was reborn as a fish with a thousand heads that suffered the endless torment of having a wheel of swords growing from its body that constantly swirled about, severing its heads. An Arhat appears and by ringing a small temple bell enables him to be reborn into a less terrible existence. The story is told in full in “Inscription for a Temple Bell at Ketsujō-ji” (#215).

Peal from its golden mouth . . . a pure mountain is the Buddha preaching the Dharma from his “golden mouth,” symbolized by the ringing of the temple bell. “Pure mountain” alludes to Yōden-ji’s mountain name, “Mountain of Pure Springs” (Zuisen-zan).

220. INSCRIPTION FOR THE SUTRA CASES AT SANMYŌZEN-JI

Sanmyōzen-ji, a Sōtō temple in Kobayashi village in northeastern Suruga, contained within its precincts a kyōzuka, a sutra mound or earth tumulus containing sutras and epitaphs. It was the largest of five such tumuli found near the present city of Numazu. When the Sanmyō-ji mound was investigated in the first part of the 20th century (A History of Numazu City, Numazu-shi shi, pp. 190–92), six

sutra cases were discovered, which are now preserved in the Tokyo National Museum. The whereabouts of the stone stele bearing Hakuin's inscription that is mentioned at the end of the verse is at present unknown.

Sanmyō-ji, the temple on the hill
(Its "mountain name" is Gōgaku),
Was once they say of great renown,
Owning manors and extensive fields.
Long ago it was an ancient mound
With a curious old pine tree over it.
In the Kyōhō era's nineteenth year
(The cyclical sign was *kinoe-tora*),
Typhoon winds from the northeast
Stripped the soil and tree branches.
The mound caved, it toppled down
As if struck by a monstrous paw.
Inside, a large jar was discovered,
Ringed by small jars like children.
Inside were six cylindrical cases
Made of a bronze-colored metal.
They were all completely empty,
Not even a fragment was found.
What could they have once held?
Asked both the young and old alike.
Further study of the metal cases
Revealed several lines of script.
Each of the cases was engraved
With the name of a sutra donor:
"The *Lotus*, one hundred copies;
Spring, the fifth year of Kenkyū,
The courtier Fujiwara Sadamune."
His consort and names of other
Illustrious persons, Genji, Ban,
Tachibana, Ki were also found.
Ah, the ancient warriors' piety,
Their sincere, deeply held faith!

We marveled at such devotion,
Feeling pangs of sorrow as well.
Sutras buried in a *kinoe-tora* year
Had emerged in a *kinoe-tora* year!
Nine turns of the sixty-year cycle,
Between the Kenkyū and Kyōhō eras.
The sutra cases were put in Sanmyō-ji,
Villagers vied over custody of the jars.
The village headman, Yoshida's father,
A highly respected elder in the county,
Fearing some of the jars might be lost,
Made villagers return them to the site.
To commemorate this rare occurrence
Priests were asked to perform services,
A splendid ceremony was carried out,
The *suiriku* rites for repose of the dead:
I pray that the sages in all ten directions,
The Great Awakened Being above all,
Will endorse this small effort we make,
That the gods who protect the Dharma
And demons throughout the universe
Will free from the paths of suffering
Those who interred these sutras here
And aid them to attain full awakening,
I also wish Mr. Yoshida's descendants
Prosperity and long life in the future.

Unexpectedly asked to write some words,
I now learn they will be engraved in stone!

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, the twentieth year of Kyōhō [1735], the Priest of the Sala Grove [Hakuin] records these matters in joyful admiration.

.....

In the Kyōhō era's nineteenth year is 1734. Kinoe-tora are the two Chinese characters that represent this year in the sexagenary cycle.

Spring, the fifth year of Kenkyū is 1194.

*The Priest of the Sala Grove [Hakuin] records these matters in joyful admiration. Hakuin signs this inscription with the sobriquet Shara-rin funō, literally, “the monk in his humble robe at the foot of the Sala Tree,” an abbreviated form of *Shara juge sendai rōnō*, “the old reprobate monk seated under the Sala Tree,” which he sometimes used in signing his paintings and calligraphy.*

221. INSCRIPTION TO BE HUNG IN THE MONKS’ HALL OF KANNON-JI

“During the winter of 1736 the master’s lay student Uematsu Suetsuna (1701–71) established a new temple named Kannon(zen)-ji on the site of a former Hara temple. He had a small Zen hall and attendants’ quarters constructed there, and asked the master to conduct services to consecrate the Buddhist images in the temple. The master wrote some Dharma instructions and a memorial inscription for the occasion, both of which still exist” (Chronological Biography, 1736, age 52; Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 203–4).

The words in the title translated “inscription to be hung” are ryōhai, “hai” referring to the wooden plaque on which Hakuin would write the inscription and “ryō” to the beam or joist on the wall inside the building above which the plaque would be hung.

Kannon-ji was never registered with the bureau of shrines and temples in Edo, and in the Meiji period it ceased to function as a religious entity. Its images were moved next door to the Uematsu clan’s ancestral temple Tokugen-ji (Hakuin Oshō Nempu, note, p. 194).

IN THE ELEVENTH month of the first year of Gembun [1736] Uematsu Suetsuna, after holding memorial services for his father Beppō Gensū Koji and his younger brother Shingan Zeshō Shinji, established a new temple named Myōchi-san Kannonzen-ji on the

site of an old temple. A small Monks' Hall and modest attendants' quarters were constructed, and at the opening ceremony when the Buddhist images were enshrined, I read out a verse, giving an account of the circumstances surrounding the events.

Reading through the stories about filial children long ago,
I was impressed by the extent of their love and devotion.
The tale of the brocade bag, the amethyst, the pot of gold,
Carp under the ice, bamboo in winter, flavorsome water.
All these acts of filial devotion within the transient world
Are worthier still when performed after the parent's death.
A son of the late Mr. Uematsu, named Suetsuna, doted
on
His younger brother, served his father, and loved
learning.
In summer of this year, the first of Gembun, *hinoe-tatsu*,
His father passed away, his body consigned to the
flames;
Before summer passed, his younger brother Korefusa
also
Died at the untimely age of twenty, much, much too soon.
A quiet, amiable person, of good and gracious
inclinations,
Korefusa seemed destined to become a man of great
stature.
He was held in deepest esteem by his relatives and
siblings,
But cherished above all others by his father and his
mother.
Both old and young grieved the death of such a favored
boy,
Even in neighboring villages the loss of a gifted son was
felt.
Heartbroken by the sudden bereavement, the Uematsu
clan
Solemnly asked the priests to hold services for the
departed.

We performed with great determination a *suiriku*
ceremony

For the spirits of the dead, and other auspicious rites as
well.

In western Hara there's a temple, abandoned for many
years,

Over whose gate the name Kannon Myōchi used to be
seen.

Now night owls hoot from the boughs of the withered
pines,

Rabbits and foxes make their dens in impenetrable
thickets.

Layman Gensū, patriarch of the Uematsu clan, had
hopes of

Reestablishing the temple, but he died before realizing
them.

His son and heir, inspired by his father's splendid
ambition,

Had the undergrowth cleared, a building site prepared,
and

On it he constructed a small hall designed for Zen
training,

Enshrining in it a sacred figure of the Bodhisattva
Kannon.

A marvelous figure of the Bodhisattva, austere and
solemn,

Said to be carved by the great priest Kōbō of Mount
Kōya.

On the temple's north side a lonely room's been made
ready,

As it is hoped a qualified priest will come here and reside.

For Suetsuna wants not only to realize his father's dream,

But to assure a favorable rebirth for his deceased brother.

Any priest who resides here doing zazen and reciting
sutras

Should perform them keeping the son's purpose in mind,

Helping the deceased to reach attainment in future lives,

Enabling them to fully realize the four Buddha wisdoms.
I deeply and most devoutly pray that old Layman Gensū
Residing in the other world, and his son Shingan Zeshō,
Availing themselves of good karma from their past lives,
Seat themselves on the self-nature's golden lotus throne;
I pray that Shaka and every saint throughout the universe
Joins with the fearless Bestower of Boundless
Compassion
To ensure the Uematsu clan's success long into the
future.

The old man of Shōin-ji, wishing everyone long life.
A winter day in the eleventh month, first year of Gembun
[1736].

.....

Beppō Gensū Koji and *Shingan Zeshō Shinji* are both posthumous names.

Reading through the stories about filial children long ago. Probably a reference to the *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety* (*Erh-shih-ssu hsiao*), the classic text of Confucian filial piety written during the Yuan dynasty. Examples of Hakuin's retelling of these stories are found in a letter he wrote his friend Watanabe Sukefusa (*Beating the Cloth Drum*, pp. 1–10).

The tale of the brocade bag . . . flavorsome water. These are various stories of filial devotion.

1. *The brocade bag.* Although the story has not been located, an annotation says it was about a bag of red damask that fell from the sky into Tzu Shih-ying's garden.
2. *The amethyst.* Liang Yen-kuang learned that his ailing father could be saved from his illness by ingesting five kinds of pebbles. He was distraught, not knowing where to obtain such items. Then, happening upon one of them in a garden, he took it home with him. He found that it was a precious amethyst.

Selling it, he was able to obtain the other pebbles (*History of the Sui Dynasty, Sui Shu*, ch. 3).

3. *The pot of gold*. Kuo Chu lived in great poverty with his mother, wife, and son. Realizing that he could not provide for them all, and reasoning that since he could have another son but never another mother, he decided to sacrifice his son by burying him alive. As he was digging the hole, he uncovered a large pot of gold.
4. *Carp beneath the ice*. Wang Hsiang lost his father's love when his stepmother constantly criticized him. He remained devoted to his parents and cared for them when they were sick. One winter, when the stepmother had a sudden craving for a favorite carp dish, Wang lay down naked on the surface of a frozen lake, thawing the ice with his body heat so he would be able to catch the fish for his stepmother.
5. *Bamboo in winter*. Meng Tsung was told by his mother's physician that she could be cured from her illness by eating bamboo shoots. Though it was winter Meng went into the bamboo grove looking vainly for some shoots. In his frustration he began to cry. As the tears fell, bamboo shoots began shooting up from the ground. He took some, made a soup, and fed it to his mother, who soon recovered.
6. *Flavorsome water*. Chiang Shih's mother liked to drink water from a certain river that was many leagues distant, and she was also fond of minced carp, so Chiang and his wife Pang carried the water for her to drink and prepared the carp dish for her table. A fountain of water suddenly sprang up in the garden, gushing water of the kind his mother liked, and each day two carp jumped out of it, enabling him to satisfy his mother's wishes.

All these acts of filial . . . after the parent's death. "Because an act of filial devotion that extends into the next life will save his father from falling into the torments of hell" (annotation).

In summer of this year, the first of Gembun, hinoe-tatsu. The year is 1739. One of the ways of indicating dates in Edo Japan was through the sexagenary cycle; a full cycle of sixty was made by combining

the names of the ten “stems” (*jikkan*) and twelve “branches” (*jūnishi*). Each combination, in this case *hinoe-tatsu*, would occur once every sixty years.

The great priest Kōbō of Mount Kōya is Kūkai (774–835), founder of the Shingon Sect on Mount Kōya, to whom a great many Buddhist statues are piously attributed.

Seat themselves on the self-nature’s golden lotus throne. Annotations point out that the wording “seat themselves” underscores the fact that breaking free of the cycle of birth and death in Hakuin Zen is something they themselves must achieve.

The fearless Bestower of Boundless Compassion is Kannon Bodhisattva.

The old man of Shōin-ji, wishing everyone long life. “He is someone with no less art and prowess than the Bodhisattvas Miroku and Kannon, so his prayers are sure to be answered” (annotation).

222. INSCRIPTION FOR A STUPA COMMEMORATING YAKUSHI NYORAI AT DAIRYŪ-JI

An annotation tells us that this inscription was occasioned by the enshrinement of a large (san-shaku) image of Yakushi Nyorai, the Buddha of Medicine and Healing, at Dairyū-ji, a Rinzai temple situated at the foot of Mount Ashitaka, not far from Hara village.

A toad with three legs has put on a pair of sandals made of steel.

He’s one with the Tathagata; they’re identical in shape and color.

The Dharma-body’s great malady may take three different forms,

And two kinds of spiritual light that darken the mind twice over.

Seeing these extremely steep and lofty lights and three maladies

Might make you roar with laughter; or might make you very sad.

Let me reveal the Buddha of Emerald Light to you as he really is:

Chestnuts and oranges snap out more sharply than thunder claps.

.....

A toad with three legs . . . made of steel. “This will be incomprehensible until you have *kenshō*. Once you have *kenshō*, whatever is said will hit the mark” (annotation).

He’s one with . . . shape and color. “After you’ve seen this toad, pines trees are the Tathagata, cherry trees are the Tathagata, Gonbei is a Buddha, and so is Hachibei too” (annotation). “But I could say, descending to the second principle, that you are sublime just as you are: pine trees as pine trees, bamboo as bamboo, Denpachi as Denpachi, and Matasuke as Matasuke — and all are Tathagatas to boot!” (annotation).

The Dharma-body’s great malady may take three different forms is an allusion to the koan “Ch’ien-feng’s Three Kinds of Infirmity and Two Kinds of Light”, which is classed in Hakuin Zen as one of the *nantō* or “hard to pass” koans. “This Dharma-body has three kinds of infirmity and two kinds of light. Can any of you clarify that?” asked Ch’ien-feng. Yun-men came forward and said, “Why doesn’t the fellow inside the hermitage know what’s going on outside?” Ch’ien-feng roared with laughter. “Your student still has his doubts,” said Yun-men. “What are you thinking of?” said Ch’ien-feng. “That’s for you to decide,” replied Yun-men. “If you’re like that,” Ch’ien-feng said, “I’d say you’re home free” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 13). See #42; also *Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, p. 19.

Two kinds of spiritual light that darken the mind twice over. “These are two koan barriers. When you’ve really heard the sound of one

hand you will make short work of this kind of thing” (annotation).

Let me reveal . . . thunder claps. “There is no Yakushi or Kannon apart from this. The stone mortar gets up and dances a jig. The central pillar stands and chortles a tune” (annotation).

223. INSCRIPTION FOR A STUPA ON THE ENSHRINEMENT OF A BUDDHIST STATUE AT KANNON-JI

“In autumn, the ninth month of the fifth year of Hōreki [1755], Uematsu Suetsuna presented a carved figure of Akiba Gongen to Kannon-ji and asked the master to perform consecration rites for it” (Chronological Biography, Precious Mirror Cave, p. 221). Hakuin also wrote a verse for this ceremony that appears in the next piece, #224.

On this autumn day amid the fifth year of Hōreki,
Dharma thunder boomed out from Mount Myōchi.
It must have aroused Sanjakubō on Mount Akiba,
Wakened him from his sleep atop Potalaka Peak.
Kōbō Daishi of Mount Kōya carved this figure of
The Bodhisattva within a state of deepest samadhi.

.....

Dharma thunder boomed out from Mount Myōchi. Mount Myōchi (Myōchi-san) is the “mountain name” of Kannon-ji.

It must have aroused Sanjakubō . . . atop Potalaka Peak. Sanjakubō is a name given to Akiba Gongen, the *kami* of Mount Akiba, who is considered a manifestation of the Bodhisattva Kannon. Mount Potalaka is the mountain sacred to Kannon.

Kōbō Daishi . . . a state of deepest samadhi. Kōbō Daishi is Kūkai, founder of the Japanese Shingon Sect, to whom a great many Buddhist statues are attributed.

224. VERSE AT THE SAME ENSHRINEMENT CEREMONY

Merciful Kannon Bodhisattva stands in the center,
Flanked on her left by the *kami* from Mount Akiba.
The lord and vassal together, like water and waves,
Avert calamity and keep poor villagers from harm.

.....

The kami from Mount Akiba. According to the *Chronological Biography* (see #223) this was a carved figure of Akiba Gongen (also known as Sanjakubō), a protective deity of the Shintō Shrine on Mount Akiba in Tōtōmi province. For a description of this deity, see the long letter included in *Beating the Cloth Drum*, pp. 112–17.

Avert calamity and keep poor villagers from harm. The text specifies the eight calamities (*hachi-nan*), of hunger, thirst, cold, heat, water, fire, weapons, and soldiers.

225. INSCRIPTION FOR A STUPA COMMEMORATING THE ENSHRINEMENT OF THE TEN KINGS AT KŌMYŌ-AN

This piece is dated 1756, Hakuin's seventy-second year. Kōmyō-an, which was located in Ōno village at the foot of Mount Ashitaka in

Suruga province, not far from Hakuin's temple, no longer exists. Fifteen years prior to this Hakuin wrote a long verse on the Ten Kings, the rules who preside at the gates of the underworld and assign souls to heaven or hell, for an "eye-opening" ceremony at Jissō-an near Hamamatsu (Book Three, #151). For his views on the Buddhist hells and the roles of Jizō Bodhisattva and the Ten Kings, see The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 232–52.

ACCORDING TO INFORMATION handed down by village elders, Kōmyō-an in Ōno village was originally a large temple consecrated to Jizō Bodhisattva, in which statues of Emma, the Lord of Hell, and the Ten Kings were also enshrined. As a sacred site it had no rival in eastern Suruga, inspiring devout worship in people throughout the surrounding villages. Unfortunately, during a great flood many years ago a monstrous conch that nested in a great boulder at Yanagizawa broke away and raised enormous waves, inundating the fields and paddies of five or six nearby villages and turning the entire area into an inland sea. The furious river gods burst the embankments along the river, allowing a muddy torrent to swallow up people's homes and cause tremendous damage to shrines and temples. Kōmyō-an was demolished, its statues of the Ten Kings becoming victims of the water gods.

Marvelous to relate, while all the other images were lost, the sacred figure of Jizō Bodhisattva alone was recovered, having been washed three leagues downstream to the village of Yoshiwara. It is now known in Yoshiwara village as the Ōno Jizō.

In the meantime Kōmyō-an lay in ruins, with nothing but its foundations remaining. More recently Shōgen Shuso of [the new] Kōmyō-an vowed to expend all his resources to have new statues of the Ten Kings made and enshrined in the temple in order to advance the fortunes of his parents Chigaku Sōhon Anju and Anshitsu Myōkyū Daishi in the next life. It was a splendid aspiration, although the means at his disposal for bringing it to realization were meager. Praying to the gods and Buddhas for their help, he proclaimed in a vow that he would recite the Shingon school's Mantra of Light one million times. He started in chanting the mantra and continued the recitation relentlessly.

A tremendous thing has now happened. This summer, in the sixth year of Hōreki [1756], the sacred figures are all completed and waiting to be enshrined! No doubt it was the result of the mantra's wonderful power. Today, on the sixteenth day of the seventh month, having been asked to conduct an enshrinement ceremony to "open the eyes" of the figures, I offer the following verse:

Saving beings from their sufferings in the three paths,
They carry out their vow within the realm of the dead.
Without, revealing great compassion as Rulers of Hell,
Within, changing shape at will as the Bodhisattva Jizō.

.....

A monstrous conch . . . turning the entire area into an inland sea. Yanagizawa village is located on the Takahashi River in the hills about two kilometers from Ōno village. According to local legend, the large boulder known as the Hachijō Ishi fell from the mountain to its present position following a flood in the year 1635. The conch made its nest in the rock, and when it couldn't find food nearby it would lay waste to surrounding fields. One night another great flood inundated the area, and the next morning tracks were found leading from the rock directly down to the ocean. The conch had caused the storm in order to make its way back into the sea.

According to the *Chronological Biography* for 1697 (age 13), Hakuin visited Yanagizawa as a young boy to engage in solitary religious practice, doing zazen on top of the rock: "He climbed Mount Yanagizawa to seek a spot more favorable to self-discipline. He came upon a flat rock, a foot or so in width, in the middle of a mountain stream . . . totally removed from the world and its dust. He took a chisel and carved a likeness of Kannon Bodhisattva into the face of the cliff and seated himself quietly before the image. He recited the *Diamond* and *Kannon* sutras and the *Daihi* mantra several times each, and prayed fervently to Kannon for assistance. . . . He continued this practice every day without fail, visiting the spot in the morning and not leaving until nightfall. One day . . . he found that several days of heavy rainfall had flooded the road, blocking his path. . . . He shed his robe, bundled it up, and

slung it over his shoulder. Brandishing a sword high above his head in his right hand, he waded across the perilous current. Upon someone later asking why he had held his sword aloft as he crossed the flood, he replied, ‘I’ve heard floodwaters are infested with huge fish and monstrous turtles that lurk there to assault innocent people. If one of them had attacked, I would have cut it in two!’” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp, 154–5).

The Ōno Jizō. “This Jizō is now in Yōtoku-ji” (annotation). Known as the Migawai Jizō, it is enshrined at Yōtoku-ji, a Rinzai temple in Yoshiwara (incorporated into the present-day city of Fuji in Shizuoka prefecture).

Shōgen Shuso. Nothing is known about Senior Monk Shōgen.

Mantra of Light. This important mantra performed by the Shingon sect, consisting of about twenty Sanskrit characters, is said to embody the full power of Vairocana Buddha.

226. INSCRIPTION FOR KIDA-IN TO BE ENGRAVED ON A STONE STELE

Hakuin wrote this piece at the request of his lay student Kida Genshō, who had studied under him at Shōin-ji and later became involved in the tangled process through which Poison Blossoms came to be published. The colophon Kida contributed to the work, and the part he played in the proceedings, is explained in the introduction to Poison Blossoms (pp. 8–12). Kida Genshō requested this inscription for an ancestor of the Kida clan who is referred to in the title as Kida-in, an abbreviation of his full posthumous name, Kida-in Gekkei Shūen Koji.

SSU-MA KUANG SAID, “Leave money to your heirs and they will only fritter it away. Leave them a library of books and they will never read them. Far better for you to secretly increase your virtue — that’s a lasting legacy for your descendants.”

Kida Taneshige of Naniwa, on the occasion of his ancestor's one hundredth death anniversary, held memorial services and offered participants a vegetarian meal. He also erected a stone stele and asked me to compose an inscription for it.

Tracing back, we find that the Kida clan is descended from Lord Miyamoto Manjū, a general in command of the military garrison in the northern provinces. For over two hundred years the Kidas resided in the Tada district of Settsu province. In the Jōkyū era [1219–22], nine generations after Lord Manjū, his descendant Shigenaga distinguished himself with brave exploits he performed while serving under Lord Yoritsune, Commander in Chief of the Expeditionary Force Against the Barbarians [*Sei-i shogun*]. For this he was made Governor of Mino province [*Mino-no-kami*] and received the district of Kida in Mino as a private estate. That is the origin of the Kida clan.

Descendants of Shigenaga carried on the family line in Mino until the 15th century when Kida Yoshikatsu returned to reside in Tada in Settsu province under the patronage of the Shiokawa clan. During the wars of the Ōnin period [1467–77] Yoshikatsu fought with great distinction, throwing back the combined armies of Settsu, Kawachi, Ōmi, and Awa. His son Shigemasa also displayed outstanding valor. The entire country was in a state of chaos at the time, with everyone great and small suffering untold hardships.

Kida Yoshiuji, the eldest son of Yoshikatsu's eldest son, said to his younger siblings "At such times, warriors should cease hostilities. It is said, 'Do not enter a dangerous country. Do not reside in a state at war.' How true those words are. What could be better than living at peace and secretly accumulating virtue unknown to others without bringing misfortune upon your descendants?"

Yoshiuji fashioned a small hut next to the Tada Shrine and lived there, meting out his words to others as though they were precious jades. When Yoshiuji's grandson Shigemi became head of the family, he moved to Naniwa and began to engage in trade. The family grew extremely wealthy and proliferated into over a score of collateral branches. All of them shared in the clan's success, and none could say they did not partake of the benefits that Yoshiuji's virtuous

conduct had created for them. Yoshiuji — his posthumous name is Kida-in Gekkei Shūen Koji — was thus the founder of the Kida clan.

I thought to myself, “A man like Yoshiuji, who correctly discerned the current of the times and inculcated virtuous behavior in his sons and grandsons, must have been a truly good person, both wise and noble-minded.”

You, Mr. Kida, should consider the source of the great wealth and prominence your family now enjoys. Honoring the gods and Buddhas above, helping the poor and needy below, performing virtuous acts — those are the source. The founder of your clan worked mightily to carry out such good and benevolent acts. Your brothers now receive the blessings accruing from his efforts. If you merely take satisfaction in the splendid circumstances you presently enjoy and make no effort to maintain that inheritance, your family will surely decline.

You have the makings of a superior Zen layman. You have always been devoted to the Three Jewels [Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha]. More recently, you entered my chambers and engaged in Zen study. You have applied yourself to your practice with diligence, and you have gained some measure of attainment. But you must strive hard and not be satisfied with this minor accomplishment. The more you understand, the greater you must strive. The more satoris you attain, the more intense your resolve must be to make further progress. Penetrate deep into the profound Dharma source, constantly spur forward your practice of the four great Bodhisattva vows to bring the benefits of emancipation to all living beings caught in the realms of transmigration. This practice — the great practice of the Bodhi-mind — is what all Bodhisattvas perform. Even if a person masters all the secrets in the three worlds and performs ten thousand benevolent acts, if he lacks the Bodhi-mind he will end up falling into the paths of Mara. It is for this reason the great master Yun-men uttered the words, *“Look closely!!”*

.....

Ssu-ma Kuang (1018–86). The famous Chinese historian and scholar is said to have written these words as precepts for his

descendants. Hakuin often used them for inscriptions on his paintings. See *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 179–81. “*Look closely!!*” (*kokan-i*) is a brief and emphatic injunction associated with master Yun-men, who sometimes used it to end his addresses to his monks.

BOOK EIGHT

Inscriptions for Paintings (*San*)

Book Eight is composed of verse and prose that Hakuin inscribed on his paintings. In Japan, these inscriptions, known as san (literally “to praise”), were added to portraits of eminent Zen figures and to paintings of landscapes, birds and flowers, and other subjects as early as the Kamakura period. During the Muromachi period, they were a characteristic of paintings by Zen priests of the Gozan monasteries of Kyoto and Kamakura. Someone other than the artist generally inscribed the words, although in some cases, such as the chinsō portraits of Zen priests, the priest portrayed in the painting often added the words himself.

Although many examples exist of san that Hakuin inscribed on other painters’ works, those in this Book, and in the additional collection of Inscriptions for Paintings found in Book Ten, were all ones that he wrote on his own paintings.

Many collections containing reproductions of the paintings described here have appeared over the last century or so. The most comprehensive are those by Takeuchi Naotsugi (1965) and Yoshizawa Katsuhiko (2011).

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227. BUDDHA LEAVING THE MOUNTAINS

Putting faultless polish on his Great Perfect Mirror,
Burying alive the murky shadows of self-deception,
He left the mountains a gaunt bag of skin and bone.
A white heron beats its way over a snowclad village.

.....

Putting faultless polish . . . of self-deception. “Shakamuni’s enlightenment in the Snowy Mountains” (annotation). See Hakuin’s comments on the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom in #144, pp. 202–3.

He left . . . skin and bone. Hakuin’s paintings depicting Shakamuni leaving his long retreat of rigorous practice in the mountains generally show him in a severely emaciated state.

228. THE THIRTEEN BUDDHAS

The Thirteen Buddhas (Jūsan-butsu), a classification that includes Bodhisattvas as well, were often depicted in painting and used in Buddhist rites during the Edo period. They are: Fudō Myō-ō, Shakamuni Nyorai, Monju Bosatsu, Fugen Bosatsu, Jizō Bosatsu, Miroku Bosatsu, Yakushi Nyorai, Kannon Bosatsu, Seishi Bosatsu, Amida Nyorai, Ashuku Nyorai, Dainichi Nyorai, and Kokūzō Bosatsu. Dwelling in the world of the dead, and with links to the thirteen “kings” or judges who rule under the authority of King Emma, the Thirteen Buddhas promote the fortunes of the dead at rites held following a person’s death.

According to an annotation, this inscription was written at the request of a female member of the Watanabe family of Hara who is referred to here by the posthumous name Kaiten Keiju Daishi.

KAITEN KEIJU DAISHI commissioned Kanō Morinobu to paint the sacred figures of the Thirteen Buddhas. They have a bearing that is altogether right and fitting, and faces that convey their great nobility. The myriad virtues they possess bring pleasure to the viewer's heart. At Kaiten Daishi's request, I wrote an inscription for the painting:

Just as the thirteen strings on a lute produce a single melody,
The Buddhas' tasks may vary, but are identical in non-doing.
Gold can be fashioned into vessels of many shapes and sizes,
But when you strike them, they all ring with the same sound.

.....

Kanō Morinobu is the original name of the well-known painter Kanō Tan'yu; given his dates (1602–74), Kaiten Daishi must have commissioned this painting well before Hakuin's birth.

229. VERSES INSCRIBED OVER IMAGES OF THREE BUDDHAS DRAWN USING THREE THOUSAND BUDDHAS' SACRED NAMES

Hakuin inscribed these three verses on a set of three paintings, each one containing an image of a Buddha, together representing the three Buddhas of the three kalpas of past, present, and future. The

artist, instead of painting the Buddhas in the usual manner, delineated them by using the names of Buddhas, a thousand for each of the three images, written in very small Chinese characters. This inscription, from the early years of the Kampō era, which began in 1741, places it in Hakuin's late fifties. The present whereabouts of the paintings are unknown.

IT IS WRITTEN in the *Sutra on Creating Images of Buddha*, "The Buddha said to the King of Khotan, 'If in the past, present, or future a person creates an image of Buddha, the boundless merit and virtue of such an act is beyond calculation. He will be reborn in the heavenly realms, where he will enjoy pleasures of every kind, and his body will assume the purplish golden color of a Buddha. If he happens to be reborn in the human realm, it will be into the household of a king, prime minister, or a man of great wealth or great wisdom and benevolence.'" The Buddha also states in a verse in the *Lotus Sutra*, "All persons who draw or paint, or have others draw or paint, an image of the Buddha adorned with myriad blessings and virtues, will attain the Buddha Way. This is so even if it is the doodling of a young boy, painted using a stalk of grass or a fingernail. These persons will gradually accumulate merit, and all of them will attain the Way." Both of these statements are spoken from the long, broad tongue of the Buddha himself, so they are true beyond any possibility of doubt.

When I was invited to Keirin-ji in Kai province at the beginning of the Kampō era [1741], I saw drawings of three Buddhas hanging on a wall of the temple. It appeared at first as though the painter had skillfully depicted the Buddhas in an antique style using thin black ink. On closer inspection, however, I realized that the figures were not painted in the ordinary manner, but were made up of inscriptions of the sacred names of the three thousand Buddhas, written in very small Chinese characters. One thousand Buddhas' names were used for each of the three Buddhas.

Ah! Such elaborate, painstaking workmanship! Such skillful art! I was filled with admiration for the artist, who had carried out his task with reverence and devotion. My palms spontaneously came together in *gasshō*, and I bowed my head.

The head priest of Keirin-ji told me, “These are recent works by Zensui Rōjin of Myōraku-ji. He produced them in the midst of a ‘sportive samadhi,’ in the time he had left over from his zazen. He sent them here about ten days prior to your arrival so they would be here waiting for you to inscribe some words on them.”

I readily agreed to play my part in the undertaking. However, the whole time I was at Keirin-ji I was so busy conducting the lecture meeting and attending to visitors and taking students’ *sanzen*, that I didn’t even have time to pare my nails. When the meeting ended, I had to leave to return to Shōin-ji, so I could do no more than bow my head as I passed the paintings hanging on the wall.

Yesterday, an attendant monk dispatched by the Keirin-ji priest arrived at Shōin-ji to extend the Rōshi’s summer greetings to me. After the monk had introduced himself, he produced the three scrolls. “In coming here, I followed the three Buddhas through the torrid summer heat, crossing many precipitous mountain trails. Master, do not say that you are too busy, that ‘you don’t even have time to pare your nails.’ Please write the inscriptions and allow me to return with the scrolls tomorrow.”

I hung the night lamp and set to work inscribing the verses, battling the sweltering heat, my back bathed in sweat. When I finished, I stepped back and read them over. The writing of the Chinese characters was rough and shabby, the verses themselves clumsy and shameful. Another torrent of sweat began pouring down, bathing my body from head to foot. One might call it the muck sweat of the guilty.

[My verses for the three paintings:]

Three thousand Buddha names, all meticulously
inscribed,
Have indeed transformed into these three Buddha
images.

They are ungraspable throughout past, present, and
future.

Waken the Buddha within. Goose him out of those
weeds!

How noble, a man who delineates one thousand Buddhas,
An act even nobler than gaining the three Buddha-bodies.
Yet even one hundred thousand names will not be enough:
Unless he wakens the true Person, he won't even be close.

They have thousands of names, but are just one Buddha.
Where, right now, is he working to save sentient beings?
After Ts'ui Hao's poem, Yellow Crane Pagoda declined.
My thoughts often turn to that tiger-priest Ch'ang-sha.

.....

Sutra on Creating Images of Buddha: Tso-fo hsing-hsiang ching, T692.

"All persons who draw or paint . . . all of them will attain the Way." The Lotus Sutra, Watson, p. 39.

Sportive samadhi (yuge-zammai) generally describes the life and work of a Bodhisattva enjoying the totally unfettered freedom of Buddhahood.

Waken the Buddha within. "Vairocana Buddha appears in you yourself, from within the Three Poisons" (annotation). The "weeds" refers to dwelling in the three poisons of covetousness, anger, and ignorance that are the source of passions and delusion.

Where, right now, is he working to save sentient beings? In answer to this question, an annotator (probably quoting Hakuin) writes: "He [the one Buddha] is right here in this room, but no one knows it."

Yellow Crane Pagoda is a large and imposing tower in Wu-chang, celebrated in a famous verse by the eighth-century poet Ts'ui Hao:

Years ago, a man sailed off on a yellow crane,
Now the Yellow Crane Pagoda alone remains.
The yellow crane flew off, and never returned,
A thousand years, clouds sailing aimlessly by.
The trees of Han-yang are mirrored on the river,

Fragrant grasses grow profusely on Parrot Island.
Where, beneath this sunset, is my native place?
Mists shrouding the river stir feelings of regret.

The excellence of Ts'ui Hao's verse was said to have kept later poets from attempting their own poems on the pagoda; even the great Li Po is said to have written:

My fist can smash the Yellow Crane Terrace,
My foot can kick Parrot Island onto its back.
And still their loveliness leaves me wordless,
Having Ts'ui Hao's poem over my head.

As a result of this poetic neglect, the site, with all its splendid poetic possibilities, was forgotten and fell into ruin.

Tiger-priest Ch'ang-sha. This reference in the final line of the verse is linked to the three previous lines. It involves a dialogue between Zen master Ch'ang-sha Ching-ts'en and a clever young man. Having read the *Sutra of the Thousand Buddhas' Names*, the young man said, "All these thousands of Buddhas are merely names. Where could all the lands be where they reside? And where are they working to save sentient beings?" Ch'ang-sha said, "After Ts'ui Hao wrote his poem on the Yellow Crane Pagoda, did you compose a verse on it, young man?" "No I didn't," he replied. "You should take the time to write one," said Ch'ang-sha (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4). "There was no one to write on the subject. Everything was falling into ruin. A good thing Ch'ang-sha came along when he did" (annotation).

230-1. MANJUSRI

Manjusri, the embodiment of prajna (wisdom), teacher of the Buddhas of the past, is one of the most important figures in the Mahayana pantheon. Some of Hakuin's paintings of Manjusri portray him as the eccentric Zen poet Han-shan, who was regarded as an

incarnation of the Bodhisattva. “From his youth the Rōshi [Hakuin] took pleasure in drawing Buddhist images. . . . At that time he drew only images of Manjusri” (annotation in a copy of Sendai’s Comments on the Poems of Han-shan; author’s collection).

As teacher and model for all the seven Buddhas of the past,
Manjusri led eighty million followers atop the sacred peak.
He’s shown as a mere boy, hair hanging like willow strings,
His lion has a baleful look that pierces down into our vitals.
Having forgotten to bring his invincible adamant sword,
He holds in his lap the wish-fulfilling gem of pure suchness.
Would you like to grasp his true and original countenance?
Manjusri Buddha is the Four Wisdoms in every one of you.

.....

As teacher and model . . . seven Buddhas of the past. According to Muchaku Dōchū, “There is no reference to Manjusri being the teacher of the Seven Buddhas of the past in the sutras. References to this which appear frequently in Zen texts derive from the *Record of Po-chang*” (*Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 199).

Manjusri led eighty million . . . the sacred peak. “He was at Vulture Peak [for the Buddha’s preaching of the *Lotus Sutra*] with a vast following of eighty thousand” (annotation).

He’s shown as a mere boy . . . willow strings. Hakuin’s paintings of Manjusri often depict him as a youthful Han-shan with the recluse’s long stringy hair.

Having forgotten . . . pure suchness. “This Manjusri is holding a wish-fulfilling mani gem in his hands. Why? Because he’s always

ranting on about saving sentient beings” (annotation).

230-2. MANJUSRI BODHISATTVA

Hakuin painted images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in great number, but his earliest-known painting in this genre is a depiction of the Bodhisattva Manjusri dating from his thirty-fifth year (see the following inscription, #230-3). For a detailed commentary on the present verse, see The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 216–18.

I bow deeply before the great teacher Manjusri
Whose pure clear Dharma-body is painted here.
If you see him there on the surface of the paper,
You’re just digging a well to seek white clouds;
If you persue him apart from this painted image,
You’re ambling eastward chasing the setting sun.
See it!!

I bow deeply before the great teacher Manjusri.

.....

If you see him there on the surface . . . chasing the setting sun.
“Laymen! Don’t think the real Manjusri is found in this picture! Seeking him there is like looking for fire at the bottom of a well. You won’t find him on any piece of paper. Yet if you seek him somewhere else, outside the picture, you won’t find him there either. That would be like facing east to view the setting sun” (annotation).

230-3. MANJUSRI BODHISATTVA RIDING A LION

Manjusri, symbolizing Buddha-wisdom, is often depicted riding on a lion, the king of animals, whose roar denotes the invincible working of prajna wisdom. Manjusri is also often paired with the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, the embodiment of love and compassion, who rides an elephant. The painting and inscription are reproduced in HZB #203, with a date corresponding to Hakuin's thirty-fifth year.

He sits by himself on top of Mount Wu-t'ai,
Performs tomfoolery around Kuo-ch'ing.
Although he may not have a lot of talent,
He isn't without one or two minor tricks:
He can smash rocks inside a poppy seed;
Can cull frost down on the floor of the sea.
He's said to summer at three different spots,
In fact he beds down in the encircling void.
You want to pay him your respects in person?
The only way is to put illusive thought aside.
When the mind is emptied of discrimination,
His marvelous features are seen plain as day.
No eye could spot the awesome attributes of
A man who abides in the place of not-seeing.
Gadzooks! A dog licking a plate of sizzling oil.

.....

Mount Wu-t'ai. Manjusri is said to dwell on this sacred mountain in Shanhsi.

Kuo-ch'ing. The poet and Zen eccentric Han-shan, said to be a manifestation of Manjusri, lived in the mountains of T'ien-t'ai in eastern China, paying frequent visits to Kuo-ch'ing temple, where his sidekick Shih-te worked in the kitchen.

He can smash rocks . . . the floor of the sea. As no source has been found for these phrases, it is possible they were coined by Hakuin. Penetrating them is the "one or two minor tricks" Hakuin referred to above.

He's said to . . . at three different spots. “Mahakashapa asked Manjusri where he spent his summer retreats. He replied, ‘I spend one month at the Jetavana monastery, one month with my young attendants, and one month in whorehouses and bars’” (*Ch'an-lin lei-chu*, ch. 14).

In fact he beds down . . . void. “Because Manjusri resides in the whole universe in all the ten directions” (annotation).

Gadzooks! A dog . . . sizzling oil. This exclamation describes an earnest endeavor that cannot possibly achieve its purpose; here it presumably refers to effort spent trying to see Manjusri's formless form. “This is not a place any of you can get your beaks into” (annotation). “He's put his mouth in a cauldron of boiling water, he'll burn his nose bad!” (annotation).

231. KANNON BODHISATTVA

One time he assumed the guise of a minister of state,
Another time took the form of a man of great means.
Now I ask: Where was the Bodhisattva the day before
He revealed those forms? Where was he hiding then?

.....

One time he assumed the guise . . . a man of great means. Based on passages in the *Lotus Sutra*, “Universal Gateway” chapter.

Now I ask: . . . Where was he hiding then? “Everyone in this room is Kannon” (annotation).

232-1. WILLOW BRANCH KANNON

Willow Branch (Yōryū) Kannon, one of the thirty-three forms in which Kannon is said to manifest herself, is depicted holding the branch of a weeping willow. Two paintings of Willow Branch Kannon with inscriptions similar to this one are reproduced in Takeuchi Naotsugi's Hakuin (#69–70).

She waves a yellow leaf to soft-soap crying children,
She puts out a fishing line without a hook at the end,
She snaps off a willow branch to string fish together,
She uses its twigs to bind up a set of farewell poems.

.....

She waves a yellow leaf . . . crying children is a metaphor for the skillful means (*upaya*) used by a mother (Kannon) to stop her child (a sentient being) from crying (from the *Nirvana Sutra*, ch. 20).

She puts out a fishing line . . . to string fish together. These two lines are allusions to Gyōran (“Fish Basket”) Kannon, who carried a fish basket around with her. “Zen teachers liken catching fish to saving sentient beings” (Muchaku Dōchū, *Kidō-roku Rikō*, p. 261).

She snaps off a willow branch to string fish together. This allusion to the Fish Basket Kannon further suggests the Bodhisattva’s purposeless activity in guiding others to enlightenment (see the story in #235; also #396.).

She uses its twigs . . . farewell poems. In China it was customary to break off a willow branch and give it to a person setting off on a journey. “Willow branch songs” (*yang-liu chih-ke*), on the sorrows of parting and separation, were a fairly common theme in Chinese verse. One by the T’ang poet Po Chu-i is the most notable example.

232-2. WILLOW BRANCH KANNON

Don’t say that the willow tree is Kannon,
Kannon is plum trees and peach trees too.

.....

“Don’t think she’s only willow trees. Plum trees and peach trees are Kannon too! Her thirty-two manifestations manifest themselves in millions of different forms” (annotation). “Mountains, rivers, the great earth itself — they’re all Kannon” (annotation).

233. KANNON BODHISATTVA, THE SIXTEEN ARHATS, AND VARIOUS DEVAS

No painting of Kannon inscribed with this verse has been discovered among Hakuin’s many depictions of the Bodhisattva, and although some of his Kannon paintings show her together with sixteen Arhats, and others with devas, no known paintings depict her together with both the sixteen Arhats and devas.

In some paintings Kannon is shown surrounded by worshipping devotees sporting turtles, octopuses, squid, shrimp, and fish of various kinds on their heads, probably the “sea dwellers” (gunrin) mentioned in the verse.

To the twenty-eight Arhats sitting here
Revering a person of absolute freedom,
To deva hosts in the heavenly realms,
To assorted supplicating sea dwellers,
The Great Being preached this verse,
Personally turning the Dharma wheel:
“You beings who have assembled here
Are no different whatsoever from me.
Yet you forfeit the gem in your hand
By gazing out and away at the moon:
The moon is the gem in your hand,
The gem in your hand is the moon.”
I earnestly hope those who see this

All enter the Buddha-nature ocean.
The Kannon painted on this paper
Is the Kannon inside each of you.

.....

The twenty-eight Arhats are among the endless forms that Kannon manifests to teach sentient beings. “Kannon is venerating Kannon!” (annotation).

The Great Being is Kannon Bodhisattva. “It is because you always seek it without that you neglect what is within, and fail to worship the Kannon in yourself” (annotation).

The moon is the gem . . . is the moon. “Originally it is neither within nor without. Our true, nondual relation with Kannon exists in such a negation. . . . If you call this nonbeing, you fall into the heretical view that death ends all. If you call it being, you fall into the heresy of eternal changelessness. What then can you do? You must hear the sound of one hand” (annotation).

234. KANNON SEATED ON THE GRASS

Although no painting fitting this description or bearing this inscription has been discovered, judging from the verse and accompanying annotations, we know that it depicted Kannon in one of his endless manifestations as a young boy seated on a bed of grasses. The grass seat is made of the kusha grass that the Buddha is said to have received from Brahman priests; when he sat upon this grass seat, it miraculously transformed into an invincible Diamond Throne.

He sits there on a cushion of green grass,
Holding a vase with a green willow slip.
Whose little boy are you?
Whose little boy are you?

Sunlight glints from the bamboo stirring in the cool breeze,
Dew gleams faintly from the pines beneath a horned moon.

.....

Whose little boy are you? “My goodness, what a wonderful lad! And he’s right there within us all!” (annotation).

Sunlight glints from the bamboo . . . beneath a horned moon. “This is the Buddha’s Dharma-body revealed in primal suchness. It is extremely difficult to penetrate here, but if you grasp it, you are face to face with the living Kannon” (annotation).

235. MR. MA’S WIFE

Mr. Ma’s Wife Kannon (Japanese, Merofu Kannon), sometimes also referred to as Fish Basket Kannon (Japanese, Gyoran Kannon; see #232-1), is one of thirty-three manifestations the Bodhisattva is said to assume (Hakuin’s verse below has thirty-two, a number given in the Heroic March Sutra). It is based on a tale found in several Sung dynasty Zen works such as the Fo-chiao pien-nien t’ung-lun (A Year by Year Chronicle of Buddhist Teaching), ch. 22, and Hu-fa lun (Treatise in Defense of the Dharma), ch. 9.

Hakuin’s four-line verse is prefaced by a long story in which he relates his version of Mr. Ma’s Wife Kannon.

THERE WAS A hamlet on an island in the sea called Golden Sand Shoal. None of its inhabitants, young or old, had any knowledge of the Buddha’s Dharma, nor did they believe in the working of cause and effect, not to mention the sufferings that awaited them in the afterlife. One day an old woman arrived in the village accompanied by a beautiful young girl. The girl carried herself with extraordinary grace and her face was as fair as a peach flower. Although no one

knew where the old woman had come from, it was said that she was interested in finding a husband for the young girl. Immediately the youths of the village began vying passionately for the girl's hand.

The old woman brought them to their senses by saying, "Why are you making such a fuss about this? There is after all only one girl, and there are more of you than I can count. She could not possibly accept all of your offers unless she manifested thousands of bodies like the Bodhisattva Kannon. Now I have a Buddhist scripture called the *Kannon Sutra*. If someone is able to memorize this sutra by tomorrow morning, that person will have my consent to marry the girl." She produced copies of the sutra, passed them out to the men, and showed them how to read it. They strove with all their effort, competing against one another to commit the sutra to memory. By the next morning ten of them had succeeded in doing so. The old woman next distributed copies of the *Diamond Sutra*, with the same conditions as before. Seven or eight men were able to memorize it. She then gave them the *Lotus Sutra*, a much longer text, saying she would choose for a husband the man who memorized it all. The men found it an extremely difficult task. Try as they might, one by one they reluctantly abandoned the attempt. One went away shaking his head, yawning wearily. One rolled up the sutra scroll with a deep sigh. Another took the sutra and tearfully threw it aside. Another, on finding his hopes dashed, just bolted off. The only one able to accomplish the difficult task was a son of the Ma family.

He took the young girl as his wife and their marriage took place amid great rejoicing. But the young woman fell ill and before long died. All the villagers on the island were deeply saddened by her death. They were thus brought to appreciate the transience of human life, and began the practice of reciting Buddhist sutras.

One day, an Indian priest carrying a long staff descended from the sky and proceeded to the young woman's grave. Poking the earth with his staff, he uncovered a set of bones that glittered with a radiant light, illuminating everything around it. "These are the sacred bones of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion," he pronounced in a loud voice. "You must revere them and strive to free yourselves from the karmic obstacles now hindering you." He then vanished into the sky.

Using skillful means, the Great Compassionate One
Manifests thirty-two forms according to arising needs.
She appeared and saved beings as a pretty young girl,
By manifesting herself in the form of Mr. Ma's wife.

.....

The following account of this story, from *Hu-fa lun (Treatise in Defense of the Dharma)*, a Sung dynasty work, gives us an idea of how Hakuin has souped it up:

In the twelfth year of the Yuan-ho era of the T'ang [817], there was a young girl of great beauty at Golden Sand Shoal in Shan-yu [Shan-tung province] who sold fish from a basket she carried. All the young men competed to make her their wife. The young girl said, "I will teach you a text called the *Kannon Sutra*. If you recite it all through the night, I will become your wife." At dawn the next day, twenty men had performed the feat. She said, "I am only one woman, so it is not possible for me to marry you all. Why don't you recite the *Diamond Sutra* in the same way?" About half the men were able to accomplish this, so next she asked them to recite the *Lotus Sutra* for a period of three days. Only one man, a son of the Ma family, was able to do it, and he and the young woman, in conformance with the established proprieties, were married. But no sooner had she entered his house than she fell ill and died. Her corpse, swiftly decomposing, soon almost completely disappeared, and the remains were quickly buried. The next day, a Buddhist priest came. Together with the woman's husband, he opened the casket. They found nothing but a set of golden bones. The priest said, "Your wife was an incarnation of Kannon Bodhisattva. She desired only for you to gain salvation." Then he disappeared into the sky. From that time forth many people began reciting sutras in Shan-yu.

236. KOKŪZŌ BODHISATTVA

Kokūzō (Skt. Ākāśagarbha) is the Bodhisattva “Empty Void Storehouse,” so called because he possesses virtues of wisdom and compassion as boundless as empty space itself, imparting them to sentient beings in response to the vows they make to him.

His mind is the mind of sentient beings,
His form is the shape of the empty void.
He satisfies all the requests he receives
And so is called Storehouse of the Void.

.....

His mind is the mind of sentient beings. “When there is nothing whatever in your mind, the Dharma’s eighty-four thousand marvelous meanings can all enter. When you have even a single thing in your mind, those meanings become eighty-four thousand afflicting passions” (annotation).

237. FUDŌ MYŌ-Ō

Fudō, the “Immovable” (Sk. Acalanātha) is the central figure of the fierce Myō-ō class of deities that protect Buddhism and its adherents from harm. Fudō Myō-ō assumes a fearsome appearance, holding a rope in his left hand and a sword in his right, which he uses to destroy evil passions.

From a mass of fiercely burning flames
He manifests a body of unbridled wrath.
He runs roughshod over Buddha realms,
Kicks over the nests of Mara’s demons.
He eliminates all suffering and calamity

Just as the bright sun dissipates the mist.
Both gods and demons bow before him
Like grasses bending down in the wind.
Joining precepts, meditation, and wisdom,
Linking mind, Buddha, and living beings,
His great power works sudden miracles
Like flames flaring out lattice windows.
Blossoms fall and scatter, birds twitter,
Where you encounter them he is there,
A virtuous shape majestic as a mountain,
Boundlessly vast as the great sky above.

.....

Fudō Myō-ō often appears as the central figure in a grouping of five esoteric Buddhist images, surrounded by four other Myō-ō — Gozanze, Gundari, Daiitoku, and Kongoyasha — who are sometimes regarded as manifestations of various aspects of Fudō's power. Hakuin records a youthful encounter he had with these five Myō-ō in his work *Horse Thistles* (HHZ2, pp. 245–6):

When I was a young boy, I went to a temple of the Shingon sect. There I saw for the first time images of the Five Great Myō-ō. I must say they seemed very strange to me. I found it hard to believe Buddhist images could have such absurd appearances. Could they be guardian deities of those street performers who engage in one-man sumo [*hitori-zumo*]? Or perhaps images worshipped by practitioners of jujitsu? Anyway, I thought, smiling to myself, they were certainly an unseemly group. Recently, however, I have come to regard their appearances as manifestations of something of truly inestimable value. They indicate the spirit of fierce, indomitable courage that a Buddhist practitioner must possess if he is to successfully negotiate the Buddha Way. The great sage Fudō Myō-ō stands sternly at the center of the group, protected by the other four Myō-ō, who personify his fierce spiritual powers. Their wrathful appearance . . . expresses

the inner secret of the great matter of Buddhist practice, the maintaining of private application and hidden practice that has been called “the essence within the essence.” I believe that these images of the Five Great Myō-ō are the very ones to enshrine in Zen training halls, where the mistaken teaching of “withered sitting” has held sway in recent times.

238. VIMALAKIRTI

A painting of Vimalakirti with this inscription is found in HZB #217.

At that time the excellent Dharma prince Manjusri
Addressed Vimalakirti for the assembled multitude:
“Now each of us has given you his understanding,
Please teach us, what is the Dharma of nonduality?”

.....

In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, “Entering the Gate of Nondualism” chapter, Vimalakirti asks the various Bodhisattvas who have assembled to explain the meaning of the words “entering the gate of nondualism.” After each of them has set forth his understanding, Manjusri asks Vimalakirti, “How does the Bodhisattva enter the gate of nondualism?” Vimalakirti answers with a deafening silence. See *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, Watson, pp. 110–11.

239. FENG-KAN

Feng-kan (literally “Big Stick”), a poet-monk of 9th-century China, is usually shown in Zen painting and sculpture together with his pet tiger and the Zen eccentrics Han-shan and Shih-te, with whom he is

purported to have been friends; together they are known as the Four Sleepers (Ssu-shui). An anecdote recorded in the Poems of Han-shan tells of this legendary priest “riding out of the pine trees on the back of a tiger, entering Kuo-ch’ing Temple and causing great consternation in the brotherhood by roaming through the corridors calling out for people to ‘get out of the way.’”

We learn from an annotation that this and the following two verses (#240–41) were inscribed over a set of three scroll paintings that depicted Feng-kan, Han-shan, and Shih-te, respectively. In Han-shan’s poetry collection we read that Feng-kan was an incarnation of Amida Buddha (The Buddha of Boundless Life), and Han-shan and Shih-te incarnations of the Bodhisattvas Manjusri and Samantabhadra.

Feng-kan sleeps, his arm slung around the tiger,
An incarnation of the Buddha of Boundless Life.
But what about this Buddha of Boundless Life?
I want you to tell me: Whose incarnation is he?

.....

Whose incarnation is he? “Every one of you” (annotation).

240. HAN-SHAN

This painting was one of a set of three depicting Feng-kan, Han-shan, and Shih-te (see #239).

I was asked to inscribe a painting of Han-shan,
Heedlessly, without thinking, I agreed to do it.
Now it’s time for me to send the painting back,
I sit with glazed eyes chewing on my brush tip.

241. SHIH-TE

This painting was one of a set of three depicting Feng-kan, Han-shan, and Shih-te (see #239). The Poems of Han-shan contains a group of fifty-five verses attributed to this boon companion of Han-shan. In his preface to the poems, the official Lu-ch'iu Yin describes Shih-te as working in the kitchens of Kuo-ch'ing temple and slipping leftovers to Han-shan, who lived in the mountains surrounding the temple. There are references in the same collection to Shih-te as an incarnation of both Samantabhadra Bodhisattva and of Manjusri.

Sitting facing the Buddha, he gobbles up the offerings.
He flies at the temple's guardian deities, whip in hand.
What gives this fellow such a free untrammelled spirit?
A mind liberated from the slightest vestige of thought.

.....

Sitting facing the Buddha . . . whip in hand. The first two lines of the verse allude to Shih-te's eccentric behavior. He is said to have grabbed the offerings set before the statue of the Bodhisattva Manjusri in the temple refectory and eaten them himself. He would suddenly take a seat before the statue and remain there all day long. When birds came and ate the offerings set out before the statues of the temple's guardian deities, he took a stick and beat the images, saying, "You can't even protect your food from birds. How can you expect to protect the temple?" (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 27).

A mind liberated from the slightest vestige of thought. The final line is literally, "He's like a *Fu* bird that climbs up and takes a perch in your living room." An annotation has, "Why is Shih-te so free-spirited? [He's like] a *Fu* bird [described as "an ill-omened bird" that assumes the enlightened master's honored seat and even beats the temple's guardian gods]. How splendid! How admirable! Our boy's a dope! [dope: *tennen*, literally 'a natural' in the obsolete sense of an idiot or moron]." This seems to convey more or less a similar meaning to

that found in the final line of another verse Hakuin inscribed on another painting of Manjusri (HZB #212). I have settled here on a loose paraphrase of that version of the verse.

242-1. HOTEI

Hotei (literally “Cloth Bag”), a potbellied little monk who has become familiar in the West as the “laughing Buddha,” appears as a character in Hakuin’s painting more often than any other figure, with the possible exception of Daruma.

Hotei (Chinese, Pu-tai) was a Chinese monk who lived during the Later Liang dynasty (907–923). He left his temple and spent the rest of his life wandering among the common people, carrying a large bag at the end of a pole containing his few belongings. He is said to have written the following death verse:

*Maitreya, a genuine Maitreya,
Appearing in millions of forms.
He manifested himself to people,
But they failed to recognize him.*

*Hotei later came to be regarded as an incarnation of Maitreya, the compassionate Bodhisattva whom Shakamuni Buddha designated to be the next Buddha to appear in the world many kalpas in the future. Until then Maitreya is said to reside in the Tushita Heaven, the fourth of the six heavens in the triple world in which we live. Meantime Hotei acts as Maitreya’s surrogate in the human world, performing the Bodhisattva’s task of teaching and saving sentient beings. In the Zen school Hotei came to be seen as an exemplar of the Zen way of life — the fully enlightened person demonstrating perfect spiritual freedom totally detached from worldly concerns. For more about this figure, see *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, chapter two: “Otafuku and Hotei, Portraits and Poets.”**

A master who resides in the Tushita Heaven,

Goes mad as a hatter in the world's red dust.
He raises up a round fan he's got in his hand,
But look, it seems he's forgotten his big sack!
His pot belly, without a single thing inside it,
Is the source of endless joy and timeless life.

.....

A master who resides . . . the world's red dust. Maitreya Bodhisattva resides in the Tushita Heaven; Hotei is his incarnation in the human world.

He raises up a round fan . . . forgotten his big sack! This painting apparently depicted Hotei without his trademark bag, said to be filled with boundless good fortune. For this bag, see *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 82, 86.

242-2. HOTEI

Lying flaked out against his bag,
His every snore's a thunder clap.
Once you've clearly heard them,
The Tower Gates will open wide.

.....

Lying flaked out . . . a thunder clap. "This napping is not easy for you to hear. It is heard only when you grasp the meaning of the coming from the west in your dream" (annotation).

The Tower Gates will open wide. Maitreya's Great Tower, a metaphor for ultimate reality, is found in the Tushita Heaven whence, far in the future, Maitreya will descend as a Buddha to teach in the human world. Hotei was considered an incarnation of Maitreya. "At that time Zenzai Dōji [Skt. Sudhana; a youth whose visits to fifty-two Buddhist teachers in his search for the Dharma are described in the *Flower*

Garland Sutra], after recently making a sunwise circumambulation of Maitreya Bodhisattva, said, ‘Great Bodhisattva, I sincerely ask that you open the gate to your tower and let me enter inside . . .’” (in *Hua-yen ching shu-ch’ao*, Ch’eng-kuan’s commentary on the *Flower Garland Sutra*, ch. 79).

243. PRINCE SHŌTOKU

Following the death of his father Emperor Yōmei, Prince Shōtoku (572–622) served as regent under his aunt, Empress Suiko. Hakuin seems to have greatly admired Shōtoku, both for his efforts to implant Buddhism in Japan and for his commentaries on Mahayana sutras.

To assist the imperial house he emulated the Lord of
Chou,
To overcome the Mononobe clan he trod on awfully thin
ice.
Entering a dream-like samadhi he went to Tai-ming
temple
And obtained eight scrolls filled with Mahayana
preachings.
Bringing them back, he caused torment to those in our
land,
Releasing five thousand blazing strangler vines of
scripture.
Do not speak of him as a second son of the Emperor
Yōmei,
He was a true incarnation of the T’ien-t’ai teacher Nan-
yueh.

.....

To assist . . . Lord of Chou. King Wen (1152–1056 B.C.), honored as the founder of the Chou dynasty, was later regarded by Confucians as the ideal ruler for his great wisdom in governing and bringing astute retainers to his side. On the early death of his son, King Wu, he assisted his nephew, the young King Cheng, in consolidating royal power.

Mononobe clan. Mononobe no Moriya (d. 587) was a high-ranking leader opposed to Soga no Umako, who had with Prince Shōtoku's aid conducted political reforms and made great efforts to spread Buddhism in Japan. The Mononobe's clan's hopes were temporarily dashed when Prince Shōtoku's father Emperor Yōmei announced his adherence to Buddhism. When Yōmei died in 587, the Mononobe and Soga factions both attempted to influence the succession and conflict arose in which Moriya was killed. Yōmei was succeeded by his sister, the Empress Suiko, who appointed Shōtoku regent, in which position he wielded considerable political power.

Entering a dream-like samadhi. Prince Shōtoku was said to be a reincarnation of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai priest Nan-yueh Hui-ssu (515–577). In another piece in *Poison Blossoms* (#167) Hakuin tells the story of Prince Shōtoku discovering that a certain Chinese character found in quotations from the *Lotus Sutra* in a work by Nan-yueh was missing from the text of the sutra he was using. He thereupon entered into a state of samadhi and traveled to Tai-ming-ssu, Nan-yueh's temple in China, obtained the sutra Nan-yueh had used, and brought it back to Japan.

244-1. BENZAITEN

Benzaiten (Sanskrit, Sarasvati Devi), a goddess of eloquence, music, knowledge, beauty, and good fortune, appears in her Japanese form as a guardian deity, usually in the form of a young woman holding a biwa or Japanese lute. As she is also associated with water, halls dedicated to her are invariably located near a pond

or lake or some other body of water. She is often represented standing or sitting on a dragon or serpent, sometimes assuming their shapes. She uses her unbounded eloquence to spread the Buddhist teachings.

Hakuin evidently addressed this verse to a young woman.

We are all of us born with a flawless Buddha-nature,
We conduct rites for it regularly in our everyday acts.
You should rise early; comb your hair to start the day;
Clean, spin and weave; don't shirk any of your duties.
If you daydream, you'll only end up cold and hungry,
No one will offer help to a house on the brink of ruin.
How laudable to embrace adversity in the present life,
With every act creating the roots of favorable rebirths.
Act toward your parents as an exemplar of filial piety,
In virtue, emulate the Stories of Praiseworthy Women.
The great Way boils down to purity in mind and body,
Even a young girl should study the wisdom of the past.
Stay up later than usual, repeat this verse three times —
You're not going to discover Benzaiten anywhere else.

.....

*Act toward your parents . . . filial piety alludes to the stories of filial devotion in the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao* (*Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety*).*

Stories of Praiseworthy Women (*Lieh-nu chuan*), a compilation of the lives of exemplary women by the Han dynasty scholar Liu Hsiang (77–6 B.C.), was widely used to educate women in ancient China.

244-2. BENZAITEN

Outwardly, she's a dead ringer for the goddess Benzaiten,

Deep within, she's secretly the Bodhisattva of compassion.

Even if the rivers and seas all receded and became dry land,

Her vow to save all sentient beings still would never cease.

244-3. BENZAITEN

Here Hakuin devotes several lines to explaining the name Dai Benzai-sonten, a variant of Benzaiten's name that uses Chinese characters with a meaning of "Great and Honorable Deity Possessed of Wealth and Eloquence." He uses the Chinese character zai, meaning "wealth," instead of an alternate homonym meaning "skill" or "eloquence," which rather reflects Benzaiten's role in Edo Japan when as a member of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune she was regarded as a deity of prosperity.

Revere great Benzai-sonten, goddess of good fortune,
A manifestation assumed by the Bodhisattva Kannon.
She is the self-nature within each and every one of us,
Apart from that nature what good fortune could exist?
"Great" describes the vastness of the self-nature's truth,
"Eloquence" expresses the performance of good deeds,
"Wealth" is the filial acts you perform for your parents,
"Honorable" is remaining aloof from luxury and greed.

A mind as pure and still as those of dwellers in heaven,
Is attained above all in the breakthrough known as *kenshō*.

But if you pursue the deities of wealth and fortune instead,
You will end up in an endless tangle of delusory thought.

.....

Apart from that nature what good fortune could exist? “Achieve kenshō and attain happiness. Since from the first your original nature has the great world as its domain, you will find nothing is lacking” (annotation).

“Great” describes the vastness of the self-nature’s truth. “Because the entire universe is contained deep in the belly of your true nature” (annotation).

“Eloquence” expresses the performance of good deeds. “Constantly boring into the self-nature, asking ‘what is it? what is it?’ and attaining virtues of every kind — that is the meaning of eloquence” (annotation).

“Wealth” is the filial acts you perform for your parents. “If, in addition, you carry out your duties to your parents and brothers, and perform benevolent acts, you will naturally accumulate great stores of valuable Dharma assets” (annotations).

245-1. DAIKOKU

The Indian god Mahākāla (Great Black Deity) is a name for Shiva or an attendant of Shiva in traditional Hindu iconography. Known in Japan as Daikoku or Daikoku-ten (both translating literally as Great Black Deity), he came to be regarded as a god of wealth and happiness, and was numbered among the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Daikoku is usually depicted sitting or standing astride two rice bales, wearing a flat black hat with a round crown; he holds a wish-granting mallet in his right hand and has a large bag slung over his left shoulder.

He is the true nature intrinsic in each and every one of us,
Having all virtues in perfection, without a self or an other.
Buddha, mind, and living beings are all substantially one;

To this truth the name “Great Black Deity” has been given.

.....

Having all virtues in perfection, without a self or an other. “Not in his body but in his mind all virtues are contained, so if a person can just achieve *kenshō*, then Gombei is Gombei Daikoku, and Rokubei is Rokubei Daikoku, and no self and other exists” (annotation). Gombei and Rokubei were common names in Edo Japan, like “John” and “Jack.”

To this truth the name “Great Black Deity” has been given. Here Hakuin uses the word *Maka-kara*, a Japanese transliteration of the Sanskrit *Mahākāla*, which translates literally as “great blackness” or “great black deity.” “[Upon achieving *kenshō*] the great earth, its mountains and rivers, all become Daikoku [a pitch blackness]” (annotation).

245-2. DAIKOKU

Two annotations, “This inscription was sent to a daimyō” and “When a leader or ruler maintains the same mind as Daikoku in ruling his domain, the common people will follow him and the land will be at peace,” suggest that the inscription and painting were done for a high-ranking member of the samurai class. The verse alludes to some of the five Confucian virtues — kindness, justice, propriety, wisdom, and honesty — as well as to the kunshi, the upright person who is said to embody them.

On his head he wears the cap of loyalty and charity,
On his feet the heavy boots of justice and propriety.
Gripped tight in his right hand is the mallet of thrift,
Over his shoulder, the sack of kindness and wisdom.
He is a truly upright man of genuinely noble stature,

The Great Black Deity samurai everywhere worship.

.....

Gripped tight . . . the mallet of thrift. Daikoku's small mallet, the *uchide no kozuchi*, is said to grant the person who wields it his heart's desire. Hakuin drew many paintings of Daikoku with his mallet, sometimes abbreviating them to show just the mallet alone. On one of these paintings he inscribed, "It's not true that this breaks open treasures of every kind. He uses it to smash the heads of the profligate" (annotation).

246. HACHIMAN

The Shintō deity Hachiman, the tutelary god of archery and warriors and the guardian of the community at large, is worshipped at thousands of Hachiman shrines throughout Japan. He is regarded as the deified spirit of Ōjin, the fifteenth Japanese emperor (reigned 269–310) and son of Emperor Chūai, and is generally enshrined together with the deified spirits of his mother, the Empress Jingū, and his wife, Hime Okami.

The Emperor Chūai's fourth son, an imperial prince,
His mother was Empress Jingū, acclaimed in legend.
Born on his mother's return from subjugating Korea,
In his youth his mentor was Takenouchi no Tsukune.
When he acceded to the throne as the Emperor Ōjin,
People revered him for his just, compassionate reign.
His divine traces remain at Iwashimizu Hachimangu,
Where he keeps eternal watch over the city of Kyoto,
Ruling over the capital as the Bodhisattva Hachiman,
His virtues ringing on like echoes down an empty valley.

.....

Takenouchi no Tsukune is a legendary vassal who served five emperors, including Chūai, Jingū, and Ōjin, and lived to be three hundred and sixty years old. Emperor Chūai's widow, Empress Jingū, apparently ruled or served as Regent from the time of her husband's death in 201 until Ōjin acceded to the throne in 269. As recorded in the *Nihon Shoki*, three years after Chūai's death, while pregnant with her son, Empress Jingū led an invasion of Korea, and returned victorious to Japan three years later.

Iwashimizu Hachimangu. According to tradition the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine, located in Yawata south of Kyoto, was built in 859 in response to an oracle from the god Hachiman, who wanted to reside near Kyoto so he could watch over the emperor and the imperial city.

247. TENJIN

Tenjin, the deified spirit of the court scholar, statesman, and poet Sugawara Michizane (845–903), regarded as a god of scholarship, is worshipped at the main Kitano Tenmangu Shrine in Kyoto and at lesser Tenjin shrines throughout Japan. The close affinity Hakuin felt with Michizane and Tenjin is seen throughout his writings. Tenjin's role in fostering his religious development as a young boy is related in his autobiographies Wild Ivy and The Tale of My Childhood (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 14–17), and also in the Chronological Biography, ages 11 and 12 (ibid., pp. 152–3).

If you intend to conduct services for the deity of Kitano,
I advise better offerings than simply fruit or cake or tea.
Integrity: this was Tenjin's substance from the very start;
Kindness and compassion: these were his heart and soul;
Pity and charity: these surpass even thousands of tapers;
Kindness to family: this is finer than the rarest delicacies.
Luxury or idle craving cannot keep the *shimenawa* pure,
Striving onward with untiring effort is the great treasure.

Loving others and being loved the most spacious shrine,
Performing duties with a mind at peace the sacred fence.
Being modest and humble the most magnificent pagoda,
A house in perfect harmony a perpetual purification rite.
Diligence and propriety are the two great majestic *torii*,
Behaving impartially toward others the treasured sword.
Rise early each morning, recite these words three times,
It will turn you into Tenjin, keep your house from harm.

.....

Shimenawa are lengths of laid rice straw rope used in Shintō shrines and other sacred places to ward off evil spirits. The following lines of the verse contain references to the *torii*, the towering front gate of a Shintō shrine through which people pass to enter into the shrine's sacred space, and to Shintō purification rites and sacred objects. The treasured sword (*hōken*), said to have been brought into the human world by Ninigi-no-Mikoto, the legendary ancestor of the Japanese imperial line, is one of the three sacred treasures of Japan. The three treasures — a sword (*Kusanagi no tsurugi*), a mirror (*Yata no kagami*), and a jewel (*Yasakani no magatama*) — are said to represent the three primary virtues of valor, wisdom, and benevolence.

248. TOTŌ TENJIN

Totō Tenjin, “the Tenjin who went to China,” is an offshoot of the Tenjin legend created by literary Zen monks in the Gozan monasteries of Kyoto toward the end of the 14th century. The legend portrays Tenjin, the deified spirit of the Heian courtier, poet, and scholar Sugawara Michizane (845–903), visiting the Wan-shou monastery on Mount Ching near Hang-chou in a dream, practicing there overnight under the Zen master and abbot Wu-chun Shih-fan (1178–1249) and receiving master Wu-chun's Dharma sanction, then

returning to Japan holding a spray of flowering plum blossoms symbolizing the Zen transmission. The legend, its origins, and Hakuin's use of it in his teaching are described in The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 200–207.

He went to China in a dream, drank the Dragon Pool dry,
He returned home to Dragonfly Land and became a *kami*.
At his original ground he manifests himself like Kanjizai,
Showing up all over the place in infinite different shapes.

.....

Dragon Pool (Lung-yen) is the name of the abbot's chambers — and so Wu-chun's residence — at Wan-shou monastery on Mount Ching.

Dragonfly Land (Shin-koku) is a poetical name for Japan, “because Japan is shaped like a dragonfly” (annotation).

At his original ground . . . Kanjizai. According to the *honji suijaku* theory, Shintō *kami* are regarded as manifestations (*suijaku*) of Buddhist deities, and Buddhist deities, such as Kannon Bodhisattva, are the original ground or true form (*honji*) of the Shintō *kami*. Tenjin's “original ground” is said to have been the Eleven-headed form of Kannon. “Kanjizai” is one of Kannon's alternate names.

249-1. DARUMA

In his fifties, when Hakuin was beginning to extend his teaching activity beyond the confines of Shōin-ji, he commented that he had already painted thousands of portraits of Daruma (Bodhidharma), the Indian priest who transmitted the Zen tradition to China. He certainly painted Daruma far more than any other subject, with the possible exception of Hotei, yet surviving examples from his forties and fifties are relatively rare. This verse is inscribed on one of the earliest-known surviving examples (HZB #54), bearing a date of the fourth year of Kyōhō (1719), Hakuin's thirty-fifth year.

An Indian chap, his true self splendidly revealed,
A clear mass of emptiness beyond all boundaries.
Many have tried hard to confront this old bugger,
Moaning through long nights on their zazen seats.
Some even tell you they've got him, "Here he is!"
The trouble is Daruma's still a hedge or two away.
You can't draw him, can't get him in verse either —
You won't see a phoenix poking in rotten rat guts.

249-2. DARUMA

One annotation states that this inscription was written at Ryūshō-ji in Iida, Kai province. Hakuin's disciple Sōten Hōsui (n.d.) was installed as head priest at Ryūshō-ji in 1765, and Hakuin is known to have visited the temple in his late seventies. Another annotation identifies the temple as Ryūshō-ji in Hamamatsu, Tōtōmi province.

Visiting countless Zen temples on a recent teaching trip,
I observed old Shao-lin's redolence lingering in them all.
Last night at Ryūshō-ji I heedlessly made a sketch of him,
A blue-eyed old fellow, he now hangs out at Mount Kōbō.

.....

Shao-lin is the site in the northern Chinese kingdom of Wei where Daruma (Bodhidharma) is said to have lived during his nine years in China. The name is often used to refer to Daruma himself.

Last night at Ryūshō-ji . . . hangs out at Mount Kōbō. Kōbō-san ("Mount Kōbō") is apparently the "mountain name" of an unidentified temple. "He may be referring to the priest of a neighboring temple whose 'mountain name' was Kōbō-san" (annotation). "Kōbō-san is unidentified. Evidently he wrote this inscription for a friend of the Ryūshō-ji priest, who then took it to Kōbō-san" (annotation).

249-3. DARUMA

Hakuin wrote an inscription identical to this on a Daruma he painted at the age of forty-four (see HZB #54).

Daruma manifests himself in his entirety,
What a bungler, he got only half of him!
But that half in and of itself is the whole.
“I had a robe that weighed seven pounds.”

.....

But that half . . . “I had a robe that weighed seven pounds.” The final line of the verse alludes to the koan “Chao-chou’s Seven-Pound Robe” (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 45), which appeared in #208 on p. 383 in Book Seven. “Is this his full body? Or is it half his body? If you want to see which, you must first pass through the koan Chao-chou’s Seven Pound Robe” (annotation). In another, very similar inscription appearing in Supplement One to *Poison Blossoms* entitled “Half-Body Daruma” (#399), Hakuin has, “It is six of one or half a dozen of the other” for the final line.

249-4. DARUMA

Born a prince in the kingdom of Kōshi in India,
A Dharma heir of the Indian teacher Prajnatarā.
He was in appearance and style extremely ugly,
Commoner than a stone pear or inedible peach.

.....

Born a prince . . . Kōshi in India. According to the Zen “histories” Bodhidharma was the third son of the king of Kōshi, an ancient

kingdom on the east coast of the Indian subcontinent in the general area of Orissa. Kōshi is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese Hsiang-chih.

Prajnatara. In the Chinese Zen records, Bodhidharma's teacher Prajnatara appears as the 27th patriarch of Indian Buddhism.

Commoner than . . . inedible peach. This line might also simply be rendered, "Like a common pear or ordinary peach." "You may imagine him to have been a fine man both in appearance and manner, but the truth is, his face was so ugly it was very hard to gaze upon it. Although he was as common as a thistle, the Demon King Papiyas was terrified of him" (annotation).

249-5. DARUMA

Since another Daruma painting with the same inscription is dated the fifth day of the tenth month, 1726 (HZB #53), this verse can be tentatively placed around the same year, when Hakuin, at forty-two, was only months away from his final decisive enlightenment.

Bulging blue eyes so pure they put the azure sky to shame,
A purple beard whose slightest touch blackens out the sun.
At my place we have no time to waste on reveries like these,
Too busy mending our paper robes with leftover yam starch.

.....

A purple beard . . . blackens out the sun. "That beard of his overflows the universe, blotting out all the sunlight" (annotation).

At my place, we have no time . . . leftover yam starch. “A Zen monk doesn’t pay attention to such things. If he does, difficulties arise. He’s better off getting some leftover yams and concentrating his efforts on using them to patch up his paper robe” (annotation). “The paste made from baked yams is good for that” (annotation). There is probably an allusion here to the uncompromising Zen style of the Chinese Zen teacher known as “Lazy” Ts’an, who lived alone in a cave subsisting on yams baked in ox dung and adamantly refused all offers of advancement, even one from the emperor himself (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 34).

249-6. DARUMA

A follower of the Nichiren sect
Wanted to honor the old Indian.
Mount Shao-lin, Mount Minobe,
Same autumn colors, same sun.

.....

“Probably done at the request of a Nichiren Buddhist” (annotation).
Mount Shao-lin, Mount Minobe. Bodhidharma lived at Mount Shao-lin. The headquarters temple of the Nichiren sect is located at Mount Minobe, just west of Mount Fuji.

249-7. DARUMA

Two blue eyes bulging out round as horse bells.
Jowls rimmed with a jet-black scimitar beard.
He’s not a Buddha, he’s not a patriarch either.

He's not a deity, nor one of the immortal sages.
Still he confounded the thinkers of six schools,
And produced five lines of wise Zen patriarchs.

.....

The *six schools* are those whose teachings Daruma is said to have refuted in India before travelling to China.

The *five lines* are the main schools of Chinese Zen that derive from First Patriarch Daruma: Lin-chi, Ts'ao-tung, Yun-men, Kuei-yang, and Fa-yen.

250. SINGLE SHOE DARUMA

The Single Shoe (Sekiri) Daruma, a standard subject in Zen painting, is based on a story in Records of the Lamp: "Bodhidharma entered Nirvana on the 5th of the 10th month in the 19th year of T'ai-ho. On the 28th of the 12th month of that year he was interred on Bear's Ears Peak. A memorial stupa was erected at the Ting-lin monastery. Three years later, an emissary of the Wei emperor named Sung-yun who was traveling in the highlands of the Pamir range in Central Asia encountered Bodhidharma. He was carrying a single shoe in his hand and strolling leisurely in a westerly direction. When asked, 'Where are you going?' he replied, 'To India.' But he also told Sung-yun, 'Your sovereign has passed away.' Astonished by these words, Sung-yun hurried home, where he learned that the emperor had indeed died. When he told the new emperor about his meeting with Bodhidharma, the emperor had the funerary tower in which Bodhidharma had been interred opened and searched. Nothing was found inside but a single shoe."

A detailed explanation of this type of Daruma painting is found in The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 207–10.

"See your nature, become Buddha,"

Like a creeper clinging to a branch.
That purple beard, those blue eyes,
Who the heck could this fellow be?

.....

“See your nature, become Buddha” are words traditionally ascribed to Bodhidharma to mean “attain Buddhahood by pointing directly at your own mind and seeing into your self-nature.”

Like a creeper clinging to a branch. Allusion to the use of words to describe reality.

That purple beard, those blue eyes. “Purple beard” and “blue eyes” are a stock description for barbarians (non-Chinese) from the western regions.

251. HUI-K’O CUTTING OFF HIS ARM

The story of Bodhidharma’s student Hui-k’o standing buried up to the waist in snow to show his resolve, and finally cutting off his arm, is told above in the letter to Layman Ishii, #187, p. 326.

Cutting off an arm, his eyes were opened,
Even so, he’s wasted perfectly good flesh.
The son of a barbarian with broken teeth,
He was called K’o, and also Shen-kuang.

.....

Even so, he’s wasted perfectly good flesh. “Gouging out a piece of (sound) flesh.” To do something painful and at the same time unnecessary.

Barbarian with broken teeth. See note to #45.p. 62.

He was called K'o, and also Shen-kuang. Hui-k'o's original name was Shen-kuang; he changed it when he began studying under Bodhidharma.

252. THE SIXTH PATRIARCH

Hui-neng (638–713), who became the Sixth Patriarch of Chinese Zen, was unlettered, perhaps illiterate. When he went to study as a lay practitioner with the Fifth Patriarch Hung-jen, he was assigned a job in one of the temple's work sheds using a foot-worked rice-pounder.

They put him to work in the rice-pounding shed,
When he had not even a grain of rice inside him.
Midnight on Yellow Plum was his bitterest time.
A mud cow barging headlong into a boiling surf.

.....

When he had not even a grain of rice inside him is an allusion to the famous line "Originally, there is not one single thing" in Hui-neng's verse (see following note):

Bodhi is originally without any tree,
The bright mirror is also not a stand.
Originally, there is not a single thing;
Where could any dust be attracted?

Midnight at Yellow Plum. Hui-neng, though lowest in rank, was the only one among the seven hundred monks at the Fifth Patriarch Hung-jen's temple on Yellow Plum Mountain (Huang-mei shan) who wrote a verse that Hung-jen found acceptable. At midnight Hung-jen called Hui-neng into his chambers in secret and transmitted his robe and bowl to him, signifying the Dharma transmission. He feared that when the other monks learned of this some might try to do harm to

Hui-neng, so he told him to leave the temple and go into hiding in the south. Hui-neng left that very night.

A mud cow barging headlong into a boiling surf. The mud cow melts away on entering the ocean. The Zen phrase is usually glossed as “leaving no traces behind.”

253. TE-SHAN

Te-shan Hsuan-chien (782–865) was known for striking students with his stick: “Te-shan’s blows and Lin-chi’s shout” were proverbial in later Japanese Zen.

Scrapping the Buddha Hall, like a dog biting a pig,
His vitals had thorns that snarled up to the heavens.
Yet an old lady selling buns saw right through him;
Yen-t’ou told him he hadn’t grasped the final word.
At the floor of Dragon Pool, he was three feet short,
In Hsueh-feng’s chambers, it was eight thousand *li* —
“We live the same life, but don’t die the same death.”
A ghost toting up the paper notes lifts his eyebrows.

.....

Scrapping the Buddha Hall. “In his temples Te-shan did away with the Buddha Hall [where Buddhist images are enshrined] and used only the Dharma Hall” (*Praise of the Five Houses of the True School*, section on Te-shan).

Like a dog biting a pig: “It does this with a savage demeanor, as if it would devour a horse or a bear” (annotation). Hakuin explains the phrase in *Hekiganshū Hishō* as “Te-shan wielding his lance-tip with great power.” Elsewhere in *Poison Blossoms* he comments, “His pure words [verses] astonish, like a dog suddenly biting a pig” (#320, verse 1), alluding to the startling means a Zen teacher suddenly employs, like bolts from the blue. Here Hakuin praises Te-shan’s

bold decision to focus his efforts on the training of monks in the Dharma Hall, where actual Zen practice takes place, even to the point of eschewing the use of the Buddha Hall where rites and ceremonies are performed.

His vitals had thorns that snarled up to the heavens. “Briars and brambles. His liver covered with hair. Deep down, he was a truly mean sonofabitch!” (annotation).

Yet an old lady selling buns saw right through him. “One day on his travels Te-shan stopped to eat some fried buns an old woman was selling by the roadside. The woman asked what he was carrying in his travel pack. When he said they were commentaries on the *Diamond Sutra*, she replied, ‘The sutra says that neither the mind of the past, nor the present, nor the future can be grasped. What about this mind of yours, asking me for dumplings?’ He was dumfounded” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7).

Yen-t’ou told him he hadn’t grasped the final word. “Hsueh-feng was in charge of the kitchen at Te-shan’s temple. One day the meal was late. Te-shan picked up his bowl and went out of the hall. [When Hsueh-feng later asked him why he had left,] Te-shan just turned and returned to his chambers. When Hsueh-feng told Yen-t’ou about his, Yen-t’ou said, ‘Why that old monk Te-shan still hasn’t grasped the final word!’ When Te-shan heard what Yen-t’ou had said, he dispatched a monk to summon Yen-t’ou. ‘Can’t you affirm this old monk?’ he asked. Yen-t’ou whispered out his meaning to Te-shan. When Te-shan ascended the high seat the next day and delivered his formal sermon, it was somehow different than before. Yen-t’ou went to the monks’ hall, smacked his fist into his hand, and burst into laughter. ‘How wonderful!’ he said. ‘The old head priest has grasped the final word. From now on, no one will be able to touch him! However he has only three years left to live.’ Te-shan did indeed die three years later” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7).

At the floor of Dragon Pool, he was three feet short. The story of Te-shan visiting Lung-t’an (Dragon Pool) appears in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7: “After Te-shan came up short against the old woman bun-seller he went to master Lung-t’an’s temple. When he arrived, he sought out Lung-t’an and said, ‘I’ve heard about Dragon

Pool, but now that I've arrived, I see no pool, and no dragon has appeared.' 'You have arrived in person at Dragon Pool,' the master replied. After the two men had talked about the Way for some time, Lung-t'an said, 'It's getting late. Perhaps you should go now.' Te-shan left the abbot's chambers, but found it was too dark outside to proceed. He asked the master for a lamp. Lung-t'an handed him one, but as Te-shan reached out to take it, Lung-t'an suddenly blew it out. At that instant Te-shan reached great awakening."

In Hsueh-feng's chambers, it was eight thousand li. Hsueh-feng I-ts'un (822–908) was a student of Te-shan; a *li* is a Chinese league. "When you get down to the essentials, his [Te-shan's] Zen methods and Elephant Bone's [Hsueh-feng] were separated by eight thousand leagues" (annotation). This line of Hakuin's verse, as well as the next — "We live the same life, but don't die the same death" — refers to a story from the *Blue Cliff Record* involving Hsueh-feng and another of Te-shan's students, Yen-t'ou Ch'uan-huo (822–908):

When Hsueh-feng was living in a hermitage, two monks came to pay their respects. Seeing them coming, Hsueh-feng pushed open the door of the hut with his hand and jumped out, saying, "What is it?" One of the monks replied, "What is it?" Hsueh-feng bowed his head and then went back into the hut. The monk later went to visit Yen-t'ou. Yen-t'ou asked him, "Where do you come from?" "From Lingnan," he replied. "Did you ever visit Hsueh-feng?" he asked. "I did," replied the monk. "What words did he have for you?" asked Yen-t'ou. The monk told him what had taken place. "But what did he say to you?" asked Yen-t'ou. "He bowed his head to us and went back into his hut without saying anything." "Ah, too bad I didn't tell him years ago about the final word," said Yen-t'ou. "If I had, no one in the world would have been able to touch him." After the summer retreat, the monk went to Yen-t'ou and again brought up their earlier exchange. "Why didn't you ask me about it earlier?" said Yen-t'ou. "I had trouble deciding what to do about it," he replied. Yen-t'ou said, "Hsueh-feng and I shared the same life [of practice, and awakening], but we do not share the

same death [we both have different styles of Zen]. If you want to know the final word, it's this, it's this!" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 51).

A ghost toting up the paper notes lifts his eyebrows. "What in the world can these words mean? They are the claws and fangs of Hakuin's Dharma cave, one of his divine, death-dealing charms" (annotation).

The "paper notes" are joss paper (*shisen*), also known as spirit or ghost money, which are sheets of paper used in the traditional Chinese custom of ceremonially burning paper notes to venerate departed spirits and aid them in the next world. Portions of this custom found their way into ceremonies in Japanese Zen temples as well. Here Hakuin is apparently alluding to the words "Te-shan did indeed die three years later" quoted in the fourth note above. Perhaps the ghost in the afterworld, aware of this, is raising up his eyebrows in surprise, or out of concern.

254-1. LIN-CHI

Lin-chi I-hsuan (d. 866; Rinzai Gigen in Japanese), founder of the Rinzai Zen lineage to which Hakuin belonged, is famous for his use of the shout and clenched fist when teaching his monks, examples of which appear in the Record of Lin-chi. In Japan this fierce teaching style became one of the hallmarks of his line of Zen.

As a son he was not filial,
As a monk he broke the precepts.
He threw punches at everyone he met,
He shouted thunder at anyone he saw.
A presence as pitiless as autumn frost,
Sad such a man had so many bad habits.

.....

He was not filial alludes to the well-known story of Lin-chi striking his teacher Huang-po upon returning to Huang-po's temple after having earlier left in anger because Huang-po had beaten him for asking a question.

254-2. LIN-CHI

The painting on which this is inscribed is reproduced in HZB #101.

He confounded the mind's workings with the true person,
Lacquering over the true and original face he had at birth.
Useless tools he devised turned into horrendous
eyesores:
Three Mysteries, Three Essentials, and Four
Discernments.

.....

Three Mysteries (sangen), Three Essentials (sanyō), and Four Discernments (shi-ryōken) are methods Lin-chi devised for teaching students.

255. YEN-T'OU

Similar inscriptions on paintings of Yen-t'ou Ch'uan-huo are found in HZB, pp. 229–231.

He swallowed up Te-shan in a single gulp,
He completely hornswoggled Hsueh-feng.
His give-and-take concerning the final word
Has been the bane of generations of monks.

His most trying time came on the reed bank,
When a lady's racy discourse froze his liver.

.....

He swallowed up Te-shan . . . gulp. “Even though he was a monk in Te-shan’s assembly, he swallowed Te-Shan whole” (annotation). See the fourth and sixth notes to #253 above.

His give-and-take concerning the final word. For Yen-t’ou’s use of the phrase “final word,” see the second note to #28 as well as the fourth and sixth notes to #253 above.

His most trying time . . . froze his liver. “Circumstances arose that obliged Yen-t’ou to leave the priesthood and live as a ferryman. When people wanted to call the ferry they would beat on one of the planks that were hung on both sides of the stream. Yen-t’ou would call out, ‘Who is it?’ The person would say, ‘I want to cross over,’ and Yen-t’ou would scull across to get him. One day a woman came along carrying an infant in her arms. She said, ‘I’m not going to ask you about using that sculling oar, but tell me this: A woman carrying an infant in her arms, where has she come from?’ Yen-t’ou struck her. ‘I have borne seven children. Six of them never encountered a good friend and teacher,’ she said, ‘I can see this kid’s not going to be much use either,’ and she threw him into the river” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7).

256. PO-CHANG

A portrait of Po-chang Huai-hai (720–814) on which this verse is inscribed is reproduced in HZB #102.

A Zen patriarch nine generations after Bodhidharma,
One of eighty-some teachers master Ma-tsu spawned.
Features so imposing demons couldn’t bear the sight,
A mien so fierce it drained color from all the flowers.

He yowled when Ma-tsu gave his nose a good tweak,
Then botching it again, he was deafened by his shout.
He devised a bunch of annoying rules and regulations,
He's the old trooper who's hogtied you young monks.

.....

He yowled when Ma-tsu . . . good tweak alludes to an episode in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 53, involving Po-chang and his teacher Ma-tsu (709–788). As they were out walking together, a flock of wild ducks flew overhead. “What’s that?” said Ma-tsu. “Wild ducks,” replied Po-chang. “Where have they gone?” asked Ma-tsu. “They have flown away,” said Po-chang. Ma-tsu grabbed Po-chang’s nose and twisted it, making him cry out in pain. Ma-tsu said, “You thought they’d flown away, did you?”

Then botching it again . . . by his shout. “When Po-chang returned to Ma-tsu’s temple, Ma-tsu said nothing and just took up his whisk. Po-chang said, ‘Are you one with that action, or apart from it?’ Ma-tsu said nothing and put the whisk back down. After a while, Ma-tsu asked Po-chang, ‘How do you preach the Dharma?’ Po-chang, saying nothing, took up the whisk. Ma-tsu said, ‘Are you one with that action, or apart from it?’ Po-chang said nothing and put the whisk back down. At that instant Ma-tsu gave a deafening shout. Po-chang came to final and complete awakening” (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 6).

He devised a bunch . . . you young monks is a reference to the work known as *Po-chang Ch’ing-kuei*, *Rules of Po-chang*, the first set of regulations governing the duties and daily lives of monks in Zen temples.

257. SUNG-YUAN CH’UNG-YUEH

Sung-yuan Ch’ung-yueh was a student of Mi-an Hsien-chieh of the Yang-ch’i line of Rinzai Zen, the line to which Hakuin himself

belonged. Hakuin lectured on Sung-yuan's Zen records on several occasions.

“**THE ANCIENTS' ARDUOUS** devotion to their practice had a radiance that was sure to spread and prosper.” If you can't believe those words, just take a look at this old fellow. Zen master Sung-yuan had a terrible time with Mu-an's “In speaking words he does not use his tongue.”

.....

“The ancients' arduous . . . spread and prosper.” “Tz'u-ming [Shih-shuang Ch'u-yuan, 986–1039] continued to sit doing zazen without sleep through the frigid nights of northern China. To spur himself to greater effort, he told himself: ‘The ancients threw themselves into their practice with arduous devotion, attaining a purity and radiance that could not help but spread and prosper’” (*Spurring Students Through the Zen Barriers*).

“In speaking words he does not use his tongue.” “One day when Sung-yuan was studying with Mu-an An-yung, he brought up the saying, ‘words of affirmation and words of negation are like a wisteria vine wrapped around a tree.’ [After several exchanges] Mu-an said, ‘I can't let that comment of yours pass unchallenged. If that is the extent of your present understanding, then when you take up the *hossu* yourself in the future and teach others, you will be able neither to help your students to awakening nor to examine their understanding.’ Sung-yuan replied, ‘Helping unenlightened beings so they will be able to make the leap all at once into the sacred realm of enlightenment will always be an extremely difficult task. In examining students you must go before them face to face and before they say a single word know them to their bone and marrow. What is difficult about that?’ Mu-an raised his hand, stopping him, and said, ‘I say to you without a shadow of a doubt that when you speak you don't use your tongue. This is something you yourself must realize.’ Later, when Sung-yuan achieved great enlightenment while studying under Mi-an Hsien-chieh, he exclaimed, ‘Today for the first time I have

understood Mu-an's words, 'In speaking, you do not use your tongue'" (*Shūmon Shōtō-roku*, ch. 10).

258. WU-CHUN

"In autumn Hakuin traveled to Kiichi-ji in Izu province at that temple's request to lecture on the Record of Bukkō" (Chronological Biography, 1752, age 68; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 220). This inscription was written during that meeting. Wu-chun Shih-fan (1178–1249) a prominent master of the Yang-ch'i line of Rinzai Zen to which Hakuin belonged, was the teacher of Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan (1226–86), whose Zen records Hakuin was lecturing on; Bukkō is the posthumous title awarded to Wu-hsueh by the Japanese emperor.

IN AUTUMN OF the second year of the Hōreki era [1752], responding to an invitation from Kiichi-ji in southern Izu province, I delivered Zen lectures on the *Record of Bukkō*. Some thirty priests came to help conduct the proceedings, which were attended by three hundred monks in training. Several hundred other people both lay and cleric also participated in the daily events.

Chinsō portraits of Zen masters Wu-chun and his heir Wu-hsueh hung in Kiichi-ji's main hall. At the head priest's request, I had previously inscribed some words on the portrait of Zen master Wu-hsueh. Now he has asked me to write an inscription for Wu-chun's portrait as well. This is what I have written.

For more than thirty years I had doubts about this old fellow. In private I regarded him simply as a splendid old priest who had lived a pure and righteous life in strict accord with the precepts, and whose virtue was probably unrivalled among Sung dynasty priests. What bothered me about him was that he seemed to be deficient in the use of the claws and fangs of the Dharma cave — that small but vital means of getting students past the ultimate barrier into final awakening. Why? The monk Wu-hsueh, who gave up both body and life while studying under Wu-chun, attained the essence of the

Eastern Mountain school when he later studied under master Hsi-keng on Eagle Peak. If Wu-chun had possessed the divine amulet that divests you of your life, why would deluding passions remaining in his mind have led Wu-hsueh to visit Eagle Peak?

Now, on composing this clumsy inscription, I had occasion to look through Wu-chun's Zen records. I came to the verse he wrote when he sensed death approaching:

When I arrived I didn't have a single thing.
I leave utterly naked, and unbared to boot.
If you still want to ask about it as it truly is,
There's a stone bridge at Mount T'ien-t'ai.

Suddenly, I realized that a single Chinese character had been left out. I was so astonished my tongue popped out of the mouth. Gooseflesh rose up all over my body. The rhinoceros of my previous doubt fell down dead. I pressed my palms together in *gasshō* and proclaimed in admiration, "Zen master Wu-chun was indeed the great teacher of the Sung period. No wonder he produced so many fine disciples. Among the twenty-four poisonous Zen blossoms that made their way into our country, fully seven of them were his students." With this, my inscription concludes.

.....

The essence of the Eastern Mountain school. Tung-shan, "Eastern Mountain," refers to master Wu-tsu Fa-yen, who called himself "the fellow who lives in the foothills to the left of Tung-shan," and to the style of Zen that characterizes his lineage. In an annotation on the term, Hakuin explains the essence of this style as "constantly striving forward [in post-satori training]" (see #71, sixth note, p. 90; and #96, sixth note, p. 126).

Hsi-keng on Eagle Peak. Hsi-keng is a sobriquet used by the Sung priest Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu (1185–1269); Eagle Peak (Chiu-feng) is the name of his temple at the Ling-yin monastery.

There's a stone bridge at Mount T'ien-t'ai is an allusion to Wu-chun's Dharma heir Tan-ch'iao Miao-lin (n.d.), whose name Tan-ch'iao translates literally as "broken bridge." Tan-ch'iao served as head

priest at the Kuo-ch'ing temple on Mount T'ien-t'ai, where there was a famous stone bridge and waterfall. Wu-chun's death verse, addressed to his student Fang-shan Wen-pao, who had requested it, tells Fang-shan that he should complete his practice under his Dharma heir Tan-ch'iao at Mount T'ien-t'ai. Fang-shan did just that and he became Tan-ch'iao's Dharma heir. In the *Fang-shan lu*, Fang-shan's recorded sayings, Fang-shan describes his teacher's writing of the death verse: "When Wu-chun fell ill, I went with the other monks to ask him for a final verse. He took up his brush, looked at me, and then wrote, 'When I arrived I didn't have a single thing. I leave utterly naked, and unbarred to boot. If you still want to ask about it as it truly is, there's a stone bridge at Mount T'ien-t'ai.' I went to Tan-ch'iao Rōshi at the Kuo-ch'ing monastery as he directed. I entered Tan-ch'iao's chambers and received his instruction every day until finally I no longer had any hindrance whatever. Tan-ch'iao Rōshi smiled, but didn't say a single word" (ZZ.70.17).

Suddenly, I realized that a single Chinese character had been left out. "These words are flavored with a special nuance. What Chinese character is missing? Investigate that matter carefully" (annotation). Actually, what Hakuin noticed was missing were some final words from Wu-chun that his student Fang-shan had expected to receive. That is, Wu-chun is telling Fang-shan not to rely on his teacher's words but to rid himself of his remaining passions and realize final enlightenment on his own, suggesting that he do it under his Dharma heir Tan-ch'iao Miao-lin (Yoshizawa note).

Among the twenty-four poisonous Zen blossoms . . . were his students. Hakuin refers to the twenty-four lines of Chinese Zen introduced to Japan beginning in the Kamakura period by Chinese priests and their Japanese students. One enumeration of Wu-chun's seven disciples has: Enni Bennen (founder of Tōfuku-ji), Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan (Engaku-ji), Yueh-an P'u-ning (Kenchō-ji), Shōzai Hōshin (Zuigan-ji), Myōken Dōyu, Gyokusen Jakuzen, and Shōkoku Isen.

259. NATIONAL MASTER DAIŌ

This inscription was written during a lecture meeting on the Record of Daiō (Daiō-roku) at Kōrin-ji at Tegoshi village in Suruga province, in the same county, Abe gun, where Daiō was born. Three other pieces composed at this same meeting, held in 1756, Hakuin's seventy-second year, have appeared previously in #108–110. A chinsō portrait of Daiō inscribed with this verse, also painted at this time, is reproduced in HZB #123. It bears a colophon that allows us to date the verse precisely: "At the foot of the Sala tree old Hakuin performs nine bows, offers incense and writes this on the Buddha's Birthday, the sixth year of Hōreki [1756]."

Nampo Jōmyō (1235–1309), better known by his posthumous title Daiō Kokushi, studied in China under Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu. Returning to Japan after receiving Hsu-t'ang's Dharma transmission, he taught at Kenchō-ji in Kamakura and other temples. The most important of his many heirs was Shūhō Myōchō, also known as Daitō Kokushi, who founded the Daitoku-ji in Kyoto. Hakuin belonged to the lineage known as Ō-Tō-Kan, which takes its name from the three teachers Daiō, Daitō, and Daitō's student Kanzan Egen. Since the Edo period, Ō-Tō-Kan has been the most important of the Rinzai teaching lines.

He sailed to China and seized Hsu-t'ang's treasure,
On returning he stripped away Shūhō's vital spirit.
The first of those proselytes foreseen by Hsu-t'ang,
A Zen patriarch eighteen generations after Lin-chi.
Alone of over twenty lineages introduced to Japan,
His bears the malice bred left of Eastern Mountain.
I now make my prostrations before master Nampo,
A priest born in Tegoshi village in Suruga province.

.....

The first of those proselytes . . . by Hsu-t'ang. An allusion to "Hsu-t'ang's prophecy," from the words Hsu-t'ang spoke to Nampo Jōmyō when the latter was leaving to return to Japan. Hsu-t'ang told him that in the future authentic Zen students would "increase daily in the land beyond the eastern sea [Japan]."

His bears the malice . . . left of Eastern Mountain. Master Wu-tsu Fa-yen (1024–1104), whose temple was on Tung-shan, Eastern Mountain, sometimes referred to himself as “the fellow who lives in the foothills to the left of Tung-shan.” The words Eastern Mountain came to refer to the Zen style of Wu-tsu and his line. Hakuin has elsewhere characterized this style as “constantly striving forward in practice even after satori is attained” (see previous piece, #258, as well as #71 and #96). The “malice” alludes to the attitude a Zen student must show toward his teacher, as exemplified in the saying “regard a teacher or those who try to help you as your deadly enemy.”

260. PRIEST BAŌ OF ZUIUN-JI

We know little about the Rinzai priest Baō Sōchiku (1629–1711) apart from what we can glean from Hakuin’s writings. The name Baō means literally “Old Horse.” Hakuin first encountered Baō in his twentieth year, when he was on his pilgrimage around the country. At the time he entered Baō’s temple, Zuiun-ji in Mino province, Hakuin had become disenchanted with Zen practice and was considering giving it up for a career in writing or painting. Writing of his experiences at Baō’s impoverished temple in his autobiographies Wild Ivy (pp. 16–17) and The Tale of My Childhood (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 19–21), and also in his Chronological Biography (ibid., pp. 158–59, 163), works all dating from his final decades, Hakuin dwells on Baō’s literary gifts (he was apparently known for his Chinese verse and prose) and also on his eccentricities and severity, describing him as “hard and sharp as flint, ruthless to the core, venomous as they come, almost impossible for monks to endure.” Hakuin ended up staying at Baō’s temple a whole year, in the course of which he decided to rededicate his life to Zen study. A little over a year after leaving, Hakuin heard reports that Baō was gravely ill and discontinued his pilgrimage to return to Zuiun-ji and care for the old priest. In this inscription, which can be dated from a surviving

holograph to 1739, written much earlier than the accounts of Baō in the autobiographies, Hakuin emphasizes Baō's ability as a religious teacher.

The most detailed modern study of Hakuin's relationship with Baō is found in Hakuin Oshō Shōden (Detailed Biography of Priest Hakuin), pp. 29–36.

THIS ISN'T A painting of Old Sai's horse. It isn't one of Ch'ao Fu's cows, either. But for over forty years, this man trampled over monks throughout the country. This isn't the lion of Fen-yang or the tiger of Shao-lung. But he was a terrifying presence who knocked Zen seekers back thousands of leagues.

He reached his maturity grazing in the uplands of Ashikaga in Shimotsuke province, and lapping the sweet waters of Mino province. When I was a young monk, I took my whip in my hand and for several years tried to break this wild bronco. I never even got a glimpse of him. Three or four other monks were with me at the time, attending to the old courser's feed and water, but none of them was ever able to measure up to his Zen working either. But don't say he had no outstanding disciples. The great earth and all its mountains and rivers are old Baō's angry glare.

.....

Old Sai's horse is a shortened form of the saying *ningen banji Saiō ga uma*, "for human beings all things are like Old Sai's horse," meaning that the ways of Heaven are inscrutable; that a setback may turn out to be a blessing in disguise. When Old Sai's horse ran off, people tried to sympathize with him. He replied that his fortune would change before long. When the horse returned, bringing another fine riding horse with it, people congratulated him on his good luck. He replied that this would only bring him bad luck. When his son fell from the horse and broke his leg, people commiserated with him; he replied that it would surely be a source of good fortune. An army from a neighboring state invaded his homeland, and all the young men were conscripted and killed in the fighting that ensued. But the son, whose disability kept him at home, survived (*Huai-nan Tzu*).

Ch'ao Fu's cows. “Emperor Yao summoned Hsu Yu, who was tilling his fields, and offered to make him ruler of the entire country. Not wanting even to hear such words, Hsu Yu went and washed his ears out at the riverside. Ch'ao Fu happened along with a herd of calves. He was about to let them drink at the river, but he stopped them when he saw Hsu Yu washing out his ears. ‘I can't contaminate their mouths with that,’ he said, and took his calves farther upstream” (*Kao-shih chuan, Biographies of Noble Sages*). Presumably Hakuin uses this phrase to assert that Baō was no recluse, a point supported by a humorous account told in the *Draft Biography* of nocturnal visits Baō made to a nun who lived in the town.

The lion of Fen-yang or the tiger of Shao-lung. Disciples of the Sung priest Fen-yang Shan-chao were known as the “four lions of Hsi-he.” Hu-ch'iu (“Tiger Hill”) Shao-lung's benign appearance and tremendous inner strength earned him the sobriquet “sleeping tiger.”

261. PRIEST KOHŌ OF JION-JI

A notation in one of the manuscript recensions of Poison Blossoms dates this piece to the second year of Kampō (1742). It was delivered after a ceremony commemorating the anniversary of Kohō's death, “held at Shōrin-ji at the request of Kohō's Dharma heir Daihō Oshō.” Hakuin was fifty-eight years old at the time.

Jion-ji is a Myōshin-ji temple presently located in western Shizuoka prefecture. Kohō Sōsa's teacher and predecessor at Jion-ji was Taidō Gentoku; his successor was Shōnan Soei. Kohō also served as head priest of Jōei-ji, a temple in Tōtōmi province where Hakuin taught on several occasions.

To requite his debt to the Buddha-patriarchs' great compassion,

He snapped off a branch from a big pine on Solitary Peak.

He gulped down the poison of Taidō's pitch-black springs,

And forged a great hero, Shōnan Soei, as his Dharma heir.

The whisk he sits gripping strikes you out like a lightning bolt,

The brocade Buddhist surplice hangs round his shoulders.

He doesn't look wise. He doesn't look dumb. Who is this?

He is known to the world as Zen master Kohō Sōsa.

262. PRIEST RANSUI OF GENRYŪ-JI

This was apparently inscribed over a chinsō portrait of Ransui Kimon (n.d.), head priest of Genryū-ji in Tadehara village west of Shōin-ji, overlooking the swiftly flowing Fuji River. Hakuin's great friend, student, and Dharma heir Kairyū Ishō (also Kairyō Eshō, d. 1747) later served at Genryū-ji as head priest. Apparently Ransui originally resided at Chōfuku-ji, in the town of Shimizu in eastern Suruga. Throughout the inscription Hakuin plays on the theme of water, beginning with the names Ransui ("indigo water") and Genryū ("source" or "headwaters").

At Flower Garden, the great River Ch'u,

At the Brocade Wall, the rivulet of Min.

He made the ten thousand blossoms open,

Their subtle fragrance permeated his robe.

On succeeding his teacher Ranzen Donshū,

He splattered his student Suinan's face with

Dippers full of lethal home-brewed slobber,

Then gave him his sanction as Dharma heir.

He forged others who had shorn the green and yellow,

How many, attracted by his fragrance, did he swindle?

They rolled in waves into the indigo marsh, intent on

Seizing fragments of the great blue dragon's scales.

He responded, edifying them with a unique Dharma,

Like the moon imprinting its seal on a thousand inlets.
Peering into his icy springs, they perceived no bottom,
Anyone who drank its water instantly forfeited his life.
Gazing at Ransui's portrait rolled out here at Genryū-ji,
I could no more draw his face than find you rabbit horn.
As a young monk, I practiced with Ransui at Zensō-ji,
Portraying him now is harder than turning dirt to gold.

.....

At Flower Garden, the great River Ch'u, At the Brocade Wall, the rivulet of Min. . . . permeated his robe. "Flower Garden," Hanazono, refers to Myōshin-ji in Kyoto; to become head priest at Genryū-ji, Ransui was first required to obtain the rank of First Seat, or *Dai-ichiza*, from the Myōshin-ji headquarters temple. "Brocade Wall" translates Chōfuku-ji's "mountain name" Kinpei-zan. Allusions to "the great River Ch'u" and "the rivulet of Min" derive from a line in a poem by the Sung poet and Zen layman Huang T'ing-chien: "In the Min state the stream of water is only enough to fill a wine glass; when it enters Ch'u, it becomes the great and bottomless River Ch'u." In these four lines Hakuin compares the trickling stream in the Min state to Ransui's tenure as abbot of Chōfuku-ji, which later, after he became affiliated with the Myōshin-ji line, turned into a great river, making ten thousand flowers bloom in the Hanazono or Flower Garden.

On succeeding his teacher Ranzen Donshū . . . his sanction as Dharma heir. Ransui received the Dharma transmission from Ranzen Donshū. Suinan Soyō, who resided in Chōfuku-ji, was his Dharma heir.

He forged others who had shorn . . . did he swindle? is an allusion to words in the *Great Wisdom Sutra*: "Empty space [the great void] is not blue, is not yellow, is not red, is not white, is not black. The same holds true of 'great' [in the Sutra's title]." In other words, Ransui's monks had grasped the essential meaning of the void, meaning they had passed the initial barrier into *kenshō*.

They rolled in waves into the indigo marsh . . . the great blue dragon's scales. In addition to these superior disciples, many other

monks came hoping to snatch the priceless pearl lying under the jaws of Ransui, the blue dragon.

I practiced with Ransui at Zensō-ji. When Hakuin set out on his Zen pilgrimage in the spring of 1703 at the age of nineteen, his first stop was the training hall of Zensō-ji in nearby Shimizu. He remained until the follow spring (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 157–8). He knew Ransui, but were he faced with having to draw his portrait now, he would find himself at a loss.

263. ZEN MASTER DAITETSU HÖGEN

Daitetsu Hōgen is the honorific Zen master title the emperor bestowed on Ten'yū Genkō (n.d.), known as the restorer of Bairyō-ji in Seki, Mino province. Hakuin probably composed this inscription for a chinsō portrait of Ten'yū during his visit to Ryōshin-ji in Kojima village west of Hara in 1755 to give lectures on the Vimalakirti Sutra (Chronological Biography, age 71; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 221).

In spring of the fifth year of Hōreki [1755], a *kinoto-i* year,
When I was lecturing at Ryōshin-ji on the *Vimalakirti Sutra*,
A monk arrived from Soyū Oshō of Bairyō-ji in distant Mino
And asked me to inscribe some words over Ten'yū's portrait.
Unrolling the scroll, my eyes fixed on a man in a purple robe,
A priest of great virtue whose legends I had heard others tell.
Trying to praise him would be like sticking horns on a rabbit,
Trying to censure him like growing hairs on a tortoise's back.

He had resided at Sōgen-ji, Kokusei-ji, and at Ryūfuku-ji
too,
Six temples altogether — Who is this priest?
The venerable Zen master Daitetsu Hōgen
Who served thrice as abbot of Myōshin-ji.

.....

Soyū Oshō. Priest Soyū is Shōdō Soyū (n.d.) of Bairyō-ji in the city of Seki, in Gifu.

Unrolling the scroll . . . purple robe. The purple robe was bestowed on eminent priests by the emperor.

Trying to praise him . . . on a tortoise's back. Praise and censure are commonly employed in inscriptions for *chinsō* portraits. Rabbit horns and tortoise hair are common tropes that here indicate the formlessness of the priest's Dharma-body or ultimate reality, which is impossible to depict.

He had resided . . . six temples altogether. Sōgen-ji and Kokusei-ji are in Bizen province; Ryūfuku-ji is in Mino province. The “six temples” are these three and the three times he served as head abbot at the Myōshin-ji headquarters temple in Kyoto.

264. THE FOUNDER OF RYŪSHŌ-JI IN TŌTŌMI

This inscription is for a chinsō portrait of the founder of Ryūshō-ji in Koike, Tōtōmi province, incorporated into present-day Hamamatsu city. The founder's name is not mentioned. Ryūshō-ji was a subtemple in the Hōkō-ji line of Rinzai Zen founded by Mumon Gensen (1323–90); Hōkō-ji is also located in Tōtōmi province.

He opened a training hall at Ryūshō for forging sages,
His stinging fists and angry yells put Lin-chi to shame.

Don't say that he used to sleep beneath Kanzan's moon,
His true roots return to Zen master Mumon at Hōkō-ji.

.....

Don't say . . . Kanzan's moon. Hakuin adopts for his Zen context the trope “Kanzan's moon,” a Chinese flute melody mentioned in T'ang poems by Li Po, Tu Fu, and others. Here, “to sleep beneath Kanzan's moon” means following the Zen of Kanzan Egen, the founder of the Myōshin-ji in Kyoto. “He's a priest reared in the Myōshin-ji line” (annotation) but a true descendant of Mumon Gensen.

265. PRIEST TAISŌ

Taisō Zennō (1690–1746) served as head priest at Jōei-ji in Tōtōmi province. Hakuin wrote this in 1750, at the age of sixty-six, while he was visiting Jōei-ji to lecture on the Record of Daitō. According to the Chronological Biography for 1750, “In autumn the master went to Jōei-ji in Tōtōmi province; while he was there he got his first look at the newly published Dream Words from a Land of Dreams” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217). Dream Words, one of Hakuin's most important works, was first published by Jōei-ji.

A SON OF Priest Zen'u of Tōzen-ji, the teacher of Priest Ban'ei Zenjo. At Jōei-ji he shook free the tendrils of Hsi-keng's entangling vines. Retiring to Kenshō-ji he held Mi-an's Broken Mortar Bowl up and played with it, tripping up horse-jowls and donkey-chins from all over the country. When I first met him at Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province, we were like old friends right off. When we met again later at Tōen-ji in Edo, I promised that I would conduct a Dharma meeting at Jōei-ji. Now at this splendid gathering I am fulfilling that promise. But Taisō is no longer here.

His Dharma heir Yūzan Zen'ichi made arrangements for the meeting, carrying out Taisō's final wish. He also had master Daitō's

poison claws and fangs printed in order to repay the profound debt he owed him.

His forehead covered with shame-induced sweat, this senile old crow from Shōin-ji pounds his drum and raises the uglinesses of his house up for the world to see. He bows down and begs Zen priest Taisō, seated in the great samadhi, for his blessing.

Waves rise up in the vast sea of assorted poisons without a breath of breeze. The portrait of Zen master Taisō hangs, bold and fearless, on the wall, showing his ugly face at the age of fifty-six. Not even the Buddhas and patriarchs could take any pleasure from it. Four hundred dragons and snakes practice diligently in the training hall — even heretics and devils must bow down before them.

Streams of tears run down my old cheeks as I write out in my mangled prose these few brief words that the head priest requested.

.....

Mi-an is Mi-an Hsien-chieh (1118–86); see #257.

266. PRIEST TŌKEI OF SESHU-JI

Tōkei Gimin (d. 1752) was head priest of Sesshu-ji, a Myōshin-ji line temple in western Suruga. A similar inscription dated 1753 is extant that Hakuin wrote over a portrait of Tōkei (Hakuin, Takeuchi, #44).

A DHARMA SON of Priest Jōgan Gimin. The father of Mō Shuso. Joining many generations of sages in Myōshin-ji's thicket of thorn, he kicked over the poisonous waves of the Southern Inlet. When I conducted a meeting at Keirin-ji in Kai province, Tōkei was there to assist me, partaking of the everyday fare of the Eastern Mountain. His gentle disposition and humility made people regard him as their father or elder brother. His kindness and sincerity made all who heard him wish to become his friend and student. Priest Tōkei Gimin, former head priest of this temple.

.....

Mō Shuso, Senior Monk Mō, took the name Hōzui Gimō and became Tōkei's successor at Sesshu-ji. "Southern Inlet" translates Nampo, Nampo Jōmyō being the founder of the Ō-Tō-Kan line of Rinzai Zen.

267. PRIEST YŌSHUN OF ENRYŪ-JI

Yōshun Soshū (d. 1743) was head priest of Tentoku-zan Enryū-ji, a Zen temple in Mikawa province (the eastern half of present-day Aichi prefecture) that belonged to the Hōkō-ji line of Rinzai Zen. According to Hakuin's inscription, Yōshun also served for a time as head priest of the Hōkō-ji headquarters temple.

IN THE SEVEN years since the death of this virtuous priest, loneliness and stillness has deepened over the Zen gardens. The priest at Mount Tentoku [Enryū-ji] asked me to write an inscription for a *chinsō* portrait of master Yōshun. As I started to unroll it, night rain suddenly began striking the banana leaves.

Yōshun received the Zen transmission from Mokuin Oshō. Zen priest Gyokusen Ryōchū issued from his Dharma forge. His mother was the wife of a Mr. Bitō of Tōtōmi province, who served the Shōgunal retainer Tōke from Tōtōmi province.

We practiced together at a meeting Chōmon Rōshi conducted at Bodaiju-in on the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. We entered Chōmon's chambers for instruction many times. Yōshun had a vast store of ready knowledge that I can never hope to attain, though in blundering and making myself look extremely foolish, I can beat him going away.

Studying for many years under Zen master Sosan at Ryōtan-ji, he stole all the vital secrets right from under the dragon's jaws. While he was there, he edited Mumon Gensen's Zen records and had them printed, discovering the priceless jewel within the lining of his own clothes. He wrote in his death verse, "For fifty years, a dream, a single boom of the temple bell." I am deeply thankful for the

remarkable things he achieved, acts that will not be forgotten for many generations to come. And it shouldn't be said that his fifty years were a dream—not to mention those Zen records of Mumon Gensen that he edited, making Mumon's hidden deeds known to future generations. He arranged for the book to be printed and covered the expenses himself. He was someone holding up a bright lamp in the dark and degenerate Latter Day of the Dharma.

Who was he? He was Zen master Yōshun Soshū, the former head priest of Hōkō-ji.

.....

We practiced together . . . on the Vimalakirti Sutra. The *Chronological Biography*, age 25 (1709), reports Hakuin and Yōshun both attending a meeting that Chōmon Zen'a conducted on *Praise of the True School* at Bodaiju-in in Sumpu; there is no record of the lectures on the *Vimalakirti Sutra*.

He wrote in his death verse. Yōshun's death verse is: "For fifty years, a dream, / A single boom of the temple bell, / Nirvana and birth and death, / A bright moon, fresh breeze."

Not to mention those Zen records of Mumon Gensen. Mumon Gensen's Zen records were published in 1728, with prefaces by Kokei Shōkin, Kogetsu Zenzai, and Muchaku Dōchū, leading Zen priests of the time. Kogetsu's preface describes a meeting with Yōshun: "At the beginning of summer in the twelfth year of Kyōho [1727], I was walking back to my former temple. As I passed by Hōkō-ji, I stopped to pay my respects to Priest Mumon Gensen and the great legacy he bequeathed. I ended up staying over at nearby Ryōtan-ji. I talked with the monks there about Mumon's achievements at Hōkō-ji, and one of them brought out a one-volume manuscript of his Zen records and showed it to me. I strongly urged them to have it printed so it could be distributed and read throughout the country. My remarks delighted Yōshun Zogen, one of Mumon's descendants at Hōkō-ji, and he requested that I write a preface for the work. Without stopping to consider my lack of ability for the task, I scribbled this off."

268. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF PRIEST YŌSHUN'S INSCRIPTION FOR HIS CHINSŌ PORTRAIT

Hakuin's friend and mentor Yōshun Shudaku, the head priest of Seiken-ji at the Okitsu post station west of Hara, has appeared several times before. An annotation here adds a few interesting details: "He was born at the Ejiri post station. He was possessed of extraordinary innate ability. When he injured a person by mistake, he fled to Daijō-ji and had Priest Daihō perform the tonsure on him. Later he succeeded to Shigan's Dharma and resided at Seiken-ji" (annotation). A portrait of Yōshun that Hakuin painted at the age of forty-nine is reproduced in Hakuin (Takeuchi, #347). Nothing is known of Senior Monk Esan (Esan Jōza).

SENIOR MONK ESAN of Seiken-ji asked me for a portrait of Yōshun Oshō. No matter how staunchly I tried to resist him, he refused to listen. When I returned to the temple I put down a sheet of paper and sat there looking at it, but I could not for the life of me draw his features. Long ago, when the famous painter Seng-yu tried to paint the portrait of the Priest Pao-yu, he finally threw down his brush in defeat. When he did that, Pao-yu reached with his fingers and opened up his own forehead to reveal a Twelve-faced Kannon Bodhisattva. Yōshun didn't manifest a figure of the Bodhisattva like Pao-yu, but I still don't know how I can depict him.

When P'u-hua was asked to paint a portrait of his teacher P'an-shan, he is said to have done a somersault. Now I am asked to paint one, but unfortunately I am too fat to do somersaults, so I have no choice but to scratch out a likeness of sorts. Yōshun himself inscribed some words over it — their natural elegance and antique nobility are truly to be praised. Humming it over and over, before long I had it by heart. As it would not be enough for me alone to know it, I wrote it down and gave it to several people. As if that was not enough, I responded with a verse of my own using Yōshun's

rhymes. Not content to stop there, I wrote out a fair copy and sent it off to Seiken-ji, doubling my unsightly clumsiness. *Haahaha*.

Upon contemplating the matter of Yōshun's looks,
I decided there is nothing at all to compare him to.
Not to speak of tracing his likeness with a brushtip
When I know from the start it won't resemble him.
Once you realize that his likeness is a non-likeness,
Whatever you draw will not look anything like him.
But senior monk, if you want a truly spitting image,
Look within: see anything there it resembles, or not?

.....

The famous painter Seng-yu. Chang Seng-yu (c.470–550) is one of China's greatest painters, whose works looked so real that once when he painted a dragon he left out the eyes, saying that with eyes it would fly away. When someone did paint them in the dragon broke free of the painting and soared into the sky. Hakuin's account of the story of Seng-yu painting Priest Pao-yu can also be found in *Sendai's Comments on the Poems of Han-shan*: "When Emperor Wu of Liang commissioned Seng-yu to paint a portrait of master Pao-kung (Pao-chih; 465–514), he was about to begin but then grew hesitant, whereupon Pao-kung suddenly reached up and opened his forehead with his fingers to revealed a Twelve-faced Kannon. Some of the faces were compassionate, some were austere. Seng-yu never was able to finish the portrait" (HOZ4, ch. 3, p. 63). The original story is found in *Comprehensive Chronicle of Buddha's Teaching (Pien-nien t'ung lun)*, ch. 6.

When P'u-hua was asked . . . have done a somersault. "When P'an-shan was near death, he said to his assembly, 'Can any of you paint my likeness?' The monks drew their portraits of the master and showed them to him, but he rejected them all. His disciple P'u-hua came forward and said, 'I have painted your features.' 'Why didn't you give it to me with the others?' asked P'an-shan. P'u-hua did a somersault and left the room. 'In the future' said P'an-shan, 'That customer is going to be teaching people like a crazy man.' To be

able to paint a likeness means seeing one's teacher fully and completely. It is proof of the Dharma transmission" (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 7).

Haahaha. "If you feel like laughing, go ahead and laugh" (annotation).

Upon contemplating the matter . . . to compare him to. "With these two lines he painted Yōshun's eyes right in" (annotation).

Not to speak of tracing . . . it won't resemble him. "Yōshun's vitals are not something you can draw with a brush tip. From the first, all comparisons are futile" (annotation).

Look within: see anything there it resembles, or not? Do you resemble something, or not? "Daitō Kokushi, in an address to his monks, said, 'In the morning our eyebrows link; in the evening our shoulders join. How do I resemble him?' Ikkyū liked those words. He is said to have written them on a panel and hung it on the wall, asking, 'What does it resemble?'" (annotation).

269. PRIEST UNZAN OF BUTSUJITSU-AN

Although it is unclear from the title, the piece itself indicates that Hakuin inscribed these words on a portrait of his close friend Unzan Sotai (1685–1747), who had passed away on the second day of the fifth month of 1747. This inscription is dated the twenty-second of the seventh month, less than three months later.

A native of Suruga province born the same year as Hakuin, Unzan began his study under Kogetsu Zenzai in Kyushu. He achieved an initial satori, then returned to Suruga and became a disciple of Tessen Genteki of Butsujitsu-zan Kongō-ji in Kadoma village, about four miles east of Shōin-ji. After later succeeding Tessen as head priest at Kongō-ji, he continued koan work under Hakuin.

An annotation quotes Hakuin saying, "We were close friends from the time I was a young monk. We practiced very hard together."

When Hakuin left Shōin-ji on trips, Unzan is said to have always accompanied him. The closeness of their friendship is illustrated by an anecdote in Hakuin's Chronological Biography, which describes Unzan reclining on the floor behind Hakuin as Hakuin was giving sanzen to his lay follower Masa (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 201).

AN INSPIRING SPIRIT that was vast and pure. A presence that shone like a beacon pointing to the ancient and lofty Zen traditions. He sailed across the western sea and threw himself under the black radiance of an old moon [Kogetsu Zenzai], crushing the Buddha mind-seal to dust. Returning to his home in the eastern provinces, he passed beyond Hsuan-sha's utterance, shattering the sharp claws and fangs of the Dharma cave. From then on, he greatly discombobulated withered-sitting Zennists wherever he found them. On occasion he would draw portraits of elder priests in the neighborhood seated on their Dharma chairs.

I knew him well for forty years. Now the tears well up and will not cease. Several of his students came asking me to inscribe some words on a portrait of him painted by the priest of Fukō-ji. It was done in a free and untrammled style, the true product of an enlightened "sportive samadhi." The words I inscribed are no more than delusions I babbled off in a dream at the foot of the Sala tree. Before I was able to complete the inscription, however, my chin dropped to my chest and I dozed off, and I encountered Priest Unzan in a dream. We were both wreathed in broad smiles. When I woke up, I found that the tears rolling down my old cheeks had drenched my robes. It is now noon, the twenty-second day of the seventh month.

.....

Hsuan-sha's utterance (Gensha dōtei). In Hakuin Zen, this phrase is invariably used to indicate that an attainment is still incomplete. It appears in a comment Hsuan-sha Shih-pei made when he heard that the priest Ling-yun had experienced enlightenment on seeing some peach flowers in bloom: "It is all fine and good, fine and good, but I guarantee you brother monk Ling-yun still hadn't got it all." See also #82.

Hakuin often used the phrase to emphasize the need for continued post-satori training. He even had it engraved on a stone seal, which he impressed on some of his paintings, perhaps to indicate that although he had tried to depict the truth of his subject, the painting still “hadn’t got it all.”

An annotation attached to the phrase “He passed beyond Hsuan-sha’s utterance” states, “This is also something I got him to do.” This annotation, presumably quoting Hakuin’s own words, indicates that after Unzan returned to Suruga province he was able under Hakuin’s guidance to deepen the initial attainment he had achieved under Kogetsu.

On occasion he would draw portraits. . . . Not much is known about this side of Unzan’s talents, though a few of his surviving works, bearing inscriptions by Hakuin, are preserved in temples in the Numazu area.

I knew him well for forty years. This statement suggests a friendship beginning in their early twenties; the *Chronological Biography* states “they were friends from the age of seven or eight” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 194).

A portrait of him painted by the priest of Fukō-ji. Kokuzen Hōkin (n.d.) was the head priest of Fukō-ji, a Zen temple in the village of Tokura.

Sportive samadhi (yuge-zammai). See #229, third note.

At the foot of the Sala tree (Shara juge). This is abbreviated from the sobriquet *Shara juge sendai rōnō*, “the old reprobate monk seated under the Sala Tree,” which Hakuin often used in signing his paintings and writings. “Reprobate” (*sendai*) refers to an *icchantika*, one who has no possibility of attaining Buddhahood, either because he is evil-minded or because, out of compassion, he chooses not to enter Nirvana so he can remain in the world and carry out the Bodhisattva’s mission of helping sentient beings.

270. PRIEST CHŌMON OF BODAIJU-IN

Chōmon Zen'a (1661–1714), head priest of Bodaiju-in in Sumpu, was twenty-four years older than Hakuin. Hakuin wrote this inscription in 1753, his sixty-ninth year.

THE PRIEST OF Shōgaku-zan Bodaiju-in brought a *chinsō* portrait of Priest Chōmon Zen'a and asked me to inscribe some words on it. There is a reason I was so glad to oblige him. When I was a young monk, I studied under Shōju Rōjin in Shinano province. After I left him to return home to Suruga, for several years I sometimes went and stayed at Chōmon's temple and received his teachings. One day, as I was out walking with Chōmon, he suddenly turned, looked at me, and said, "In the future, with cultivation, it will become a tall pine tree and provide shade to the world." He asked me to add words to it, and when I immediately said, "Cultivate it a thousand years, Bodhi will still cover the old tree," he burst out laughing.

As I was just a young monk, I merely considered Chōmon as a Zen priest with average understanding. Later, when I traveled in the western provinces and studied under many different Zen teachers, I realized that Shōju Rōjin was greatly superior to them all, and that his student Chōmon was a great Zen master unrivaled in his time. I headed back to eastern Japan and went and prostrated myself before Chōmon at Bodaiju-in.

Now, gazing at his portrait and recalling the days of my youth, the tears just keep falling. Stifling them, I gird myself up and compose the following:

Chōmon Zen'a Oshō, formerly head of this temple,
Was straight and true, a warm, pure-hearted priest.
Throughout the days and nights he kept spurring on
Ornery packs of donkey-jowled, horse-faced monks.
For forty years beneath the Bodhi tree he spewed out
Bitter poisonous vapors and fierce pernicious clouds.
When genuine Zen traditions lay expiring in the dust,
This obstinate old man alone stood gnashing his teeth.
When the Zen gardens were inexorably going to seed,
He contemplated them with a gravely puckered brow.
As a novice entering Sekiin Soon's fiery broken forge,
He brandished the edgeless blade of Eastern Mountain.

Later, avenging the poison milk from his foe Takusui,
He took a First Seat at Myōshin-ji and succeeded him.
In lecturing to five hundred monks about *Vimalakirti*,
He spoke out on the menace of silent illumination Zen.
In conducting a meeting on *Praise of the Five Schools*,
He scrutinized scores of grizzled Chinese Zen masters.

Now Chōmon's portrait is hanging right before me. What should have been a tiger has come out looking like a badger. But that is as it should be. No painter, not even Seng-yu, could catch the true features of Chōmon's original face. I fervently hope that in the future, Chōmon's descendants — men who have acquired his claws and fangs — do not die out.

.....

The following version of Hakuin's youthful interaction with Chōmon appears in Tōrei's *Draft Chronological Biography* for Hakuin's twenty-ninth year; it was deleted from the published version: "The master stopped as he was passing to see Chōmon Oshō at Bodaiju-in. Chōmon was very pleased to see him and said, 'A rare visitor, indeed. Stay over for a few days.' The master declined. Chōmon quoted some words, 'In the future, with cultivation, it will become a tall pine tree and provide shade to the world.' He then said, 'If you promptly produce a line to finish that up, fine, you can go. But if you can't produce one, I won't let you leave here.' The master thereupon said, 'Cultivate it a thousand years, Bodhi will still cover the old tree.' Chōmon clapped his hands in admiration and said, 'Now I know I must make you stay.'"

"In the future, with cultivation . . . shade to the world." When Lin-chi had become discouraged with the progress of his study under Huang-po and decided to tell the master that he was leaving the temple, the head monk went to Huang-po first and said, "When the young monk [Lin-chi] comes, please use your skillful means on him. In the future, with training, he is sure to become a great tree which will provide shade for the people of the world" (*Rinzai-roku*, Yanagida Seizan, p. 233).

As a novice entering Sekiin Soon's fiery broken forge. Literally, "he entered a broken forge where Sekiin Soon was blowing into his bellows pipe to make the blaze hotter." Sekiin Soon (n.d.), a student of Gudō Tōshoku, was the head priest of Heirin-ji in Musashi province.

He brandished the edgeless blade of Eastern Mountain is a reference to the Zen of Wu-tsu Fa-yen. See the sixth note to #71 and the first note to #258.

Later, avenging the poison milk . . . and succeeded him. Takusui Sōjiki (n.d.) was Chōmon's teacher and predecessor as priest at Bodaiju-in. Before becoming abbot, Chōmon, like all Myōshin-ji priests, had to acquire the rank of *Dai-ichiza*, "First Seat," from the headquarters temple.

Seng-yu is the great Chinese painter Chang Seng-yu (c.470–550). See the first note to #268.

271. PRIEST HYAKUNYO OF ZUIGAN-JI

This inscription was written for a chinsō portrait of Hyakunyo, a priest of Zuigan-ji in Matsushima, northern Honshū. It appears from the verse that when Hyakunyo was a young monk on pilgrimage he studied at Tōkō-ji in Mino province under Daigyō (also Daikō) Eryū (1674–1706) at the same time as Hakuin, then later returned to Zuigan-ji for further study and eventually became head priest.

Years ago you went inside Tōkō-ji's thorny thickets,
We sucked poison milk together from Daigyō's teat.
Later you sank beneath Green Dragon's lethal waves,
Ended up taking your own teacher alive at Zuigan-ji.

Who is this?!

The son of Muan Nyogen, the father of Bunrei Tōiku,
Hyakunyo Rōjin, former head priest of this temple.

.....

Years ago you went . . . Daigyō's teat. According to the *Chronological Biography*, Hakuin took part in the *rōhatsu* training session at Tōkō-ji under head priest Daigyō in 1705. He stayed on until the following spring (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 160).

Later you sank . . . waves. Seiryū-san, "Green Dragon," is the "mountain name" of Zuigan-ji.

Ended up taking . . . at Zuigan-ji. "Your own teacher" (*shujinkō*) alludes to the koan "Ts'ui-yen's Own Master" in the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 12, which apparently had some special significance in Hyakunyo's training. "Every day master Zuigan would call out to himself, 'Master!' and he would then answer, 'Yes.' He would then ask himself, 'Are you awake?' and answer himself, 'Yes.' 'Will you never at any time be deceived by others?' he would ask, and then answer, 'No, I will not.'"

The line seems to refer to the fact that Hyakunyo finally succeeded his teacher and became head priest of Zuigan-ji.

Who is this?! The son of . . . former head priest of this temple. Muan Nyogen (n.d.) was Hyakunyo's teacher, and Bunrei Tōiku (n.d.) was his successor.

272. PRIEST DAITEN SHIGEN OF RYŪSEN-IN

Ryūsen-in, in Hamakita village, Tōtōmi province, belonged to the Hōkō-ji line of Rinzai Zen. According to the annotations, Daiten Shigen (d. 1729) began religious life as an Ōbaku priest and later received the Dharma transmission from Mumon Gensen at Hōkō-ji.

Daiten was one of Sen Takuhō's sons,
He became the father of Gyōten Kaku.
He traveled to Kyoto as well as Osaka,
He read the Tripitaka from first to last.

He was asked to reside at Mampuku-ji,
And he received the full precepts there.
Tending the sutras as master Fu's proxy,
He gained samadhi as Tao-hsuan's mate.
At the start he tasted old Tu-chan's fists,
Frightening him literally out of his wits.
Later, discarding Mumon's Dharma seal,
He forced demon spirits to sob and wail.
He is the patriarch who rebuilt Ryūsen-in,
His name, Venerable Oshō Daiten Shigen.

.....

Daiten was one of Sen Takuhō's sons . . . the father of Gyōten Kaku. Nothing is known about Daiten's teacher Sen Takuhō, except that he served as head priest of Ryūsen-ji, or about his student Gyōten Sokaku (d. 1775), who succeeded him at Ryūsen-ji.

He read the Tripitaka . . . at Mampuku-ji. At Mampuku-ji, the Ōbaku school's headquarters in Uji, Daiten apparently served as temple librarian in charge of their famous Tripitaka collection.

Tending the sutras as master Fu's proxy. Master Fu is Fu Ta-shih, a celebrated layman of early Chinese Buddhism who is credited with the invention of the revolving sutra storage case, a large cylindrical cabinet filled with Buddhist scriptures that is revolved to allow access to all the scriptures on the shelves.

He gained samadhi as Tao-hsuan's mate. Tao-hsuan (596–667) was founder of an influential sect of Precepts Buddhism in China. "Tao-shuan founded a precepts school in China. *Nagajō* [the term Hakuin uses for *samadhi*] is the samadhi espoused in the *Kusha-ron* [the Japanese title for Vasubandhu's 4th- to 5th-century *Abhidharmakosa*, or *Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma*]" (annotation).

At the start he tasted old Tu-chan's fists . . . discarding Mumon's Dharma seal. Tu-chan Hsing-jung (1628–1706) was the fourth abbot of the Mampuku-ji headquarters temple of Ōbaku Zen. Since Tu-chan served prior to that as head priest of Hōrin-ji, an Ōbaku temple

in Tōtōmi near the city of Hamamatsu, Daiten may have studied with him there.

273. SHŌJU RŌJIN

Hakuin inscribed this verse on a portrait of his teacher Shōju Rōjin that he painted at the request of his disciple Dōka (later Tōrei Enji). In explaining the circumstances in a long annotation, Tōrei also summarizes his practice under Hakuin:

In the third month of the first year of Enkyō [1744], having already had my satori confirmed [inka] once or twice, I entered a small hall at Shōin-ji and began to practice the Lotus samadhi. The master gave a loud shout and scolded me about “The Old Woman Burns Down the Hut”, his voice penetrating deep into my marrow. I was in agony for many days after that. [I returned home] that winter to care for my sick mother. In the tenth month of the next year [1745], now twenty-four years old, I shut myself up for an extended retreat in the Higashiyama area of Kyoto, pushing myself as relentlessly as I could physically endure. In the first month of the next year I sent a letter to Shōin-ji. The master [Hakuin] replied with a verse praising a realization I had achieved. That summer, the fifth month, my mother passed away. In autumn I ordained my younger brother into the priesthood. That winter, I moved to Kōin-an in Higashiyama. . . . In spring of [1748, my brother] Fumō, now my disciple, requested a meeting. When he came I gave him a copy of Records of the Authentic Lamp, a biography of Shōju Rōjin, and an inscription written by master Hakuin. I traveled to Shinano province where I succeeded in collecting material about Shōju’s life. When I presented the biography of Shōju I had compiled to master Hakuin, asking him to revise my work, I also requested a portrait of Shōju. Fumō went to

Sekigahara in Mino province to visit the Miwa family [the family of Shōju's teacher Shidō Munan] to see if he could find a portrait of Zen master Munan. He then proceeded to Shinano province to try to verify some of the dates in Shōju's career, and to locate, if possible, some of his books or manuscripts. On Fumō's return, he went directly to the master and informed him of the details he had discovered. The master was extremely pleased, and painted a portrait of Shōju. He inscribed this verse on the back of the painting. He wrote to me, saying, "You yourself should write a colophon over this portrait." Such is the record of how this verse came to be written.

Brother Dōka came and asked me to paint a portrait of Shōju.

I tried over and over but not one resembled Shōju in the least.

I might keep painting forever, my efforts would still fall short.

A broken kettle slips on rope shoes, fords at Meng Crossing.

.....

My younger brother. Tōrei's younger brother (d. 1794) is known only by his Buddhist name Fumō, which he received from Tōrei.

Records of the Authentic Lamp (Shūmon Shōtō-roku) is a compilation by the Japanese Myōshin-ji priest Tōyō Eichō (1429–1504), first published at the beginning of the 16th century, consisting of the records of eminent priests, Chinese and Japanese, in Tōyō's lineage. Tōrei held this work in great esteem and used it throughout his career. The biography of Shōju that Tōrei compiled is probably the *Shōju Dōkyō Etan Anju Anroku*, a short work first published in 1931 in Abe Hōshun's *Shōju Rōjin* (Gagetsu-an, Nagano). Tōrei, who has been called the historian of Hakuin's line, also compiled a spiritual biography of Shōju's teacher, Shidō Munan (1603–76). It

has been translated as “The Life of Shidō Munan Zenji,” Sōhaku Kobori and Norman Waddell (*Eastern Buddhist*, III, 1, 1970).

I might keep painting forever . . . fords at Meng Crossing. Meng’s Crossing is a strategic river crossing in Henan province. “Unable to paint Shōju’s original face or true Dharma-body in ink, Hakuin ends by making a final, verbal attempt to depict it [in a koan of his own making]” (annotation).

274-1. THREE TEACHERS WITH ONE HEAD

Hakuin’s paintings of Lao Tzu, Confucius, and Buddha, representing the Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist traditions, depict them with three different bodies that are joined by a single, tripartite head.

These old crocks have three faces but share a single head.

That men of such consequence should each have illnesses!

Lao Tzu valued the ancients, Confucius the present world,

Buddha honored both and encompassed the future as well.

When working together, thrusting open the closed barrier,
They can eliminate suffering caused by primal ignorance.

Once you break open the seed that creates your delusions,

You are no longer troubled about the branches and leaves.

Though these men’s works contain truly wonderful words,
They’re like air flowers you create from rubbing your eyes.

The Way is hard to grasp, lying beyond vast and misty seas,
But I jotted down two lines out behind the monks' quarters:

My toes poke out from holes in my tattered year-old socks,
Anyone who sees this clearly will surely perceive the truth.

.....

That men of such . . . have such illnesses! An annotation identifies the illnesses as *sewa yaki*, interfering in other people's affairs; being meddlesome do-gooders. Hakuin's line of verse contains an allusion to a passage in the *Analects* VI.8: "When Confucius's follower Po-niu was ill, Confucius went to see how he was doing. Holding his hand through the window he said, 'I am afraid it is too late. Surely, it is the decree of Heaven. That such a man should have such an illness! That such a man should have such an illness!'"

When working together . . . caused by primal ignorance. An annotation quotes the saying, "To break free of suffering one person pushing at the barrier is better than a thousand."

Once you break open . . . about the branches and leaves. "He's just meddling, trying to get people to enter the Great Way. Get rid of the seed core of delusion that addicts you to the Great Way. Crack the seed core and dump all those branches and leaves" (annotation).

Though these men's works . . . rubbing your eyes. "Seen through the eyes of the enlightened, there are no ultimate teachings" (annotation). Flowers in the air or "air flowers" (*kūge*) are illusions you yourself create, like the false images produced by rubbing your eyes; the term suggests going out of your way to create illusions (see also #93). Hakuin's line of verse also contains an allusion to a passage in the *Analects* XI.25: "After three of Confucius's students had expressed their opinions on a certain question, the master asked his follower Tien, 'What about you, Tien?' Tien ceased

strumming on the zither and, as the last notes died away, set the instrument aside and stood up. 'My tastes are different from those of these three men,' he replied. 'What harm is there in that?' said the master. . . . 'In the late spring,' said Tien, 'when work on the spring clothes is finished, I'd like to go with five or six older fellows who have been capped and six or seven young boys to bathe in the Yi River, take the air among the altars where they pray for rain, and come home singing.' The master gave a deep sigh and exclaimed, 'I'm with Tien!'" (adapted from the Watson translation, p. 77).

But I jotted down. . . . The original refers to Chao-chou's "Song for the Twenty-four Hours," in which Chao-chou describes the poverty and hardship of his long years of Zen training.

My toes poke out from holes . . . year-old socks. "This is the stuff of old master Chao-chou [see previous note]. It shows the deep poverty in Hakuin's temple. He's still wearing last year's socks [*tabi*], and his toes can be seen sticking out from the holes" (annotation).

Anyone who sees this clearly . . . perceive the truth. "Understand this, and you'll understand the true flavor of the Great Way" (annotation).

274-2. THREE TEACHERS WITH ONE HEAD

The three sages and their three teachings,
If they are preached, their truth vanishes.
If they're left unpreached, nobody learns,
And people mistake their minds for truth.

275. SHEN NUNG

Shen Nung is a legendary ruler of ancient China credited with teaching people the use of the plow and the efficacy of medicinal plants. He is also referred to as a god of fire, having taught how to use it to clear the land.

Years ago, before writing came into use,
He had a method of tying knots in ropes.
He lashed plants with a whip, tasted them,
And learned to use them as healing herbs.
Whittling a tree branch he devised a plow,
Taught farmers its use for tilling the fields.
He gave men fire to could cook their food,
Setting them apart from animals and birds.
Praiseworthy men who emulated his virtue
In time gained mastery of the medical arts.

.....

He lashed plants with a whip, tasted them. An account in the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shih-chi, ch. 3)* states that Shen Nung would beat plants and grasses with a whip and then taste them to discover their properties and medicinal uses.

276. CHUANG TZU

Although evidently written for a painting of the Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu in color, no such work is known to exist. Chuang Tzu was awarded the honorific name Nan-hua chen-ren, "True Man of the Southern Flower," by one of the T'ang emperors, and his book, the Chuang Tzu, is referred to as Nan-hua chen-ching, The True Classic of the Southern Flower.

A face red as a jujube fruit, his silver hair,
A droopy robe, his silently clasped hands.

It is not the old guy from the four-mat room,
So it must be the sage of the southern flower.
He lived the true equality of right and wrong,
Dreams turn real when the butterfly returns.

.....

It is not the old guy from the four-mat room. Layman Vimalakirti's tiny room, into which infinite numbers of Bodhisattvas and religious seekers came to receive his teachings.

He lived the true equality of right and wrong. The final two lines are based on passages in the "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" chapter of the *Chuang Tzu*: "Where there is recognition of right there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong there must be recognition of right. Therefore the sage does not proceed in such a way, but illuminates all in the light of Heaven. He too recognizes a 'this,' but a 'this' which is also 'that,' a 'that' which is also 'this.' His 'that' has both a right and wrong in it; his 'this' too has both a right and a wrong in it. So, in fact, does he still have a 'this' and a 'that'? Or does he in fact no longer have a 'this' and a 'that'?" (Watson, p. 40).

Dreams turn real when the butterfly returns. "Once Chuang Chou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Chuang Chou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuang Chou. But he didn't know if he was Chuang Chou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Chou" (ibid, p. 49).

277. KUAN YU

Kuan Yu (d. 220) was a celebrated general whose exploits during the civil wars that led to the collapse of the Eastern Han dynasty, later fictionalized in such works as Romance of the Three Kingdoms,

made him into a great hero of Chinese folk religion. The legends of Kuan Yu epitomize his virtues of loyalty and integrity and celebrate him as the most renowned of China's military heroes. He was a favorite painting subject for Hakuin.

With a pugnacious bearing and benevolent spirit within,
Kuan Yu was loyal, honorable and upright to his marrow.
Blessed with the physical strength of Hsiang Yu of Ch'u,
He also had the great sagacity of Chang Liang of the Han.

Red Hare, his prize steed, towering over ten feet in height,
Had the prowess to breach enemy cities at a single bound.

One sweep of Emerald Dragon, Kuan Yu's crescent blade,
Made mincemeat of murderous wolves and vicious tigers.
As a governor of Shu, the people loved him like a father,
Ts'ao Ts'ao feared him greater than the sharpest weapons.

To save his lord's wife from harm, he surrendered to Wei,
He rescued brother-in-law Chang Fei from imminent peril.
With son Kuan Pei before him, and Chou Kang at his rear,

He was the younger brother of Liang Pien,
His style was Yu, his sobriquet Yun-chang.

.....

Hsiang Yu (232–202 B.C.) and Chang Liang (282–189 B.C.) are celebrated Chinese heroes.

Red Hare, his prize steed . . . at a single bound. Kuan Yu's horse, Red Hare (Ch'ih t'u Ma), is described in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as being ten feet from head to tail and nine feet from hoof to head, with the strength that enabled it to gallop across cities and leap over moats.

One sweep of Emerald Dragon. . . . “Kuan Yu’s sword, Emerald Dragon, weighed one hundred and fifty pounds” (annotation).

Ts’ao Ts’ao feared him . . . and Chou Kang at his rear. Kuan Yu served the warlord Liu Pei when the latter was struggling through the wars of the Three Kingdoms period. Kuan Yu was a close companion of Chang Fei from a young age, when they joined the local chieftain Liu Pei. Appointed governor, Liu Pei went to war with Ts’ao Ts’ao of the Eastern Han dynasty, with Kuan Yu and Chang Fei as his chief lieutenants. Kuan Yu fought bravely, but was once surrounded and taken prisoner along with two of Liu Pei’s wives. Ts’ao tried to win him over to his service, but Kuan Yu remained faithful to Liu Pei, eventually escaping and returning to Liu Pei. Kuan Yu led Liu Pei’s forces against Ts’ao Ts’ao, winning a key victory at the Battle of the Red Cliffs. After many more battles, Kuan Yu was finally captured and put to death, but the Eastern Han dynasty collapsed soon after, and the state of Shu Han was established with Liu Pei as its first emperor. Kuan Pei was Kuan Yu’s son, and Chou Kang was a general who served Kuan Pei.

His style was Yu. “Style,” also sometimes called “courtesy name,” was the name by which a person was known to his friends.

278. CHUNG KUEI

Chung Kuei, Shōki in Japanese, is a mythical Chinese hero who vanquishes demons and evil spirits. In the popular sculpture and painting of Edo Japan he is usually shown wearing a scholar’s hat, a green robe, and large boots, stabbing or trampling on demons. According to the legend of him in the Chinese records, he was a scholar who lived during the T’ang dynasty. Upon failing his official examinations, he committed suicide, but feeling gratitude to Emperor Hsuan Tsung for giving him a fine funeral, he appeared to the Emperor in a dream when the latter was suffering from a fever. In the dream Chung Kuei drove off the two goblins who were trying to steal

the damasked incense bag of Lady Yang (the Emperor's consort) and the Emperor's jade flute. When the Emperor woke up, he was cured. Chung Kuei later came to be regarded as a demon-queller god and it was as such that he was introduced into Japan.

The precise meaning some of Hakuin's allusions in this verse are difficult to grasp. It seems likely that someone asked him to inscribe words on a painting of Chung Kuei, and Hakuin, instead of writing specifically about the Chinese hero, took the opportunity to admonish the person, evidently a layman, for his profligate and licentious lifestyle.

In explaining this verse, Yoshizawa cites Japanese proverbs in which the word hanage, "nose hair," appears: hanage wo nobasu, to become stupidly infatuated with a woman; hanage wo nukareru, to be outwitted or made a fool of by a woman's charms (literally, to have one's nose hairs yanked out); and hanage wo yomu, to lead a man around by the nose (literally, "to read his nose hairs").

I've heard that rope made from a beautiful woman's hair
Can fetter the Elephant King so that he can't even move.
Who is that now being yanked around by his nose hairs,
A person who's surrendered all the dignity he
possessed?
There's a demon, he goes by the name Chiu Chung Kuei,
Who hunts down and eats the goblins of water and land.
Long ago he intruded into one of Hsuan Tsung's dreams;
Lady Yang had no doubt been flexing her nose tweezers.
How fearful indeed the enticements lovely ladies employ,
Clapping fetters even on gods and lesser demons like
that.

.....

I've heard that rope . . . so that he can't even move. The Buddha said, "There is a great white elephant with the strength to move mountains, smash the earth, create rivers, uproot great trees, and break up boulders. He has unrivaled strength, but a man can twist human hairs into a rope, tie it around the elephant's leg, and cripple

him so he is unable to move” (*Wu-k’u chang-kou ching; Sutra of Words and Phrases on the Five Kinds of Suffering* T17). Yoshida Kenkō, alluding to this passage in *Tsurezuregusa (Essays in Idleness)* mentions “using even a woman’s (fine) hair.”

Who is that now . . . his nose hairs. Being pulled by the nose seems to refer to the layman’s infatuation with a young woman or women, probably courtesans, who toy with his affection.

There’s a demon . . . Chiu Chung Kuei. Although suppressing goblins is Chung Kuei’s job, no demon or devil of this name (literally “Pigeon Chung Kuei”) is known. Is Hakuin perhaps making a hidden reference only the layman would understand?

Long ago he intruded . . . Hsuan Tsung’s dreams. “When Chung Kuei expelled the goblins, it was probably because Lady Yang used her nose-hair tweezers and bewitched the Emperor with her charms” (annotation). The nose-hair tweezers in this annotation are the charms she would use to lead the Emperor around by the nose.

279. CHUNG KUEI DOING ZAZEN

A mere glance at a picture of cross-legged sitting
Starts evil demons quaking and seeking the door.
How much more fearsome Minister Chung Kuei
Sitting upright with his backbone ramrod straight!

.....

“When Hakuin painted Chung Kuei, his countenance looked like Daruma. One monk said, ‘It’s like bowing down before the First Patriarch.’ The master wrote an inscription for the painting: ‘The great teacher Daruma returned to life as a layman.’ Then he wrote an inscription for a painting of Daruma: ‘Minister Chung Kuei in his Dharma essence’” (annotation). The idea of Chung Kuei as a minister is a Japanese embellishment of the Chinese myth.

280. SAIGYŌ

The renowned poet Saigyō Hōshi (1118–90), born Satō Norikiyo to a noble family of Kyoto, adopted the name Saigyō, “Heading Westward,” when he entered the Buddhist priesthood at the age of twenty-two.

Years ago, a samurai named Satō Hyōe Norikiyo
Entered the priesthood and called himself Saigyō.
Saddened by a snipe winging up over the marshes,
He lost mind and body, was left with only a name.

.....

Saddened by a snipe . . . over the marshes. Hakuin invokes Saigyō’s well-known verse:

Even in the mind of the mindless one
grief arises
when the snipe wings up
over the marshes
in the autumn evening.

(translation R.H. Blyth)

He lost mind and body . . . only a name. “Why is [his poetry] so pleasing and comforting? Why will he be celebrated to the end of time? Because he realized the Buddha-nature. ‘Even in the mind of the mindless one’ is Saigyō’s enlightenment poem [*tōki no uta*]” (annotation).

281. SAIGYŌ APPEALS TO THE PINE TREE

No painting with this inscription is recorded. It may have been similar to other paintings Hakuin did of Saigyō, showing him as an itinerant monk stooping to tie on his sandals. The title of this inscription is taken from a poem in Saigyō's Sanka-shū collection: "I made a grass hut at Entsū-ji and resided in it. On seeing an ancient pine tree that had weathered an eternity of time standing before the hut, I made an appeal: 'After I die, remember a solitary monk whose steps no one will follow.'"

The first two lines of Hakuin's verse wryly comment on the painting, while the second two provide an even wrier response to his own observation.

Te-shan is putting on his sandals with his back to the hall,
He's setting out following that encounter with Kuei-shan.
A monk interrupted and said that it's Saigyō, not Te-shan,
The painter just forgot to paint the pine tree he appealed
to.

.....

Te-shan is putting on his sandals . . . with Kuei-shan. This is based on the following story in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 4: "As soon as Te-shan arrived at Kuei-shan's temple he went directly into the teaching hall without even putting down his travel packet. After pacing from east to west and west to east, he looked around and said, 'Nothing, Nothing' [*Mu, Mu*], and then he left. Upon reaching the monastery gate, he thought, 'I can't be too rash about this.' Arranging his robe properly he returned and requested an interview with Kuei-shan. Kuei-shan was sitting quietly on his cushion. Te-shan picked up his sitting mat and said, 'Head priest!' Kuei-shan began to take up his whisk. Te-shan gave a shout and, shaking his sleeves, left the room. Turning his back on the teaching hall, Te-shan put on his straw sandals and left." Hakuin's comments on this part of the koan appear in #136.

A monk interrupted . . . the pine tree he appealed to. "These words have special significance. Is this Te-shan, or is it Saigyō? Is it

Saigyō, or is it Te-shan? Someone who has heard the sound of one hand will grasp the borderline between them” (annotation).

282. TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI

One of the most remarkable figures in Japanese history, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98), born into the humblest of circumstances, worked his way through the ranks while serving under feudal lord Oda Nobunaga to become Nobunaga’s most trusted lieutenant. After the latter’s death in 1582, he emerged as the undisputed ruler of the country.

The son of a peasant family who rose to the heights,
In China they regarded him as the emperor of Japan.
He had Han Hsin’s genius, Chang Liang’s sagacity,
Kiyomori’s good fortune, and Chiang Wei’s mettle.
Parceling wealth and favors among provincial lords,
He then dispatched them to fight in his Korean wars.
He rebuilt Sanjō Bridge in Kyoto using stone pillars,
Had the name Hideyoshi engraved on all the railings.

.....

Han Hsin and Chang Liang are two of the three great heroes who contributed to the founding of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.).

*Kiyomori is Taira no Kiyomori (1118–81), who established Japan’s first samurai-dominated government as a military leader during the Heian period. As Hakuin uses Kiyomori’s religious name Jōkai, the “good fortune” apparently alludes to a story told in *The Tale of the Heike* in which Kiyomori takes Buddhists orders and adopts a Buddhist name after miraculously recovering from a serious illness.*

Chiang Wei was a regent of the state of Shu Han who distinguished himself as a military commander during the Three Kingdoms period.

He then dispatched them . . . Korean wars. As a step in his plan to subjugate Ming China, Hideyoshi sent two expeditionary forces to its vassal state Joseon (Korea) in the late 16th century.

He rebuilt Sanjō Bridge . . . engraved on all the railings. In 1590, to commemorate his victory over the Hōjō clan at Odawara, Hideyoshi had the main Sanjō Bridge in Kyoto rebuilt using stone pillars, the first time they were used in Japan. A commemorative inscription in Hideyoshi's name was engraved on the pillars.

283. YANADA ZEIGAN

Yanada Zeigan (1672–1757) was a prominent Confucian teacher from the port city of Akashi on the Inland Sea west of Osaka whom Hakuin befriended in his later years. Hakuin asked Zeigan to write a preface for Poison Blossoms, but later withdrew his request (see the Introduction to Poison Blossoms, pp. 9–13).

Versed in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism,
He teaches people the five Confucian virtues.
Kakinomoto Hitomaro has departed the scene,
Now this man guards the ramparts of Akashi.

.....

The five [basic] Confucian virtues are kindness, justice, propriety, wisdom, and honesty.

Kakinomoto Hitomaro (c. 662–710) was a *waka* poet and aristocrat who is revered as the god of poetry. One of his most famous poems was written at Akashi:

Dimly, dimly
in the morning mist that lies over Akashi Bay,
my longings follow with the ship
that vanishes behind the distant isle.

A shrine to the poet was later built in Akashi. Hakuin's paintings of Hitomaro are discussed in *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 194–99.

Now this man . . . ramparts of Akashi. Akashi was a port city fortified with high stone ramparts, some of which skirted the sea.

284. MR. YOTSUGI RELIEVING VILLAGERS IN DISTRESS

Yotsugi Masayuki was a wealthy Kyoto layman who became a student of Hakuin and aided him in a number of his publishing projects. From the same village in Ōmi province as Tōrei, Yotsugi provided hermitages in the eastern hills of Kyoto for young Tōrei when he was in the capital for practice retreats. It was probably Tōrei who first introduced Yotsugi to Hakuin.

This piece was written in 1752 at Kiichi-ji in southern Izu. “The master received a request from Kiichi-ji and went there in the autumn to lecture on the Record of Bukkō. Tsutsumi Yukimori traveled all the way from Kyoto to attend. He told Hakuin how Yotsugi Masayuki had relieved starving villagers in northern Kyoto who were in great distress. As an expression of his approval, the master made a painting depicting the events and added an inscription to it” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 220). Katō Shōshun states in his edition of Hakuin’s Chronological Biography (Hakuin Oshō Nempu, p. 241) that the painting is extant, but it has remained unpublished and its whereabouts are unknown. Yotsugi also appears in one of the letters included in Beating the Cloth Drum, p. 133.

Tsutsumi Yukimori (n.d.), also known as Nara-ya Kichibei, was related to Yotsugi and may also have served as head clerk (bantō) at his business in Kyoto.

Mr. Yotsugi (his first name Masayuki)
Vigorously pursues the study of Zen

While carrying out his Bodhisattva vow,
Tirelessly working for his fellow men.
At a meeting I held in Akashi last year
He passed my first two koan barriers,
Hearing the sound of the single hand,
And putting a stop to sound altogether.
He has not seen my inner sanctum yet,
So many tough barriers still lie ahead.
Yotsugi procured seven Buddha-relics,
Which he placed in a jeweled reliquary.
Tōrei brought this treasure to Suruga,
And enshrined it in his temple there.
Folks from all over come to worship it,
Filing in and out like lines of red ants.
In spring of the second year of Horeki
A blizzard left snow over twenty feet deep,
Isolated villagers in the northern hills,
Thirty hamlets from Kurama to Ohara,
No fire in their hearths for over a week,
All the villagers were hungry and cold.
Yotsugi, grieved to hear of their plight,
Was moved to utter the following vow:
“Even should it take everything I own,
Leave me penniless till the day I die,
I must save them from certain death.
How can I just sit by idly and watch?”
A relative named Tsutsumi Yukimori,
Fully supporting Mr. Yotsugi’s plans,
Trekking nine miles through deep snow
To tell villagers help was on the way,
Fortifying them with hope and courage,
Inspiring them with a will to survive.
Tsutsumi then returned to the villages,
Leading pack horses loaded with rice.
Two men like Yotsugi and Tsutsumi
Are rarely found in this dusty world.
Without a stalwart such as Tsutsumi

Yotsugi could never achieve his aim;
Without the donation Yotsugi offered
Tsutsumi could not perform his deeds.
It is said that a diviner long ago, reading
Death in the face of an acolyte monk,
Sadly informed the poor young fellow
He only had seven more days to live.
The weeping boy, overcome by despair,
Went sadly to bid his parents farewell.
On his way home he passed a tiny rivulet,
Where a line of ants was being swept away.
Seeing their plight, he broke off a reed
And used it to make a bridge for them.
The diviner, meeting the boy again, said,
“You must have performed a splendid deed,
I now see signs of long and prosperous life.
I am sure you will save a great many lives.”
When the boy told how he rescued the ants,
Even his teacher was pleased and impressed.
He lived to become a priest of great virtue,
Dying when well over ninety years old.
If saving the lives of those small insects
Could change a boy’s fate to such an extent,
Just imagine the futures of these two men
Who saved so many people from certain death!
Their exploits inspire a most earnest prayer:
May all attain the perfection of wisdom as one.
Unable to suppress my admiration for these men
I painted this so people will know what they did.

.....

My first two koan barriers. Yotsugi had passed Hakuin’s two-part koan (“Hear the sound of one hand,” and “Put a stop to all sounds”) while taking part in the lecture meeting Hakuin held on the *Record of Hsu-t’ang* in the winter of 1750 at Ryōkoku-ji in Akashi, Harima

province, located on the coast of the Inland Sea just west of the modern city of Kobe (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 217).

Yotsugi procured seven Buddha-relics . . . enshrined it in his temple there. On his way back from teaching in western Japan, Hakuin stopped over in Kyoto for lectures on the *Blue Cliff Record* at the Yōgen-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji. Tōrei was with him as an attendant and later accompanied him back to Suruga. The Buddha-relics Yotsugi donated to the newly rebuilt Muryō-ji, where Tōrei had been appointed head priest, were officially enshrined in the eleventh month of 1752 (see #176).

Thirty hamlets from Kurama to Ohara. Kurama and Ohara are villages in the hills several miles north of Kyoto, an area that normally receives heavier snowfall than Kyoto itself, though a depth of twenty feet would be unusual.

285. A BOY RIDING A WATER BUFFALO

The ox or bull as a symbol of the massive strength and stubborn recalcitrance of the Zen student's mind, long a favorite trope of Zen painters and poets, finds its most well-known expression in the Ten Ox-herding Pictures (Jūgyū-zu). Hakuin's verse is undated, and no painting of this description is known.

Where'd you get your hands on that buffalo,
Young fellow? And whose little boy are you?
Such a skinny rider, and such a sturdy beast,
Nasty customer even with a ring in his nose.
I can give a few pointers about taming an ox:
Attempt to catch him, he's sure to slip away;
Give him his head, he nuzzles right up close.
Booieeee! Booieeee!

.....

Such a skinny rider . . . ring in his nose contains references to lines in verses accompanying the first (Seeking the Ox) and fourth (Catching the Ox) stages of *the Ten Ox-herding Pictures*.

286. A CRAB

Hakuin drew several paintings of crabs, but none answering this description is known.

BOTH ARMS RAISED up high, both eyes staring like stalks at the blue sky, this tiny riverside creature scrabbles its way into the reeds. On looking more closely, I discovered that it was Crab Sensei. Addressing him, I said:

“Ah! How strong and brave you are, even as you humble yourself before all things for your peace and security. The trouble comes when someone gets puffed up and arrogant. You always gaze upward as though worshipping the Buddha’s blue eyes, like you were one of the host of eighty thousand who attended the preaching at Vulture Peak. It is a gaze that takes everything in, like the usurper Wang Mang, whose loathing enemies would even today devour him alive. It is the gaze of a cat who pretends to doze under a peony in the warm spring sun, and suddenly leaps to catch a butterfly. It is the gaze of a Zen monk steadily scanning the distant heavens and aspiring to the freedom to transcend those heights (though this is a perilous trap for him).

“But what is your real intent in assuming that brave and manly attitude with your six legs and two pincers and revering Heaven like that?”

Crab Sensei replied, “I have my reasons for scuttling sideways the way I do. I’m not just indulging in some cheeky sport. I must also point out that I am different from the four examples you just gave.”

With deepest respect I then said to him, “I was sure that was the case. Would you please fill me in on the particulars of that difference?”

Shuffling and scuttling around, Crab Sensei whispered in a tiny voice, “To tell the truth, I’m quite an ignorant fellow. I’m not sure myself. I’ve just always acted like this.”

“Could that be your original nature?” I asked.

Edging sideways, Crab Sensei said, “I don’t know. I don’t know,” and disappeared into the reeds.

.....

The usurper Wang Mang (1st century B.C.) After marrying his daughter to the Han emperor P’ing Ti, Wang Mang poisoned him, and then had his daughter name her infant son as emperor and appoint himself regent. He later declared himself emperor. When his own army later turned against him, his soldiers tore his corpse into pieces.

The gaze of a Zen monk. “This is where a great many monks stumble to their ruin. . . . [They shouldn’t] seek Buddhahood above or try to save sentient beings below. They should swallow up [negate] all Buddhas of the three worlds” (annotation). “Here is the real meaning of these words of master Hakuin” (annotation).

Edging sideways, Crab Sensei said, “I don’t know. I don’t know.” . . . “Tōrei: ‘Although this inscription seems to espouse the Taoist doctrines of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, at a deeper level it is urging people to turn to the Buddha Way. Lao and Chuang teach spontaneity and naturalness, that all things derive from Heaven. Buddha teaches that the three worlds [past, present, and future] exist, and that within them cause and effect hold sway, that good and evil are both produced by the mind. The pieces that follow, the master’s verses about a hungry ghost thrashing a skeleton [#288-1, #288-2], teach that good and evil is all produced by the mind’” (annotation).

287. BIRDS RETURNING TO THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS

An ink painting on the wall reveals serenely hidden vistas
A flock of birds perhaps returning at evening to their nests
Soars in a slanted skein high above the clouds like tiny
flies
A distant line of hills drawn like lovely arching eyebrows.

.....

A distant line of hills . . . eyebrows. The artist's brushstrokes depicting the hills resemble "moth eyebrows," a phrase used to describe a beautiful woman's eyebrows.

288-1. A HUNGRY GHOST THRASHING A SKELETON

INSTEAD OF THRASHING the bones of his former self,
Why doesn't he grasp the mind that beats them?
How priceless is the mind that does the thrashing,
That mind is the mind of all the ancient Buddhas.

288-2. A HUNGRY GHOST THRASHING A SKELETON

This long verse was inscribed, like the one in the previous piece, on a drawing of a hungry ghost (Sanskrit, preta; Japanese, gaki).

Hungry ghosts, who inhabit the second lowest of the six realms in which unenlightened beings are reborn, live in a state of perpetual, insatiable thirst and hunger. Occupying the top rung on the ladder of rebirth in the six realms are heavenly beings (devas) such as the one that appears in the second half of Hakuin's verse. These godlike

beings, because they experience unremitting pleasure, lack any incentive to cultivate wisdom or compassion. Devas are beings of great power, wealth, and longevity, and they are normally invisible to human and other beings on lower levels of existence, but in time even they grow old, manifesting the five signs of decay (tennin no gosui) — dirty clothing, withering of garlands in their hair, unpleasant odors, sweaty armpits, and uneasiness of mind — and when they die, they are reborn into a lower, less fortunate realm of existence. Among the six realms of existence — deva, human, asura, beast, hungry ghost, and hell — it is in the human realm alone that realization of the truth of Buddha's teaching and escape from the suffering of the six ways are possible.

From other similar works Hakuin painted, we can assume the drawings depicted a skeletal figure with a skull-like head and a grossly distended stomach thrashing with a bamboo rod at the scattered remains of a disinterred corpse. The story that inspired the image and verses appears in a number of Chinese collections of Buddhist tales. The version found in a work entitled Divergent Concepts in Sutra and Vinaya Texts is as follows:

Long ago in a foreign land there was a man who beat his corpse after he died. When onlookers said, "You are dead. Why are you beating your corpse?" he explained, "When I was alive, this was my body. I committed a great many bad deeds because of it. When I saw sutras or precepts, I didn't read them. I stole, I deceived people, I raped, I was unkind to my parents, I used my wealth selfishly only on myself, and never donated alms. Because of this body you see here, I fell into the evil realms of existence when I died, and underwent punishments and suffering impossible to describe. That is why I beat my corpse"

(Ching-lu i-hsiang, ch. 46).

Hakuin's own interpretation of the story, which unfolds as he retells it, is given a typical Zen twist at the end. The much shorter inscription on the same theme that appeared in the previous piece

(#288-1) can be said to encapsulate both the tale and Hakuin's underlying message.

A Zen priest was doing zazen in a graveyard,
Bathed in the pale moonlight of a lonely moor.
At midnight, he felt a noxious breeze rise up
And saw a hungry ghost pummeling a corpse.
Thrashing at it with furious, demonic passion,
Its hawk-like eyes aglow with burning hatred.
What had whipped it into such a wrathful state,
Kept it thrashing ceaselessly through the night?
Quaking with fear, the priest went up and said,
“Who were you? From what house and family?
What grave injustice is it that you must avenge?
What fired you to this towering pitch of anger?”
Glowering darkly, but revealing signs of shame,
The ghost broke into tears and told his bitter tale:
“I was a man of substantial eminence and wealth,
A womanizer devoted to the pleasures of the flesh.
I showed no kindness or compassion to my parents,
No more concern for others than for a root or stake.
I rejected the notion of an after-life or future world,
My mind just thirsting onward like a hungry beast,
Thinking solely of myself and my immediate needs.
When I died, I fell into this accursed form you see,
Doomed to walk endlessly among razor-leafed trees,
To undergo frightful torment in a cave-like darkness,
And all because of those hateful bones rotting there.
They’ve caused me greater pain than the lictor’s axe.
My hatred for them is unceasing, and it never abates,
I come here every night and thrash at them like this.”
Then flushed with bloody tears he stopped speaking,
Choked with bitterness, uttering heart-rending cries.
The priest, his own eyes glistening, turned and left.
But after he had gone no more than a hundred steps,
Chance brought him to the side of another graveyard.
In it he beheld a deva praying before a pile of bones.

It wore a jeweled crown and slippers of silken brocade,
Its body tinkling with gems exuded a sweet fragrance.
High overhead floated auspicious five-colored clouds,
The surrounding trees glowed with rare celestial light.
The priest, taken aback, approached the radiant being.
“I feel favored to gaze on your sublime form,” he said,
But why have you chosen to appear in this boneyard?
And why do you bow before a pile of stinking bones
More wretched and worthless than old chips of wood?”
“Come closer and I will answer you,” replied the deva.
“I have an excellent reason to bow before these bones.
I was born to a poor family, the very poorest of the poor,
There wasn’t even rice bran to fill our starving bellies.
But by the gradual accumulation of various good acts,
I attained rebirth in the palace of the thirty-three gods.
When I inhabited the human realm, this was my body;
I come here to repay a small part of the debt I owe it.”
Then he suddenly disappeared into the cloud and mist,
Leaving only the plaintive cries of the autumn insects.
What a shame that the priest, on meeting those beings,
Was remiss in his duty to confront them as he should.
Even if the ghost had thrashed the bones into powder,
It wouldn’t free him from the seas of birth and death.
Even devas reborn into the initial meditation heavens
Grow old and die, and revert to less fortunate births.
But if you grasp the mind that is thrashing the bones,
The four Buddha wisdoms will suddenly blaze forth.
The deep mind-source within you is a precious thing,
It can change into a raft, ferry you beyond the world.
Even someone burdened by deep obstructing karma
Will find it suddenly vanish upon grasping this mind.
This teaching is not meant to delude or deceive you,
It is an eternal truth, unchanging till the end of time.

.....

In the latter parts of the verse Hakuin employs terminology from ancient Buddhist cosmology. The Triple World, the locus of illusion or unenlightened being, is comprised of (1) the World of Desire, the dwelling place of all those in the six paths, including the six kinds of heavenly beings; (2) the World of Form, whose inhabitants are less in thrall to desire but still attached to form; and (3) the World of Formlessness, whose occupants are free from both desire and form. “The palace of the thirty-three gods” is in the second-lowest heaven in the World of Desire, while “the initial meditation heavens” — Hakuin specifies Daibonten (Skt., Maha-brahma) and Bonpoten (Skt., Brahma-puro-hita) — are the second and third lowest stages in the first meditation heaven of the World of Form.

BOOK NINE

RELIGIOUS VERSES (*GEJU*)

The Japanese word geju, from the Sanskrit gāthā, refers in Buddhist scripture to a verse or versified discourse. In later Chinese and Japanese Zen it came to be used in a looser sense for Buddhist verse in general. Hakuin composed a great many geju as Instructions to the Assembly and for temple observances such as Buddha's Birthday and Bodhidharma's Death Anniversary. Most of those in Book Nine are written for individual priests and laymen or as occasional verses unconnected to any specific teaching category.

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289. WHILE STAYING AT RYŪUN-JI

Ryūun-ji is located a little over a mile east of Hara in what is now the city of Numazu. Its head priest at this time was Setten Ehatsu (also Ehotsu; n.d.), one of Hakuin's oldest friends. Slightly older than Hakuin, in his teens Ehatsu was a novice under Sokudō Rōshi at Daishō-ji in Numazu at the same time as Hakuin, whom he accompanied on a number of the latter's early travels and in time came to recognize as his teacher. After Hakuin was installed as head priest at Shōin-ji, Ehatsu came to assist him whenever extra help was needed. Despite this close relationship, Ehatsu appears in Hakuin's records only once, and that in passing, in Wild Ivy (p. 49). An annotation quoting Hakuin states that "this took place forty years ago," which would place this verse no later than his early to mid-forties, a period during which he was still engaged in a regimen of particularly intense practice (Chronological Biography, pp. 199–202).

The following two verses, #290 and #291, written for Unzan and Senior Priest Jun, respectively, were also composed during this stay at Ryūun-ji. The three men had probably gathered at Ryūun-ji for the rōhatsu sesshin (training period) held in the twelfth month. If written at the end of this intense period of practice, all three verses can be said to express Hakuin's state of mind at the time.

Poking about for his gimp-legged pot in the dim dawn
light,

An old priest sets about brewing some Sleeping Dragon
tea.

Wumps from a wooden fish resound from the recitation
hall,

A crow flaps by, crossing through the mist of the old
village.

Although the cold is ten times more intense than at
Shōin-ji,
We can't match the peace and tranquility found at Ryūun-
ji.
Head priest Setten attends scrupulously to his guest's
needs,
Having a senior monk bring glowing coals to warm me
up.

.....

Poking about for . . . some Sleeping Dragon tea. The “old priest” is Setten, head priest of Ryūun-ji. “Sleeping Dragon tea” is apparently an herbal decoction Setten was using for an indisposition of some kind, or perhaps he was preparing it for the monks. In the third line of the verse, describing events in the adjoining hall, the monks are beating loudly and rhythmically on the “wooden fish” (*mokugyo*) as they perform the morning sutra chanting.

A crow flaps by . . . the old village. Hakuin used the fourth line of the verse as an inscription on a number of paintings: as a comment on a picture of two flying crows, on portraits of Bodhidharma, and most often on paintings depicting Shakamuni at the point when he leaves the mountain after engaging in intense practice, a theme that would tie in with the supposition that Hakuin wrote the verse at the conclusion of the rigorous winter training period (because Shakamuni leaves the mountain after engaging in an intense period of practice).

Although the cold . . . found at Ryūun-ji. “Being located in the foothills below Mount Fuji, Ryūun-ji is much colder than Shōin-ji, and since it is not like Shōin-ji situated right on the busy Tōkaidō road, also much quieter” (annotation).

290. FOR UNZAN OSHŌ, USING THE SAME RHYMES AS THE PREVIOUS VERSE

This was composed at around the same time as the previous verse, while Hakuin was staying at Ryūun-ji. Unzan Oshō, Unzan Sotai (1685–1747), the head priest of Kongō-ji in Kadoma, Suruga province, located about four miles east of Shōin-ji, was apparently also staying at Ryūun-ji at the time.

Unzan achieved an initial satori while studying under Kogetsu Zenzai in Kyushu. After receiving Kogetsu's confirmation, he returned to his native Suruga province where he was installed as head priest of Kongō-ji. The Chronological Biography (1719, age 35) tells us, "Unzan of Kongō-ji and the master were close long-time friends, having known each other since they were six or seven years old. Unzan visited Hakuin at Shōin-ji regularly to continue his study, later achieving a satori. Whenever Hakuin left Shōin-ji to travel, Unzan always accompanied him" (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 194–5).

An annotation Tōrei adds to the final verse helps to clarify a matter art historians have long speculated about, revealing that during this time in his forties Hakuin devoted a great deal of time and effort to his painting and calligraphy: "He [Hakuin] was devoting himself assiduously to the study of painting and calligraphy [at this time]." Another unidentified annotator, whose comments seem to convey Hakuin's own words, has: "It took place forty years back, when I painted a picture of a celestial phoenix. I was working very hard on my painting and calligraphy at the time."

Naikan meditation excels the best herbal potions known,
So I threw out the clay pot I had been using to brew mine
up.

Our constitutions are different, one of us weak, one
strong,
But on both our grizzled heads the hair is now snow-
white.

No one knows how many more such meetings we'll enjoy,
Yet we both discovered pleasure amid this world of
dreams.

It wasn't something we achieved from hunting and
seeking,

We did it in phoenix flights, swapping verses such as these.

.....

Naikan (“Introspective Meditation”) is the therapeutic meditation Hakuin used to cure himself of the “Zen sickness” he contracted in his late twenties. The story telling how he acquired this method from the hermit Hakuyū in the mountains of Kyoto is told in *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 83–114).

Our constitutions are different. “You [Unzan] are weak; I [Hakuin] am strong” (annotation). In fact, Unzan died more than twenty years before Hakuin.

Yet we both discovered . . . world of dreams. “Within this delusory world of dreams we have both discovered how to enjoy the pleasures of the Dharma” (annotation).

It wasn’t something we achieved . . . swapping verses such as these. “Once you grow old, there’s nothing left to do but drink tea and recite Nembutsu” (annotation). “We did not go out to seek fame or profit in the world” (annotation). The final line, “We did it in phoenix flights, swapping verses such as these,” alludes to the pastime of writing and exchanging Chinese verses.

291. THANKING SENIOR PRIEST JUN FOR SPONSORING A VEGETARIAN FEAST, USING THE SAME RHYMES AS BEFORE

Senior Priest Jun has not been identified, but the context and the annotations tell us that he was a priest residing at Ryūun-ji and that he had requested a memorial service for his deceased, though unnamed, teacher.

You rose early, boiled up water for the tea,
Hastened to the kitchen and cleaned the pots,
Hurried to the hall and arranged the candles,
Chopped greens and roots from frosty fields.
To honor your late master in the great silence,
You offered a spare feast for a shiftless guest.
A mind like yours must always be cherished,
You didn't get it from the bull-headed shrike!

.....

A mind like yours . . . shrike! Hakuin is offering a backhanded compliment. The bull-headed shrike or butcher-bird (*mozu*) is said to eat its mother, an ultimate breach of filial duty, whereas Jun shows by his conduct his devotion to both his late teacher and to Hakuin.

292. INSTRUCTING SENIOR PRIEST TETSU WHO RETURNED FOR FURTHER STUDY

Senior monk Tetsu, later Kanjū Sōtetsu (d. 1770), served as head priest of Rinzai-ji in the castle town of Sumpu (present Shizuoka City), where he had succeeded Hakuin's friend Kyōsui Edan. He studied with Hakuin at Shōin-ji, appearing in the records, as he does here, as Senior Priest Tetsu.

Tetsu had apparently left Shōin-ji after an initial satori but before his post-satori training was complete, returning to his home temple Rinzai-ji. In 1748, at Kanjū's request, Hakuin conducted a lecture meeting at Rinzai-ji to commemorate the two-hundredth anniversary of temple founder Daikyū Sōkyū's death (see #385; also Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 213–14).

You stayed away and kept your distance these ten years,

Did you feel you were scratching an itch through a shoe?
Happy with a small gain, you left to bask in the city dust,
Now you're back, enduring the waves of the poison seas.
I always cherished that genuine steel I saw in you, Tetsu,
But you need more than kindling to create a red-hot fire.
Throw yourself back into my inferno of eternal darkness,
Once you have turned to cinder, great results will appear.
On Great Plum Peak your blossom only opened halfway,
Illusory flowers can never be true harbingers of spring.
Luckily the cold this winter will penetrate your marrow,
We'll soon detect the pure sweet fragrance of the plum.

.....

Did you feel . . . through a shoe? Hakuin uses this idiomatic expression to describe Tetsu's unavailing efforts to get at the basic source of his problem.

Now you're back . . . the poison seas refers to the difficult koan work in which Tetsu was now engaged under Hakuin. "Tetsu was struggling with 'What is the color of the wind?' [a koan Hakuin devised for advanced students]" (annotation).

I always cherished that genuine steel . . . a red-hot fire. Hakuin plays on the name Tetsu, "Steel," using the word "Pin-chou steel," a legendary steel of ancient China. Pin-chou's extremely hot furnaces produced blades of great purity and strength.

Eternal darkness. "Primal ignorance [*avidya*]" (annotation).

Once you have turned . . . will appear. "Because he will be bruised and battered by the merciless tempering and refining he undergoes at Hakuin's forge, working on koans such as 'Nan-ch'uan's Death' and 'The Buffalo Passes Through the Window'" (annotation).

Great Plum Peak translates Daibai-zan, the "mountain name" of Hōjō-ji, a temple in the remote mountains of Tamba province west of Kyoto, where Tetsu had studied under head priest Daidō Bunka (1680–1752). In Chinese and Japanese literature and art, the plum blossoms with their exquisite scent appearing during the depths of winter symbolize the imminence of spring. Hakuin exploits Hōjō-ji's

mountain name to allude to the “partial attainment” Tetsu had achieved at Hōjō-ji.

Hakuin is urging Tetsu to surpass his initial breakthrough: “Half-opened blossoms’ is the breakthrough Tetsu achieved under Daidō Oshō” (annotation). “The satori he experienced at Daidō’s temple was like a ‘flower in the air’ [*kūge*], illusory and hence totally useless” (annotation).

293. THANKING GENTOKU RŌJIN FOR A GIFT OF REMARKABLE SPIRIT ROCKS

As a lover of rocks, Hakuin had few equals. The “spirit rocks” (kiseki) mentioned here were actually boulders that had been sent from Hina, Ishii Gentoku’s home village in the mountains below Mount Fuji, to Hara on the coast. Layman Ishii (Rōjin means “Venerable Old Man”) is the advanced Zen student to whom Hakuin wrote the remarkable letter in Book Six (#187). Transporting the rocks would have been a major undertaking, requiring the assistance of large numbers of men. The rocks were hauled to the river, put onto rafts, and floated down to the ocean, where they were met by boats that towed the rafts along the coast to the beach near Hara, where the rocks were unloaded. Hakuin’s first-hand account vividly conveys to the reader the exuberance and state of excitement. The verse opens with Hakuin awaiting the arrival of the rocks with keen anticipation.

Rising before dawn, I went to prod the cooks to hurry the rice,

Sent men into the dark to round up monks of special strength.

I feared for the raftsmen who struggled in the surging torrents,

The spirit rocks loaded on board were not just ordinary stones.

I knew the river gods would try to snatch them for themselves,
They would covet such rarities for their own watery dwellings.
I alerted the men who wielded the bamboo ropes to stand ready,
Told everyone I met to call me as soon as the raft came in sight,
Stationed lookouts like a commander leading troops into battle.
All of a sudden we heard the lookout's cry, "The raft is coming!"
A wave of joyful commotion passed quickly through the crowd,
Nimble-footed men began hurrying about calling to each other,
I yelled "Are the rocks secure?" oblivious to raftsmen's safety.
When the heavily laden rafts came in view we gaped in wonder.
There was a lofty rock with sage-like dignity, but not overawing,
The flat one crouched like a tiger or panther, yet full and plump.
They were covered with emerald moss like two ancient dragons,
Their distinctive markings proclaiming a kinship closely shared.
Thousands of men shining with sweat attacked unyielding stone,
Battling these frosty guardians of the peaks with heroic courage.
Fresh blood was mustered; vigorous youths, seven, eight strong
Spit in their fists, flexed their arms, and tried to work their will.

The beach gave way, the raft tipped, casting many into
the sand;
Unable to get the rocks ashore, men were drained and
dispirited.
Mr. Shōji appeared leading a large contingent of men and
boys,
Old Kokan came running with a company of
neighborhood lads.
One final great, united effort — and the rocks were on the
beach!
But again they dug in and refused to budge a single
hairbreadth,
Much less let themselves be carried to Shōin-ji's temple
garden.
But thanks to a fine gentleman long involved in the
healing arts,
The rocks were coaxed ahead, herded as so many cows
or sheep.
A verse as splendid as exquisite brocade accompanied
these gifts,
Humming it quietly to myself as I sat amid the frenzy of
activity,
I could feel a profound purity permeating deeply into my
bones.
No gift of precious jewels could have brought me such
great joy.
My strong infatuation for streams and rocks is beyond
any cure,
Such treasures mean more to me than dozens of walled
castles.

294. A CLEAN SWEEP

He sweeps out the hare horns with a shaftless broom,

Churning up the great earth to scupper Master Chaos.
Pure breeze rises from dust inside a white-hot oven,
Purple motes gush out like magnificent bright gems.
A crow croaks once or twice deep in the green hills,
A fluttering leaf or two gives intimations of autumn.
Solitary cloud, would you tell Nine Doubt Mountain
All the dust was carried to Mount T'ai-hua last night?

.....

He sweeps out ... a shaftless broom. "Sweeping out nonexistent dust with a broom that could not exist. The only one who knows how to do that is someone who has cut off the roots to life" (annotation).

Churning up . . . Master Chaos. Chaos (Hun-tun) is the primordial unity from which all things emerge. The emperor of the South Sea, named Shu ("Brief"), and the emperor of the North Sea, named Hu ("Sudden"), feeling sorry for Master Chaos who rules the central region, decide that since everyone else has seven openings enabling them to see, hear, eat, and breathe, they would repay the kindness Chaos has shown them by boring similar openings for him. Each day they bore a hole, but on the seventh day, Chaos dies (see *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 97). The "great earth" is the world ruled by these two emperors, who by descending into ratiocination and churning things up, destroy the primordial unity.

Pure breeze . . . oven. "After passing through this, utter freedom is attained" (annotation).

Purple motes . . . bright gems. "Descriptive of the working of perfectly unfettered freedom" (annotation).

Solitary cloud, would you tell . . . to Mount T'ai-hua last night? "Nine Doubt Mountain" is Chiu-i-shan, in Hunan, so called because its nine peaks were indistinguishable from each other; it is the traditional burial site of the sage-ruler Shun. Mount T'ai-hua, in Shan-tung province, is foremost of the five sacred mountains of China. Hakuin addresses a floating cloud: If you happen to run across "Nine Doubt Mountain" in your travels, would you convey my news? Yoshizawa's Japanese translation for these two lines, based on an annotation, is:

“Last night the Great Spirit (Chu-ling shen) carried this whole mountain of dust to Mount T’ai-hua, so now not a particle remains.” Chu-ling shen is a powerful deity who in the process of altering the course of the Yellow River is said to have raised his hand and split Mount T’ai-hua in two.

295. GIVING THE TONSURE TO ATTENDANT ECHŪ

Echū — the name is literally “Devotion to Wisdom” — cannot be identified.

“Wisdom” is to steadily illumine perfect harmonious unity,
“Devoted” is to be straight and true-hearted whatever you do.

Just vow that you will remain ever faithful to your new name,
I’m not expecting you to be clever or to turn into a wordsmith.

.....

“Wisdom” is to steadily . . . unity. “Perfect harmonious unity” translates the term *enyū*, which describes the perfect interconnection between all things resulting from the truth that they all share the same fundamental nature. “Grasping your own self-nature you grasp the natures of others as well — that is the meaning of perfect harmonious unity. The unity is based on the principle that one is all and all is one. In the *Tendai shikyō-gi* [*Meaning of the Four Teachings of the Tendai School*], it says: ‘The stillness and silence of the Dharma world is called Cessation, Cessation meaning Dhyana. The constant light of stillness and silence is called Insight, Insight meaning wisdom’” (annotation).

“Devoted” is to be . . . whatever you do. “Eating your food, drinking your tea, remaining pure-hearted at all times” (annotation).

I’m not expecting . . . turn into a wordsmith. “Though I am shaving your head and making you a Buddhist monk, I am not telling you to write verses or to study literature; I am telling you only to avoid falling into hell” (annotation).

296. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE THAT KIN JŌZA WROTE ON THE FIRST OF THE YEAR

Kin Jōza (Senior Monk Kin) has not been identified.

The green willows wear robes of shimmering iridescent
mist,
Plum flowers fall, cherry flowers open — there is nothing
else.
Amid this landscape the god of spring slumbers serenely
off,
But the slightest thought to see it puts it a million miles
away.

.....

The god of spring. “The intrinsic self-nature in each person” (annotation).

297. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

PATRIARCH'S DEATH

Hakuin does not say whose Death Anniversary is being commemorated. The words Soki, "Death Anniversary of the Patriarch," could refer to the First Patriarch Bodhidharma or to the founder of a temple. In Shōin-ji's case, the temple founder would be Daizui Sōiku.

Hanging up the patriarch's portrait, making nine deep bows.

There is nothing on earth that's not his true and original face.

Hills, rivers, grass, trees — they all manifest his Dharma-body,

Shining out serenely from the inextinguishable Dharma lamp.

298. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE BY FUNI OSHŌ ON THE NEW YEAR

Funi-an, "Hermitage of Nonduality," was the name of the temple in Matsunaga village in present-day Numazu where Tetsuzui Genshō (1640–1745) was the long-serving head priest, and by extension Funi-an also refers to him. See also #172.

Funi-an's retreat isn't like Chu-ko's hermitage in Nanyang.

Seated at a brazier, he takes after old Lu Tung in his love of tea.

There's not a hint of the deafening shouts Lin-chi roared out,
Yet an old tiger dozing on a hillside can be quite frightening.

.....

Chu-ko. Chu-ko Liang (181–234; style name K'ung-ming) was an ancient strategist of the Three Kingdoms period who counseled the warlord Liu Pei in his successful campaign against the Wei kingdom. Liu Pei is said to have visited Chu-ko Liang at his retirement retreat in Nan-yang to enlist him as an advisor. Chu-ko later came to be venerated as a hero possessed of supernatural powers. Hakuin says in the first line that Funi Oshō's purpose was not to avoid the world like an ordinary recluse, but to carry out his vow as a Bodhisattva to help others.

Lu Tung. The T'ang poet Lu Tung (790–835) was known for his devotion to tea.

There's not a hint . . . Lin-chi roared out. "It was because he was a gentle, mild-natured man, utterly sincere and unaffected. There was nothing of the staff or shout about him. He was without any odor, a man who had lost all his bone and marrow, and had no Zen stink about him at all" (annotation).

Yet an old tiger . . . quite frightening. "He liked his sleep, but there was something terrible in his sleep" (annotation). Hakuin presumably alludes to the Sung priest Hu-ch'iu ("Tiger Hill"), who was nicknamed Sleeping Tiger.

299. FOR KI ZENNIN ON HIS RETURN TO MINO PROVINCE

All that is known about Ki Zennin (Zennin means "Zen man") is found in an annotation to this undated verse: "He was a monk named Zenki

from Tsūgen-ji in Mino province.”

Zen man Ki set a sheet of paper before me and
requested

A verse before he returned to his home temple in Mino.

I had a verse for him; it's been ready a good many years,

It divests the wise of their wisdom, fools of their follies,
Causes gods and demons to run off whimpering in grief,
Makes Zen monks' brows clench into creases and knots.

It puts an end to the lives of Buddhas and hungry ghosts,
Working quicker than sparks shooting from a flint stone.

It is said: "A pillow at the mountains, at the river shoes;
Go carefully and hurry, but don't stumble in your haste."

In the morning your robe will be burdened by white frost,

In the evening your steps weighed down by frozen
clouds.

.....

I had a verse for him . . . good many years. Hakuin is probably referring to the Sound of One Hand koan, which he began using in his sixty-second or sixty-third year. This would provide the verse's date with a terminus a quo, and, since he says he's been using the koan a long time, it was probably written considerably later than his early sixties.

"A pillow at the mountains, at the river shoes." The annotations agree that these are cautions for traveling monks. One says: "If you're heading east on the Tōkaidō, you should stop in Numazu for the night and cross the mountains of the Hakone barrier in the morning. If you're heading west, don't stop until you cross the Fuji River; then rising water won't trouble you." Another says: "A pillow at the mountains' means you should stop over when you come to the high mountains and cross them the following day. 'At the river, shoes' means if you stop after completing a difficult river crossing, your journey will be trouble-free." Yet another says: "Mountains should be crossed in the morning; rivers should be forded in the

evening,” thus tying these directives to the poem’s final two lines: “When you cross the mountains in the morning, your robe will be heavy with frost. When you cross the river before stopping for the night, you will be enveloped in frozen clouds.”

300. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATRIARCH’S DEATH

As in #297, the identity of the patriarch is uncertain.

Three by three, two by two, clerics with frost-white brows,
One old bonze sits perched on top a hundred tips of
grass.
How many here belong to this great and splendid lineage,
Will raise fresh breezes to carry on the Zen transmission?

.....

Three by three . . . frost-white brows. “The priests (those with frost-white brows) in attendance at this anniversary commemoration are all old Buddhas” (annotation).

One old bonze . . . hundred tips of grass. “Perceive the prince in the bustling market place! Make the old priest atop the hundred grass tips your own!” (annotation); the words appear in the *Comprehensive Records of Yun-men*. “Hundred tips of grass” (*hyakusō tōjō*) refers to the myriad things of the world.

How many here belong . . . to carry on the Zen transmission? Hakuin is indicating the true Zen lineage of koan Zen that he espouses. “How many will make the Dharma flourish again by producing descendants year after year?” (annotation).

301. RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FROM KAISHUN RŌJIN

An annotation attached to this piece states, “Kaishun was a priest of the Shingon sect. He reached a certain degree of understanding.” Kaishun (n.d.) was apparently acquainted with Hakuin’s friend Yōshun Shudaku, the head priest of Seiken-ji in nearby Okitsu. A meeting Kaishun had with Hakuin is recorded in the Chronological Biography for 1733: “In spring a priest named Kaishun of the Shingon sect came to Shōin-ji for an interview. Master Hakuin took a fire iron and held it up in front of Kaishun’s face. ‘If you feel the slightest hesitation before this piece of metal, you aren’t truly enlightened yet.’ Kaishun was dumbfounded. Later when the master told Yōshun about the exchange, Yōshun remarked, ‘Against you, even one of the foremost teachers of the esoteric school was at a loss’” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 202).

Kaishun Rōjin is a priest of many accomplishments,
An elder whose lineage traces back to Kōbō Daishi.
Having mastered the secrets of the three mystic acts,
He began to focus his study on the Five Zen Houses.
After repeated forays inside the Green Dragon’s den,
He experienced the deadly peril lying under its jaws.
Yesterday Kaishun showed up and rapped at my gate,
Pressing me for a verse I had promised I’d write him.
I’ve pondered it, aware it would be no ordinary poem,
It’s taken me over three kalpas of most diligent work.
Any demon seeing it will scatter like a panicked hare,
Any god that reads it will bolt off begging for his life.
At times it’s no different from Granny Chang’s ears,
At times it’s just like Mother Li’s arched eyebrows.
But as soon as I take it up to write this down for you,
My brush tip stiffens, turns harder than a steel spike.

.....

Kōbō Daishi is Kūkai (774–835), the founder of Japanese Shingon Buddhism.

The three mystic acts (san-mitsu) of body, speech, and thought in this form of esoteric Buddhism are said to enable the practitioner to attain unity with a deity.

I've pondered it. An annotation, apparently conveying Hakuin's own words, has: "This entire room we're sitting in is my verse. It has taken me over three infinite kalpas of time to produce it."

Granny Chang's ears . . . Mother Li's arched eyebrows. Words that are prior to intellection, thus epitomizing the import of the entire verse.

302. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATRIARCH'S DEATH

The Patriarch, though unstated, is apparently Bodhidharma.

Nowhere in this vast Dharma world did he leave any
traces,

He wasn't reborn as a cow at the farm at the foot of the
hill.

Twenty or thirty glittering golden bones could well remain,
But if you try to see them they transform into flowers of
air.

.....

Nowhere . . . traces. "The Dharma world in the ten directions, above, below, in the four quarters, is his great and perfect awakening. Today's Buddha left no traces" (annotation).

Twenty or thirty . . . remain. “His sacred golden bones still exist today” (annotation).

Flowers of air (kūge) are delusory appearances seen by rubbing the eyes.

303. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE BY KŌGA OSHŌ ON THE NEW YEAR

Kōga Chidan (d. 1735), head priest of the Rinzai temple Daichū-ji near the city of Numazu, appears again below, #321. Here two annotations describe him as “Hakuin’s Dharma friend.”

I read with delight your New Year’s verse on *prajna*
wisdom,
It is *prajna* in its highest form, prior to judgments or
surmise.
My attempts at a rhyming response were neither fish nor
fowl.
Hanging hapless in a paddy, you lack an understanding
friend.

.....

After praising Kōga’s verse in the first two lines, and saying he was unable to respond with an effective verse of his own, Hakuin depicts Kōga in the fourth line alone at his temple Daichū-ji without any “understanding friend” (*chiin*). The final line alludes to anecdotes concerning the Hossō priest Gempin Sōzu (734–818), who led a reclusive life, helping neighboring farmers by going into the fields when the rice was ripening and shouting to scare off birds and animals.. Hakuin refers to a poem that the monk Gempin recites in the Noh play *Miwa*: “I am a wretched monk, standing like a

scarecrow in a mountain rice paddy. With autumn at an end, no one will come to visit me.”

304-1. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE COMMEMORATING THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF SHŌZAN OSHŌ’S DEATH

Shōzan Sojiku was the teacher of Hakuin’s close friend Tōhō Sokin, who resided in Tokugen-ji, a temple adjacent to Shōin-ji. As Shōzan died in 1704, his twenty-fifth death anniversary would fall in 1728, Hakuin’s forty-fourth year. This verse and the next were both written at this time.

There are a thousand ways to carry out the Buddha’s work,
You can intone sutra texts, you can burn incense at the altar,
In Zen it means repaying your debt by offering some words:
“I gather hoarfrost to my heart’s content on the ocean floor.”

.....

“I gather hoarfrost . . . ocean floor.” In the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* the metaphor of hoarfrost at the bottom of the ocean is used for illusions with no basis in reality. See #125.

304-2. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE COMMEMORATING THE TWENTY- FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF SHŌZAN OSHŌ'S DEATH

In the hall reading a four-line verse in old Shōzan's
memory,
Its words are redolent with the fragrant scent of
sandalwood.
To know its taste you must pass through gut-rending
agonies,
Masticating the poisons in each silk-capped word and
phrase.

305. ON BANSUI OSHŌ'S SEVENTH MEMORIAL ANNIVERSARY, USING MATCHING RHYMES

Bansui Soboku (n.d.) was the priest of Chōgetsu-ji, a temple in Magomi village (now incorporated into the present city of Numazu) on the western slope of Washizu-yama, a mountain whose conspicuous shape Hakuin depicted in several of his paintings.

An annotation tells us that Hakuin composed this verse for Bansui's memorial service as he was being sculled in a small boat across Suruga Bay to Chōgetsu-ji ("Fishing for the Moon Temple"), a temple about six kilometers east along the shore from Hara. He would probably have boarded the boat, propelled from the stern by a single sculling oar, at the pine-forested beach near Hara. The annotation adds, in what sounds like a transcript of Hakuin's own

words: “On the way, the boat passed over the reflection of snow-covered Mount Fuji on the water. A delightful sensation!”

Emperors Shun and Yu attained it by achieving the Mean,
Chin and Ch’u with all their wealth could not approach it.
Chōgetsu-ji’s gate looms into view, my verse is now
ready,
The oarsman sculls us slantwise over a solitary white
peak.

.....

Emperors Shun and Yu . . . the Mean. “Emperor Shun spoke to Emperor Yu, ‘The mind of man is uncertain; the mind in accord with the Way is difficult to clarify. Devote your effort to following and fostering the way of the Mean’” (*Book of Documents*). “What does it mean, ‘attained it’? It means hearing the sound of one hand” (annotation).

Chin and Ch’u. An allusion to a passage in *Mencius*: “The philosopher Tseng Tzu said, ‘The wealth of the states of Chin and Ch’u cannot be rivaled. Their rulers may have their wealth, but I have my benevolence. They have their exalted ranks, but I have my integrity’” (II.2.ii).

306. AT THE NEW YEAR, CONGRATULATING ZEN MAN ZENJO WHO IS FAR AWAY

Ban’ei Zenjo (1699–1746) was the head priest of Jōei-ji in Kakegawa, Tōtōmi province. This verse was evidently written to congratulate Zenjo on his appointment at Jōei-ji. Hakuin refers to Ban’ei in an inscription he wrote for Ban’ei’s teacher Taisō Zennō

(Poison Blossoms, #265), but beyond that nothing is known about him.

Don't let worldly concerns affect your devotion to the Way,
I was glad you trekked through heavy snow to visit me
here.

There's nothing special in my cauldron that I can offer
you,
Only scathing words more bitter than sow-thistle
dumplings.

I regret you took a temple so soon, depriving you of
friends,

Not to mention the recent loss of the man who tonsured
you.

A priest going astray after taking on a temple is an old
story,

Yet each grain of rice he eats is the toil and sweat of
donors.

It won't matter if no one trusts in you until the day you die,
Remain resolved, and never become an object of
contempt,

Even if you are shackled within a mesh of white-hot
chains,

Never let sensations tarnish the purity of the Buddha-
mind.

You can create fire repeatedly if you have a flint in your
bag,

But once your human form is lost it won't ever come
again.

Ample food and warm quarters are a priest's greatest
curse,

It takes cold and hunger to produce a teacher worth his
salt.

So regularly offer incense and intone the texts of our
school,

If you get sleepy when sitting, get up and clean out the
hall.

Don't allow yourself to sink to the level of a petty swindler,
The mind set forth here creates the ridgepoles of our
school.

.....

Don't let worldly concerns . . . to visit me here. “The master [Ta-hui] lit some incense and made a vow: ‘Even though I myself should undergo the torments of hell for the sake of other sentient beings, I will never let worldly emotions intrude on the Buddha Dharma’ (*Chronological Biography of Ta-hui, Ta-hui nien-pu*, age 37). “When things go against you, the Dharma disappears as you deal with the world” (annotation). “Your [Ban'ei's] devotion is not affected; you walked here through the ice and snow with your mind constantly focused on right thought” (annotation).

There's nothing special . . . offer you. Fan Tan (d. 185), prevented from accepting a high position in the government by his mother's illness, put his wife and children in a pushcart and eked out a meager existence as a fortune teller, sleeping under trees or in rude shelters. He finally acquired a small dwelling of his own, but still subsisted on the poorest fare. People made up a song: Fan Tan's rice bin is filled with dust; Fish breed in Fan Tan's cauldron — that is, he was so poor his larder was always empty and his cauldron never used (*Book of the Later Han*, ch. 81).

I regret you took a temple so soon . . . the man who tonsured you. “When you left to become a temple priest you no longer had any Dharma friends [brother monks?] at hand who might have helped you. The teacher that ordained you has also passed away. [Thus I (Hakuin) caution you in their place]” (annotation).

Yet each grain of rice . . . donors. “No matter what kind of . . . scheme it may be, you must never succumb to ideas of fame or honor and defile your all-important Buddha-nature” (annotation).

It won't matter if no one . . . become an object of contempt. “Whatever else you do, don't place your trust in people's opinions” (annotation); place it in the Dharma alone.

You can create fire . . . it won't ever come again. Hakuin's counsel is: You may be able to produce fire (the spark of life?) over and over by using a flint, but attaining human form is once and for all.

Ample food and warm quarters . . . greatest curse. "Perhaps Jōei-ji was a wealthy and well-equipped temple" (annotations).

The mind set forth here creates the ridgepoles of our school. "If you just keep faithfully pursuing the Way in this manner, in the end you will naturally assume the character of someone who can help others" (annotation).

307. AITSUBO, INDIGO BASIN FALLS (ABOUT HALF A LEAGUE EAST OF SANMYŌ-JI)

Aitsubo, Indigo Basin Falls, is a cataract that gushes from a thirty-foot-high cliff and flows into the Kise River at the neck of the Izu peninsula, about eight miles east of Shōin-ji. This verse was probably written at the same time as another piece, entitled "Inscription for the Sutra Cases at Sanmyōzen-ji" (#220) and dated 1735, Hakuin's fifty-first year, which is included among the inscriptions (mei) in Book Seven.

At Indigo Basin I expected to find pools of deep blue
water,

My wonder on seeing it would have quivered a liver of
iron.

A snow-white waterfall gushing out mighty torrents of
water,

More deafening than a thousand thunderclaps crashing at
once.

Swirling waves buffeting the banks, making tree leaves
quiver,

Gusting winds whipping racks of mist into feather-like clouds.
Roaring madly southward it pours at last into its ocean home,
Producing the magnificent deep blue of the world's Four Seas.

308. ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE NINTH MONTH, AN EVENING AT MR. SHŌJI'S RESIDENCE

Hakuin's verse, thought to date from around his fiftieth year, describes a visit to the residence of his friend Shōji Rokubei (Layman Yūsai, d. 1750) in Hara for an autumn moon viewing. The Layman treated him to noodles made from newly harvested soba (buckwheat). As this is known to be one of Hakuin's favorite foods, the gathering may have been held in his honor.

Shōji was an influential citizen of Hara and a cousin of Hakuin's. He was an avid Nichiren Buddhist, yet he, his brother Yūtetsu, and his daughter O-Satsu (1714–89) all studied Zen under Hakuin. Satsu appears in a number of stories in Hakuin's records, all of which show her to have been a formidable Zen laywoman (e.g., Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 199–200 and 236–38).

In Japan, soba is harvested in summer and autumn. Although noodles made from the soba flour are eaten throughout the year, soba lovers esteem above all the fragrance and flavor of those made from the new, freshly ground autumn kernels. Soba is the theme of three other pieces in Poison Blossoms (#313, #337, and #426).

I hadn't walked into the hills to gaze up at the autumn moon,
Knowing I'd visit Mr. Shōji's on the thirteenth of the month.

The Moon Lady's face was hidden, veiled by curtains of rain.

I hung a lamp and passed the time reading Po Chu-i's poems.

Shōji served new *soba* — thinly sliced jade — my greatest treat.

Eaves still dripping, the bright moon emerged to cries of joy!

Getting up to walk in the garden, my bones utterly transparent,

A summit crowned with white snow rose into the clearing sky!

.....

I hadn't walked . . . of the month. The custom of autumn moon viewing was introduced from China in the Heian period. The Chinese custom of climbing a high hill on the Double Ninth (the ninth day of the ninth month) and drinking chrysanthemum wine is alluded to in the first line of the verse. The beauty of the autumn moon on the thirteenth day of the ninth month is reputed to be second only to that seen on the fifteenth day of the eighth month.

Moon Lady. Lady Ch'ang, the Moon Lady, stole the elixir of immortality from her husband, drank it, and fled to the moon, where she transformed into a frog, whose shape can be seen on its surface.

My bones utterly transparent alludes to lines in a verse by the 14th-century Zen poet Jakushitsu Genkō: "As I grow older, a mountain retreat appeals all the more strongly to my feeling; / Even when I am buried, after death, underneath the rock, my bones will be as thoroughly transparent as ever" (translated D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, p. 357).

A summit crowned . . . the clearing sky! An annotation attached to the final line apparently records Hakuin's own words: "Gazing up at the clearing skies, Mount Fuji appeared so sharp and distinct it seemed you could reach out and take it in your hands."

309. THE NEW MASTER OF EISHŌ-JI REQUESTED AN INSCRIPTION HE COULD PUT UP AS AN INSTRUCTIVE REMINDER, SO I WROTE THIS VERSE IN THE OLD STYLE TO CONGRATULATE ZEN MEN JU AND SHŪ ON BECOMING HEAD PRIESTS

According to the Chronological Biography for 1735, age 51: "In autumn, the ninth month, the master [Hakuin] composed a congratulatory verse and sent it to his students Sempo Zenju and Kōgoku Genshū" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 203). Sempo Zenju had become the head of Seibon-ji, a temple just east of Shōin-ji; Kōgoku Genshū was appointed to Eishō-ji in Kuchino, located at the eastern neck of the Izu peninsula. Hakuin's holograph of this verse is reproduced in HZB #197. A verse in the old style (ko-shi; ku-shih in Chinese) is a Chinese verse form with few formal constraints apart from the length of the lines, four to seven characters, and rhyming every other line.

Observing men make their way along a steep mountain
path,
I've noticed that those who mind their step don't trip and
fall.
And I've seen those who amble down a wide and level
path,
Drinking in the passing scene, slip and stumble to the
ground.
The real danger doesn't lie in treacherous, cliff-hugging
trails,
It's found in idle byways that shunt you off to fame and
profit.

Flat paths that end at a perilous crossroads won't be smooth,
But a mind grounded in samadhi will experience no distress.
I'm convinced adversity transforms one's aspiration into jade,
While wealth and fame are seeds that lead invariably to ruin.
Many who become temple priests today end up going astray,
It is a position to accept only with utmost dread and caution.
A young monk sets out with aims you can't help but cherish,
But let him head a temple and he soon starts wanting things.
Wise to foolish overnight, the shift comes swift and sudden!
"Take a tangerine across the river, it becomes a navel orange."
Racking my brains for men whose aspiration did not change,
I didn't come up with enough names even worth mentioning.
Brother monks view these apostates with disgust and dismay,
Menial servants stand sniggering at them from the shadows.
Zazen is more distasteful to them than the bitter yellow root,
Fame and profit more appetizing than sweetest white honey.
They seek booty like thirst-crazed deer dashing at a mirage,
Then cling to it like a cold cicada clutching an autumn leaf.

It has been said the idea to overcome indolence is a strength,
And when that aspiration starts to wane, arrogance appears.
Men of true stature can pass through fire as easily as a pearl,
Their spirit soars straighter than an arrow from a bow-string.
The talents you two possess are not pebbles to be cast away,
Your virtues are not worn-out sandals to just be tossed aside.
I have always admired the absence of clumsiness in you two,
I counted on you becoming fields of merit for men and gods.
I was pleased when I heard about your recent appointments,
But couldn't avoid harboring regrets and misgivings as well.
Recall that day when you left your home to take the tonsure,
Your parents weren't hoping you would make a good living.
Remember that day when your teacher shaved off your hair,
You vowed you'd train assiduously, like the Zen sages of old.
You left home to attain the Way: what Way did you attain?
Nine generations reborn in heaven: what heaven will it be?
Wisdom is not erudition, not a matter of knowing answers.
Wisdom is what you acquire from the fear of falling into hell.
If after becoming a priest you're unable to grasp this truth,

You are destined to be reborn as a buffalo or a packhorse.

A wise priest fears a gift more than he does a poison arrow,

The ancients feared profit as intensely as a yawning abyss.

When the Emperor Wu resided in the capital city Chin-ling,

He revered priest Yun-kuang and ceded him great powers.

After Yun-kuang passed away, he was reborn as a large ox,

Tearfully pulling carts, the slobber drooling from its mouth.

When master Pao-shih saw him he rebuked him by saying:

“Do you still wish to deny the working of cause and effect?”

Gird up your spirit, never forgetting your mission as a priest,

Time passes quickly by, and you will have no second chance.

The cow demons twirl their iron whips in gleeful anticipation

To see you accept alms from laypeople as if it was your due.

Don't think these lines I write more bitter than sow thistles,

You've got to keep sculling until you get wind at your back.

One pig-faced demon, its body shining with a golden light,

Was tormented by maggots pouring endlessly from its lips.

An eminent priest scrupulous in observing all the precepts

Had received this terrible retribution for disparaging others.

When one of the ancients assumed a post as a temple priest,
Countless clerics and laymen were soon reaping the benefit.
He shook his fellow priests, frightened the rich and mighty,
Noble legs quaked before him, great sages made deep bows.
The wise fulfill their deepest aspirations working for others,
The foolish fritter their virtue away indulging selfish fancies.
After the leaves in the oak forests have withered and fallen,
Before the plum flowers blossom in the intense winter cold,
Who will serve like Hui-neng or Lin-chi as tall shade trees,
Sustaining the ancient traditions trickling from the Source?
Today's priests are basically no different from the ancients,
Yet their vigor in girding their spirit is undoubtedly inferior.
A tree you carefully cultivate will become a fine ridgepole;
Conserved water turns into a river dispensing benefit to all;
In time, inch-high seedlings rise above the adjacent plants;
Water accumulating cup by cup one day may become a sea.
Don't vitiate your ardor for the Way with worldly feelings,
Curbing worldly urges deepens your passion for the Way.
As long as you have a mouth, you can keep yourself fed,
If you have shoulders, there will be a robe to cover them.
People content with a pure, tranquil life enjoy long lives,
Quiet, abstemious habits give your self-nature a keen edge.

Even if you succeed in amassing many thousands in gold,

The treasure boat vanishes when your final breath arrives.

You must keep defusing the passions at the mind-ground
Until it becomes as smooth as the glassy surface of a pond.

Ponder the horrific torments poor souls experience in hell
Because of self-love, that chronic partiality for themselves.

I'm not saying to grab your sandals, resume your training,
But satori has nothing to do with your residing in a temple.

Wu-chin attained his awakening while living as a layman,
T'ai-nien attained his while working to earn his livelihood.
Both examples can be helpful in the situation you two face.

Buddha called Bodhi a rare jade hidden inside the topknot,

Grab that jade right where you are, make Bodhi your own.

Hsuan-chueh equated it to a lotus flowering in a raging fire.

You obtained rare human rebirth, became Buddhist monks,

Zen monks to boot, apportioned the highest standing of all.

Your minds are originally as bright and as clear as mirrors,

Your self-natures lustrous pearls, requiring no polish at all.

Read and reread the sayings of the Buddha and patriarchs,

Comport yourselves as though in daily attendance on them.

Do zazen when you get time, even for one stick of incense,

It possesses the same merit as practice of all six *paramitas*.

No one today can do the kind of zazen that staggers a cow,

Now they go through the motions with half-baked resolve.
Anyone who wants to lay hands on the Buddha's mind-seal

Must grasp the secret of "the man listening to me right now,"

Or tackle the koan story of Chao-chou's seven-pound robe.

Once you penetrate those you're free of the Diamond Cage.

Before he set out for his temple in Izu yesterday Shū came

With a sheet of paper, asking me for a few edifying words.

I reminded him of my long history of setbacks and defeats:

What can a vanquished general have to pass on to his men?

In that case, he said, write something about those reversals:

"The lead chariot overturns, those that follow avert danger."

So puckering my brow I scrawled these several tens of lines,

Dreading the smiles they would surely elicit from the wise.

The ancients risked their lives speaking for the public good,

Why should I fear what others say, if my words are helpful?

I'm not an old duffer just scribbling away for his kicks; I do it only

To prevent you from blackening our untransmittable transmission.

.....

“Take a tangerine across . . . a navel orange” is a saying from the *Huai-nan Tzu*, used mockingly for someone who changes completely according to circumstances.

They seek booty . . . at a mirage is based on a verse by Shih-kung about thirsty deer dashing madly into shimmering heat waves thinking they are water (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 29).

It has been said the idea (i: mind, will, intention) to overcome indolence . . . arrogance appears. Annotators cite two quotations: “The mind [i] is the master of the vital spirits [ki]; the vital spirits are followers of the mind” (*Mencius*); “Hsueh-tung said, ‘When a student’s vital spirit is stronger than his mind, he becomes a small person. When his mind is stronger than his vital spirit, he becomes a gentleman, truly fine and upright’” (*Precious Lessons of the Zen School*).

Men of true stature can pass through fire . . . an arrow from a bow-string. “Persons of great stature in our school have no intention of striking the bullseye, but if they shoot, they can’t miss” (annotation). “Their every thought invariably achieves attainment” (annotation).

Fields of merit (fukuden) alludes to priests who produce great stores of merit.

Nine generations reborn in heaven refers to the saying, well known in China and Japan, “If one child enters the Buddhist order, his descendants for nine generations will be reborn in the deva realms.” Huang-po is said to have spoken these words at his mother’s funeral.

When the Emperor Wu resided . . . “Do you still wish to deny the working of cause and effect?” Emperor Wu of Liang (464–549) venerated Yun-kuang, ceding unprecedented powers to him. When Yun-kuang died he was reborn as a buffalo. Seeing him, Priest Pao-shih (418–514) condemned him for receiving this retribution. A comment on the following case in the Yuan master Lin-ch’uan’s *Hsu-t’ang chi*, Case 86, has: “An old annotation on this describes Yun-kuang as a bold and forthright priest. He was always perfectly

content with himself, and didn't bother about upholding the Buddhist precepts. Shih-kung said, 'Why did you even become a priest?' Yunkuang replied 'I make use of things without using them. I eat without eating. I'll probably bring future retribution on myself and be reborn as a water buffalo, pulling carts through the mud.' Shih-kung said, 'Why didn't you say, pulling carts without pulling carts? The water buffalo has roared and given up the ghost, tears falling from its eyes'" (ZZ2.29).

The cow demons twirl . . . gleeful anticipation. Works dealing with the Buddhist hells, such as Genshin's *Ojōyōshū*, describe cow-shaped demons torturing people with such weapons.

One pig-faced demon . . . terrible retribution for disparaging others. See "Dharma Words Written for Bonji" in Book Three, p. 215, paragraph beginning "There was an evil demon . . ." The story appears in *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, ch. 76.

As long as you have a mouth . . . a robe to cover them. The popular saying *kuchi areba, kui; kata areba, kiru* appears several times in Hakuin's records: "As long as you have a mouth you can eat; as long as you have shoulders you can wear a robe," meaning that a person need not worry about sustaining life — he will be able to manage somehow.

Wu-chin attained his awakening . . . to earn his livelihood. Chang Wu-chin (Chang Shang-ying, 1043–1121) rose to become chief minister of state; Yang T'ai-nien (Yang-i, 974–1020?) was an acclaimed master of the *shih-wen* style of parallel prose. Both were Zen laymen who successfully pursued their training while engaged in mundane affairs.

Hsuan-chueh equated it . . . a raging fire. Yung-chia Hsuan-chueh (665–713), in his *Verses on Realizing the Way* (*Cheng-tao ke*).

No one today can do the kind of zazen that staggers a cow. "When the World-honored One entered the sacred room and began sitting tranquilly, torrents of rain poured from the skies accompanied by tremendous claps of thunder, killing four buffalos and two farmers" (*Madhyama Agama Sutra*, ch. 8. T26). "A matter for us to envy" (annotation).

Must grasp the secret of “the man listening to me right now.” “If you cease your mind from its constant striving, you are no different from the Buddhas and patriarchs. You want to grasp the Buddhas and patriarchs, but you who are listening to my teaching at this very moment, you yourself are the Buddha-patriarch” (Record of Lin-chi, p. 23).

Or tackle the koan story of Chao-chou’s seven-pound robe. The koan, from the Blue Cliff Record, Case 45, is told many times in Poison Blossoms: see #157, last note, p. 233; #208, p. 383; and #249-3, p. 435.

The Diamond (or Adamantine) Cage (kongō-ken) is an enclosure from which escape is impossible.

“The lead chariot overturns . . . avert danger.” Zensha no kutsugaeru wa kōsha no imashime, “the overturning of a carriage in front serves as a warning to the carriage that follows behind,” is a proverb from the Book of the Han (Han-shu).

Untransmittable transmission (fuden no den) is the mind-to-mind transmission of the Zen Dharma, which is said to be impossible to transmit to another yet which must be transmitted to keep the Zen teachings alive.

310. EKYŪ RETURNED TO HIS HOME AND DID NOT RETURN FOR A LONG TIME. THE REASON, I HEARD, WAS A BAD COLD. I SENT HIM THIS POEM AS AN ANGRY FIST TO ADMONISH HIM

Hakuin tells us that he wrote this poem while at Rinsen-an, a small temple under Shōin-ji’s jurisdiction in nearby Shimizu village. Rinsen-an had associations with Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655), a Sōtō

teacher of samurai origin known for his teaching of Niō Zen. An annotation says: “Ekyū received the tonsure from Hakuin and lived at Rinsen-an.”

According to Katō Shōshun, Ekyū began residing in Rinsen-an at the tender age of sixteen after receiving the Dharma transmission from Gōin Kakudō, a student of Suzuki Shōsan’s Dharma heir Shinkaku Echū. After beginning his study at Shōin-ji in 1721, when Hakuin was thirty-seven, Ekyū was apparently still at Rinsen-an in Hakuin’s early fifties, but passed away before he could distinguish himself as a teacher (Chronological Biography, 1721; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 195–6).

You said when you left you’d be back by mid-September,
Halfway into October now and you still haven’t shown up.
I heard you caught a bad cold at the beginning of autumn,
Few people have avoided coming down with it this year.
I hope your health has improved and you are eating
again,

Whatever the physician says, I predict a speedy recovery.
You looked skinnier than a stork the last time I saw you,
I feared a stiff wind would sweep you up into the clouds.
For restoring health you can’t beat Lan-ts’an’s simplicity,
For curing illness, *Naikan* meditation cannot be
surpassed.

I’m not telling you this to help you live to be a thousand,
But because I want to see your ox grow up fat and sleek.
Are you still focusing these days on taming the creature?
At the slightest chance the senses frisk like famished
rats.

It is a universal truth: do as you please and inertia sets in,
But illness is the chance to investigate the hidden depths.
Illness in every one of your body’s eighty thousand pores
Can transfigure on the spot into just as many sutra
scrolls.

How can the poor man find the bright gem inside his
robe?

A true monk can dispel doubt with the grit of an iron bull.

Reject the three kinds of sage and four kinds of attainment,
Don't hanker after four fruits or other sage-like trimmings.
I'm not espousing anything fanciful or out of the question,
We all have this bit of radiance from the instant we're born.
Its brilliance reaches down to the floors of the deepest hells,
Extends beyond the outer limit of the great Iron Mountains.
Strive hard, Ekyū, bore into those koans for all you're worth.
Once you lose human form it won't return for many kalpas.
You weren't born into the body of a cow or sheep or swine,
How fortunate you are to be wrapped in a Zen monk's robe.
This good fortune so difficult to receive will not come again,
So ignore faults in others and just push yourself to the limit.
Beneath the railing edge crickets trill softly in the moonlight,
A light wind whispers through the leaves of the garden trees.
What greater joy for a follower of Zen than to live on retreat,
Even the fresh breeze enters your scrubwood gate first of all.

.....

Whatever the physician says . . . a speedy recovery. “Physicians say it is not a good idea to try to cure a bad cold quickly” (annotation).

Lan-ts'an's simplicity. The eccentric T'ang monk Lan-ts'an, “Lazy Ts'an,” dwelled as a recluse in a cave, living on yams he baked in ox

dung and adamantly refusing all offers of worldly advancement.

Naikan meditation is Introspective Meditation, therapeutic techniques that Hakuin used to cure himself of the “Zen sickness” he contracted in his late twenties. See *Idle Talk on a Night Boat (Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 83–114).

But because I want to see your ox . . . fat and sleek. The white ox symbolizing the enlightened self-nature appears in a well-known parable in the *Lotus Sutra*.

Can transfigure on the spot . . . sutra scrolls. “It [illness] can be as precious a teaching as the sutras” (annotation).

How can the poor man . . . his robe? This line evidently alludes to a story in the “Five Hundred Disciples” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. A poor young man visits the house of a wealthy friend, is accorded great hospitality, and becoming inebriated by wine, falls asleep. His friend sews a precious jewel into the lining of his robe to provide for his future needs, and then leaves on business. Waking up, the young man resumes his peregrinations, undergoing great hardship, unaware of the treasure in his bosom. When the friend meets him once again, he is shocked by his poverty, and tells him about the great jewel he possesses.

Reject the three kinds of sage . . . or other sage-like trimmings. “Cast aside the poor man’s satori of the three sages” (annotation). The three sages (*san-gen*) are those whose attainment is still incomplete; the four fruits (*shi-ka*) are those sought by the followers of the Two Vehicles.

Iron Mountains (Techisen). In Indian mythology, they are the legendary outermost mountain range said to encircle the world.

Beneath the railing edge crickets . . . the leaves of the garden trees. “The pleasant scenery of Rinsen-an when I was residing there by myself” (annotation).

311. THANKING MONKS CHŌ AND TAN FOR THEIR HELP IN CONSTRUCTING A NEW MEDITATION HALL, WITH PREFACE

In the CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY for Hakuin's fifty-second year [1736; one year later than the date Hakuin gives here], we read, "There were now eight monks residing at Shōin-ji. In summer, the master lectured on the Blue Cliff Record. In autumn, thanks in large part to the efforts of Chō of Tango and Tan of Bungo, the construction of a new Monks' Hall was completed. The master composed a verse to express his gratitude" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 203). Nothing is known about these two monks apart from the information provided here.

IN RESPONSE TO repeated requests from friends of Shōin-ji, we set about in autumn of the first year of Gembun [1735] to construct a small Meditation Hall. From the very first hammer taps, the brothers in the assembly endured fatigue and hardship that is hard to express in words, and this will continue until the work is finished. With everyone pitching in and working together, it won't be long before the Hall is completed.

Yesterday, a priest who often comes and stays at Shōin-ji paid us a visit. After sitting for a while, he got up to leave. I said, "Return tomorrow and stay over so you can lend the brothers a hand." With that he had a change of heart and said he would stay on. But later he slipped away and returned to his temple. It made me wonder: Is he wise, or just half-baked? I couldn't understand why he should be afraid of a little work.

But he brought to mind the men who had been working steadily and enduring bitter hardships for twenty or thirty days now. Certainly none of them balked at the difficulties. Among them, monks Chō and Tan stood out. They persevered from start to finish, their stalwart valor increasing the closer they approached the goal. Neither of them is particularly robust. Where did they acquire those

constitutions of stone and steel? How were they able to put forth that unceasing effort?

Apply yourselves, Brothers Chō and Tan. I have no doubt that the exemplary conduct you have shown throughout this project is but the first indication of the many splendid things you will accomplish in the future.

Thirty days now we've been working on this Monks' Hall,
"All things have a beginning, few reach final completion."
Brother Tan, born in Bungo, and Brother Chō from Tango,
You've labored hard, as though it was your karmic
destiny.

You were first to go into the frigid cold on begging rounds,
You hauled water and fuel; you worked at the rice-
pounder,

Coated the walls with plaster, took your turn in the kitchen
Preparing the meals, not wasting so much as a grain of
rice.

You carried the mud in from the hamlet with faces of
steel,

Hopped over the roofs like monkeys wielding your
mallets,

Wearing beat-up straw sandals and *tabi* riddled with
holes,

Your robe hung in tatters, your pants were ragged and
torn.

You never shirked any chores or tasks, either large or
small,

Never took a clean job and left the foul ones for the
others.

At night you spread out leaves and sat upright doing
zazen,

Before dawn you were out picking greens in the frosty
field.

I can't offer you so much as a rice ball to reward your
work,

I haven't given you any teachings either in prose or in
verse.

You get only a daily fare of scathing blows and angry glares,
Spend your nights on rickety floors in ramshackle dwellings.
I'm only sorry I am now too old to see how you will turn out,
But if you strive hard and vow never to court profit or fame,
And continue on that course, amassing large stocks of merit,
One day you will be priests the whole world holds in respect.

.....

“All things have a beginning . . . final completion.” From the *Book of Odes*.

You carried the mud . . . with faces of steel. “The young monks went about their tasks, making their way back and forth to the village to haul mud for the walls, without any self-consciousness whatever” (annotation).

A *rice ball* is rice flour and water kneaded into balls and boiled; it is very simple fare.

312. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE BY TAIKŌ OSHŌ, WITH PREFACE

Taikō Oshō is described in annotations as the priest Shōzan Reiyū (1700–63), who resided in the Tōfuku-ji subtemple Taikō-an in Kyoto and is known to have studied for a time under Hakuin. Yoshizawa, after offering various reasons why this may be mistaken, concludes that Taikō Oshō’s identity remains unknown.

TAIKŌ-TON OSHŌ STOPPED at Shōin-ji on his way to Edo. After he left I had no word from him for quite a long time. Then, on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a letter suddenly arrived. On opening it I found it contained a poem written in the ancient style. After reading it over three or four times, I was unable to resist writing one of my own using the same rhymes and sending it to him. I didn't write it to display my doubtful literary talents, merely as a token of my gratitude for the verse he had sent.

A warbler has flown in from the capital's towering groves
And taken roost in the snarling branches of tiny Shōin-ji.
He hears noisy sparrows instead of polished city sounds,
He sees rustic temple scenes, not spacious imperial vistas.

He swallowed up the Zen waters at their ultimate source,
He dried up all the waves in the Teaching Schools' ocean.
I'm undistinguished, have no affinity with exalted priests,
Yet this tiger, this princely stallion, entered my chambers.
He is not a cleric you expect to linger in Shōin-ji's groves,
He aspires like the roc to soar to the east as far as he can.

To a crane like me who steps carefully around the temple
Making bad verse, those thousand leagues seem very far.

I write to amuse the wild birds that have assembled here,
And to restrain the fledgling yellow beaks that attend me.
When they find a derelict nest they deem a possible roost,

They jot off a note to inform me that they've settled there.
They find rundown temples to reside in all over the place,
But such abodes aren't proper for such rarely gifted fowls.
They may enjoy living quietly in a remote hut somewhere,
It won't have the bamboo fruit a phoenix needs to survive.
While my monks arrive fired by the most sterling motives,
Then they hunker as mute as horned owls in the midday sun.

Don't hawks stay hidden till they drop down on their prey?

Doesn't the inchworm loop back before it seizes its lunch?

From long in the past it's been said those of great capacity

Mature by steady work, unworried by any lack of progress.

A phoenix roosts in bamboo groves, eats only bamboo fruit,

Will only suck water bubbling from sweetest, purest springs.

I hope you will secure such fruit and water on your retreats,

And will, before long, see a phoenix flapping down to earth.

An embankment, created to keep water from draining away,

Can bring fields of withering plants back into bountiful life.

When a tree is cultivated with infinite care over many years

It will naturally possess the qualities of the finest ridgepoles.

Haven't you heard those stories about Zen master Big Plum,

Or the tales praising National Master Nan-yang Hui-chung?

In their surpassing wisdom, eminent bronzes of olden times

Regarded rank and privilege as they did a filthy horse leech.

Buddha acquired a radiant white hair between his eyebrows

Because he greatly respected men who lived reclusive lives.

Do you monks understand? Even old Buddhas, like Po-yun,

Who served as the head abbot at the Ch'eng-t'ien monastery,

Went to Zen master Pao-chueh to voice his deep
misgivings

About having taken on the post of temple abbot
prematurely.

Master Po-yun died as it happened at a relatively young
age,

How regrettable such a priest withered while still in flower.

Need I also mention the evil demons of power and
prestige,

Always striving to insinuate deeply into your vital organs?

It's like watching a person pounding some damp green
rice,

It will no more appease his hunger than a painted rice
cake.

All he achieves in the end is to swirl up storms of rice-
bran,

Blinding the eyes of others, filling them with useless
debris.

The matter of waiting until you are ready is up to you
alone,

But how do you repay the donations people have given
you?

The brows of monks who know this glisten with cold
sweat —

They will find it coating their sides and lower bodies as
well.

The lamp starts to dither, a cricket churrs under the
window;

The moon ascends into the sky, sending out cooling
breezes.

A passing wild goose dropped off the letter you wrote to
me,

Affording me greater pleasure than a gift of rarest
delicacies.

Hearing news from the place the quail is cloistering
himself,

The shrike replies with a lengthy, garrulous letter of his own.

It's been many years now since he eschewed literary pursuits,

How will he manage a verse to express what he wants to say?

I pray you will sprout such wings that blot out the very skies,

Hastening you back here to help this dotard with his students.

Having now fairly used up all the resources I once possessed,

I'm adding years to no purpose, not capable of helping others.

.....

A poem written in the ancient style. “Poems in the ancient style,” *gushi*, are written in uniform lines of syntactically-paired couplets. The form became prominent in the [Han Dynasty](#) and experienced a great revival during the [Tang Dynasty](#). Li Po was particularly known for his use of this style.

To a crane like me is an allusion to Hakuin's sobriquet Kokurin, “Crane Grove.”

And to restrain the fledgling yellow beaks that attend me. The term yellow beak (*kōkō*), from the Confucian *Analects*, refers to young, inexperienced youths. Perhaps Hakuin is referring to attendant-monks entering their post-satori practice.

It won't have the bamboo fruit a phoenix needs to survive. “There is a phoenix bird called the Yuan-ch'u that rests on nothing but the Wu-t'ung tree, eats nothing but the fruit of the *Lien* bamboo, and drinks only from springs of sweetest water” (*Chuang Tzu*, “Autumn Floods” chapter).

Then they hunker as mute as horned owls in the midday sun. Hakuin refers to monks who rest in a partial attainment, and fail to achieve the total freedom of full realization.

Don't hawks stay hidden . . . before it seizes its lunch? Both images imply the need for post-satori practice.

Haven't you heard those stories about Zen master Big Plum. “Big Plum,” Ta-mei Fa-chang (752–839), is known for sequestering himself in solitary retreat in the fastnesses of Big Plum Mountain; in affirming his enlightenment his teacher Ma-tsu said, “The plum is ripe.”

Or the tales praising National Master Nan-yang Hui-chung? After leaving his teacher Hui-neng, Nan-yang Hui-chung (d. 775) entered a temple deep in the valleys of Po-ha Mountain in Nan-yang and continued his practice for forty years, never leaving the temple gates.

Buddha acquired a radiant white hair . . . men who lived reclusive lives. “Seeing the virtue [of those recluses], Buddha praised them for their beauty, and because of that he attained the characteristic white hair on his forehead” (*Pu-sa shan-chieh ching*, ch. 9, T30).

Do you monks understand? Even old Buddhas, like Po-yun. . . . Hui-t'ang Tsu-hsin's (1025–1100) criticism of Po-yun Shou-tuan (1023–72) for becoming a temple priest prematurely is found in *Precious Lessons of the Zen School*: “Po-yun first resided at the Ch'eng-t'ian monastery in Chiu-chiang, then moved to Yuan-t'ung monastery. Since Po-yun was still a very young man, Zen master Hui-t'ang, head of the Pao-feng monastery, said to Yueh Kung-hui, ‘The new head priest at Yuan-t'ung has penetrated through to the source in a manner that certainly does not disgrace the lineage of Yang-ch'i. It is a pity, however, that in trying to put the understanding he has achieved to use in teaching others, he is extremely premature. It is a misfortune for the Zen school. The Creator is not generous in the creation of fine vessels, and does not allow men to achieve total perfection. If a person insists on seeking it, Heaven will surely divest him of his gift.’ Po-yun was only fifty-six when he died. Knowledgeable priests said that Hui-t'ang was a true master who knew Zen's subtlest, most profound secrets.”

It's like watching a person pounding some damp green rice. Green rice is rice harvested before it has fully matured, and thus inedible. “Even though you once attain satori, it's best to regard it as insufficient, always insufficient” (annotation).

All he achieves in the end is to swirl up storms of rice-bran. “Selling satori cheaply defiles the Dharma halls” (annotation).

*But how do you repay the donations people have given you? The original has “double tax” (*nizei*) for donations, a reference to the onerous land tax the peasants were obliged to pay twice yearly, which Hakuin was always decrying.*

*Hearing news from the place the quail . . . a lengthy, garrulous letter of his own. The quail, said to have no fixed abode, sometimes appears as a symbol of the recluse. The shrike (*mozu*) is known for the stridency and dissonance of its cries.*

I pray you will sprout such wings . . . to help this dotard with his students. The wings of the phoenix are so immense they are said to blot out the skies. “Since I’ve grown very old it is hard for me to be of help to people. Come here and lend me your help” (annotation).

313. RESPONDING TO AN INVITATION TO THE NOGA RESIDENCE

*An annotation inscribed on a draft manuscript of this verse tells us Hakuin wrote it in the middle of the tenth month of the nineteenth year of Kyōhō (1734), at the age of fifty. At the time he was apparently staying at Rinsen-an, a small temple in Shimizu village east of Hara. Mr. Noga (Noga Yoshisuke, also Gisuke, n.d.) was a local official (*godayū*) of Suruga province whose residence was located next to Rinsen-an. Some of Hakuin’s students served as priests of Rinsen-an, and he himself lectured there on a number of occasions. Rinsen-an and Mr. Noga appear in several upcoming pieces, #317 and #318.*

Mr. Noga is a man who cherishes honesty and sincerity,
I’ve heard of his devotion to the common people as well.
Yesterday, Mr. Noga came over and rapped at my gate,

We passed a few hours hashing over matters of the Way.
He spoke earnestly of a desire his mother had expressed
To treat me to some new *soba* from the autumn harvest.
How could I possibly decline an invitation of this kind,
Especially one issued from such a fine and elegant lady?
Entering the tranquil atmosphere of the Noga home,
The close, warm family ties were immediately evident.
A bamboo basket, filled with crimson persimmons,
A hand-towel, sparkling white, at the privy door.
A dozen bookcases, stacked high with rare volumes,
Two yellow chrysanthemums, like sisters in a vase.
A sword gleaming on a stand to dispel idle demons,
The scroll in the alcove revealed a noble mind —
Please do not say you've nothing to offer your guest.
Your hearts and minds surpass the greatest delicacies.

.....

A fine and elegant lady. “Mr. Noga’s wife came to Shōin-ji in person to issue the invitation” (annotation).

314. DIRECTIVES FOR TWO OR THREE MONKS STAYING AT RINSEN-AN, USING THE RHYMES OF THE PREVIOUS VERSE

Hakuin seems to have written this verse while he was staying at Rinsen-an with his students Ryōsai and Ekyū and his friend Unzan.

You don't become a son of the Dharma King
Until you strike deep into your untilled field.
Then facing north you see the Southern Star,
Turning south, you gaze at the Northern Star,
Your auspicious field more fertile by the day,

With soil whose essential vigor is never lost.
At that time a master of seeing and hearing
Is in himself the True Man who has no rank.
As it isn't a matter of practice or attainment,
You won't find this place either close or far.
It's a pair of sandals at the foot of the stairs,
Or the hand towel hanging from your waist.
If you bore in and grasp the meaning of this,
At that instant you leave the cycle of rebirth.
If you don't gain the eye that can discern it,
You will continue your life as an idle spirit.
Don't get the idea it will be easy to achieve,
Just smash the gem hidden in your topknot.

.....

You don't become a son of the Dharma King . . . into your untilled field. "You must once hear the sound of one hand, and then put a stop to all sounds" (annotation). The Dharma King is Shakamuni Buddha. The "untilled field" is the field of the eighth consciousness, which must finally be broken through; see Hakuin's use of this term in #161.

Just smash the gem hidden in your topknot is an allusion to the parable of the priceless gem in the topknot (*keichū-myōju-no-tatōe*) in the "Peaceful Practices" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. The wheel-turning king (*Cakravartin*; Jap. *tenrin-ō*), an ideal ruler in ancient Indian mythology who governs with justice rather than force, rewards his soldiers with fields, houses, robes, gold, silver, and other treasures, but he imparts one object, a bright jewel he wears hidden in his topknot, only to a man who has performed some truly great exploit. Shakamuni compares the jewel in the topknot to the *Lotus Sutra* (from *Nichiren Dictionary of Buddhism*, online version). Here the jewel in the topknot is a metaphor for the Buddha-mind.

315. FOR UNZAN OSHŌ, USING HIS RHYMES

“This poem was written to celebrate Unzan Sotei’s completion of his Zen practice” (annotation).

Your Mind King has brought six bandits to heel,
Brought peace and serenity throughout the land.
The four rivers now return to the southern seas,
Stars in the sky wheel around the Northern Star.
He rules a realm of vast, unremitting Emptiness,
A splendid pristine landscape fresh day after day.
Inside his chambers, filled with measureless joy,
An undying person lives in a timeless mortality.

We’ve become useless crocks, how lucky we are
To have shared similar aspirations since our teens,
We’ve practiced together and exulted together too,
With our hearts and minds in unbroken harmony.
Setting out together, we returned together as well,
Just like two spokes turning around a central hub.
Your frail health always gave me cause for worry,
I’ve beseeched the gods above and below for help.
I seem to sense your health has improved of late,
And you have recovered your old vigor and pep.

.....

Your Mind King has brought six bandits to heel. The “Mind King” is the eighth consciousness; the “six bandits” are the first six consciousnesses (see #165).

The four rivers. “Birth, existence, change, and death. The stars are sentient and non-sentient beings” (annotation).

316. ANSWERING SENIOR PRIEST SAI, USING HIS RHYMES

Senior priest Sai (Sai Jōza; later Ryōsai Genmyō, 1706–86) was one of the first students Hakuin taught after he became head priest at Shōin-ji. Ryōsai trained under Kogetsu Zenzai in Kyushu and achieved an initial enlightenment. He then went to Shōin-ji to study with Hakuin. Hakuin confirmed Ryōsai's attainment several years later, designating him as a Dharma heir. Ryōsai served as head priest of Kagaku-ji in Mikawa prefecture (present Aichi prefecture), gaining a reputation for his Chinese kambun verse, a collection of which he published in 1793 under the title Jishō-roku.

*Although Ryōsai has the distinction of being the first person Hakuin sanctioned to teach, in his later years Hakuin is said to have expressed regret at having confirmed Ryōsai too soon, before his Zen training was fully complete: "If I had only waited another three years . . . no one in the country would have been able to touch him" (e.g., *Stories from a Thicket of Thorn and Briar*, p. 120). Because of this, and Ryōsai's penchant for literary pastimes, some in the Hakuin school have been inclined to stress his affinity with Kogetsu Zen.*

When my old student Sai returned from the east
He was jittery as a farmer with his tax in arrears.
Finding on his arrival at Shōin-ji that I was away,
He left, bided his time in a room at a nearby inn.
He came back at midnight and tapped at my gate,
I sensed a new resolve to see the Matter through.
Inspecting him carefully in the light of the lamp,
I brought up the question of the Original Person.
He set forth his understanding in tolerable detail,
I slipped unwittingly into an old auntie type Zen.
Having been away more than three or four years,
He had come to receive my teaching once again.
As I began to probe him at the most vital points,
He responded with vigor, showing no hesitation.

Keep boring onward, Ryōsai, don't ever ease up,
Bring to bear all the grit and mettle you possess.
Shatter the precious jewel in Hakuin's headdress,
Contemplate it as the treasure of your own house!

.....

I brought up the question of the Original Person (honrai nin). It is unclear to which koan Hakuin is referring here.

I slipped . . . old auntie type Zen. That is, I pressed my questioning so benignly that without knowing it I fell into a kindly Rōba (grandmotherly) Zen.

**317. VERSE WRITTEN AT RINSEN-AN,
FOLLOWING THE RHYMES OF ZEN MAN
RYŌSAI (WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED AT
RINSEN-AN, KYŪ AND YUI WERE OUT ON
A BEGGING EXPEDITION, SO WE WERE
ENTERTAINED BY MR. NOGA, A WARM
AND COMPASSIONATE OLD GENTLEMAN
WHO LIVES NEXT DOOR)**

Ryōsai Genmyō, described here as visiting Rinsen-an with Hakuin, was introduced in the preface to the previous verse, #316. Kyū (Ekyū, n.d.), who was apparently the resident priest at Rinsen-an at this time, received the Dharma transmission from a teacher in Suzuki Shōsan's (1579–1655) lineage after attaining enlightenment at the young age of fifteen, and that at sixteen he was appointed head of Rinsen-an, which had originally been one of Shōsan's temples. Ekyū

began studying at Shōin-ji in 1721, Hakuin's thirty-seventh year, and is recorded as serving together with Ryōsai as a senior monk (jōza) at Shōin-ji in 1734 (Chronological Biography), and even later. Nothing is known of the monk Yui. Mr. Noga appeared before, in #313, and will again in the next piece, #318.

After poking around in silence, fumbling for the key,
We entered a hermitage cloistered by towering trees.
No fire was burning inside the brazier to welcome us,
A single volume, half-read, lay open on top of a desk.
I struck the bronze chime and bowed before Buddha,
Its sound reached cottages beyond the bamboo fence.
An old gentleman appeared from the house next door
With a pot of tea in his hand and offered us a few cups.

After poking around . . . the key. “The monk Kyū always hid the key in the bushes. Ryōsai knew where it was hidden, having formerly resided at Rinsen-an” (annotation).

318. DESCRIBING A PREVIOUS VISIT TO RINSEN-AN, THE SAME RHYMES AS BEFORE

The person Hakuin was visiting is unidentified. Judging from the verse itself, it was probably Ryōsai.

A hot summer's day, now how many years back?
We walked here together to visit this hermitage.
You composed a fine verse but didn't jot it down.
I responded, but can't remember my verse either.

The dense forest giants afforded us merciful shade,
Cool drafts of breeze came from gaps in the walls.

Mr. Noga from Yukawa treated us to cold noodles.
We can now recall with pleasure those bygone days.

.....

Gaps in the walls. “Rinsen-an was small and ramshackle, but because of that the cool summer breezes penetrated right inside” (annotation).

Mr. Noga . . . cold noodles. Yukawa was a village located just south of the hermitage. An annotation identifies the noodles as *sōmen*, served cold in summer.

319. PLUM RAINS FALLING FOR DAYS ON END, I THINK OF ZEN MEN SAI AND JŌ ON THEIR PRACTICE RETREAT

Hakuin seems to have composed this long verse of sixty-six lines at Shōin-ji during the rainy season in the fifth lunar month while his two monks, Sai (Ryōsai Genmyō) and Jō (unidentified), were engaged in a solitary practice retreat at nearby Rinsen-an. As Ryōsai’s study with Hakuin began in 1735, when Hakuin was fifty-one, and continued for several years, this verse no doubt dates from that period. The name “plum rains” (bai-u) derives from the ripening of the plum tree’s fruit from green to yellow, which coincides with the annual rainy season.

Yellow plum rains pelting day after day,
Beating rice shoots down into the earth.
Spating torrents, angry roaring dragons,
Roil higher than storming ocean waves.
Firewood is damp, floor planks yawning,
Oven cold, the walls covered with snails.
The seething flood carrying away bridges,

Oxcarts disappearing into its muddy maw.
Chestnut flowers are thrown and scattered,
Red pomegranate buds are beaten to earth.
I feel for my two monks sitting and dozing
Until their legs beneath them wither away.
Walls of rain have immured them indoors,
Keeping them from leaving to beg for food.
But that's how Zen monks acquire strength,
Let's have no prayers for the rains to cease!
If you two were practicing in any other hall
You would be provided with all your needs.
What can possibly have entered your heads,
Embracing adversity like this from choice?
Having had no news since the deluge set in,
I snuck in a packet of tea leaves on the sly.
Brother Sai is a man from Owari province,
Brother Jō is from the capital, farther west.
Nagoya and Kyoto have many differences,
But these two monks share a single dream.
In Nanshan leopards hide in rains like this,
For fear their fur will lose its glossy sheen.
At Hsi-ling two men subsisted on bracken
To stay unencumbered by golden chains.

It's said that a man who pursues the Way
Ought to live alone, away from the world.
How noble is the monk who turns recluse,
Possessing nothing but a robe and a bowl.
His age is the same as the great sky above,
He embraces the complete universe within.
Under the protection of the Dragon Kings,
Neither fires nor floods will do him harm.
If the Great Yu had not subdued the floods,
We'd all have turned into shrimps and clams.
While Yu was able to discipline the waters,
Not even he can hold back the river of lust.
In the frenzied force of its churning billows,
No rafts can ferry either the foolish or wise.

If you drown you sink to the floors of Hell,
You are hauled before Lord Emma's court,
And condemned to toss about life after life
On the measureless ocean of samsaric night.
How can you free yourself from such a fate?
There is a way that yields miraculous results.
Look within, it's in the lining of your robe!
There is no one who is not a living Buddha,
Each and every person is old Shaka himself,
Still we foolishly seek him in another place.
The reason we provoke our own misfortune?
The serpents of fame and wealth and greed.
Be dauntless, dauntless and brave above all,
Find out how to master these deadly snakes.
A method for yanking their fangs for good
Is yours on grasping the true nature of mind.
If you discern this nature in its flawless form,
You'll attain oneness with fragments of mist.
This satori will give you a Buddha's wisdom,
Elsewise you end up in an unfortunate place.

I've composed this long string of useless verses
To ease the tedium of these interminable rains.

.....

In Nanshan leopards hide . . . lose its glossy sheen. The reference appears in a passage in *Stories of Praiseworthy Women (Lieh-nu chuan)*, ch. 2.

At Hsi-ling two men subsisted on bracken refers to Po I and Shu Ch'i, brother princes who renounced their claims to the throne and fled into the mountains of Hsi-ling where they subsisted on wild plants until they died of cold and hunger.

If the Great Yu had not . . . shrimps and clams is based on a well-known saying, "If it had not been for Emperor Yu [who drained the swamps and brought the rivers under control], we'd all now be fish." Hakuin assumes this Chinese myth as part of the Zen heritage.

Hold back the river of lust. “River of lust” translates *aiga*. “When the river of desire dries up, you will gain release from suffering” (*Heroic March Sutra*, ch. 4).

Lord Emma’s court is where the dead are brought to receive their final judgment.

Look within, it’s in the lining of your robe! See #310, sixth note, p. 506, for this parable in the *Lotus Sutra*.

You’ll attain oneness with fragments of mist. “It is not only your own body, but also the body of the mountains and rivers, the body of oneself and the body of others [and of everything else in the universe] as well” (annotation).

320. NINE VERSES WRITTEN ON A VISIT TO BUTSUJITSU RŌJIN, WITH PREFACE

Butsujitsu Rōjin (“Old Man Buddha Sun”) was a sobriquet adopted by Hakuin’s longtime friend Unzan Sotai (1685–1747), taken from the “mountain name” of his temple, *Butsujitsu-zan Kongō-ji*. At the time this was written Unzan had recently turned *Kongō-ji* over to his Dharma successor *Fuhō* and retired to a small hermitage nearby.

Although these poems convey respect and fondness, they seem a bit perfunctory too, deploying well-worn Zen tropes in patently extravagant praise of Unzan. They were written in 1735, when both men were fifty-one. Previous references to Unzan (#269, #289, #290, and #315) also mention his weak constitution. Did Hakuin dash them off in the course of an evening’s visit in an attempt to cheer up his ailing friend?

Hakuin was far less retiring than he portrays his friend to be, and his life took a distinctly different and vigorously active course, but here, at age fifty-one, his own full-bore teaching career had scarcely begun.

In each of the following nine verses Hakuin describes his reclusive friend as an orchid (*ran*, also *yūran*, literally, “secretly

blossoming orchid”). Confucius likened the perfect gentleman to an orchid, which with humility and integrity, and a loyalty that may not be easily recognized, blossoms and emits its fragrance in shady, out-of-the-way places.

PREFACE

At the beginning of spring in the twentieth year of the Kyōhō era [1735], Butsujitsu Rōjin picked up his robe and bowl and retired to a secluded spot in the neighboring village. Immediately I wanted to go and congratulate him, but being old and indolent, I never got around to it. On a fine day at the end of the third month, I took up my staff and set out to pay him a visit.

Gazing over a landscape of shady green trees, through cherry blossoms scattering in the breeze, I could make out a small dwelling with a narrow peaked roof, but I was unable to find any path that would take me there. I walked down one lane, but it petered out, so I came back and tried another one. As I hesitated, undecided, with the sun dipping low in the sky, I began having second thoughts about the visit. Ah, a friend and boon companion of forty years was living only a few miles away, yet I couldn't even find my way to his dwelling. It may be that this was simply because recluses tend naturally to conceal their whereabouts. Nonetheless, this made an inexplicably strong impression on me.

Presently a monk appeared and he led me to Unzan's dwelling. It was sparse and spartan, a fine place to leach the mundane from one's bones. On meeting, host and guest both broke into spontaneous guffaws of laughter. That night, master Unzan wrote a verse. I responded with some of my own, using the same rhymes.

I

Unzan doesn't dine on phoenix marrow and dragon liver,
A gimp-legged old pot blackened with use suits him fine.
A Dharma successor secured, a heavy burden now lifted,
He can coil up in his grass hut and doze off like a dragon.
His pure words astonish, like a dog suddenly biting a pig.
His poems are transformative, like the elixir of the sages.
People ought not wonder a man like you should exist,
Among trees there is Ch'un, among grasses, the orchid.

II

Thirty years you burrowed inside your den at Kongō-ji,
 Went prowling for rat livers like an old gimp-legged cat.
 Your tiger-eyed glance had people trembling like leaves,
 Now you're a dozing dragon coiled like an old pine tree.
 Your skill as a bandit would put even Hou Hei to shame,
 Your daily fare of vegetable broth would beggar Fan Tan.
 Retiring from temple affairs you've led a life of seclusion,
 A moth orchid blossoming among the grasses by the pond.

III

Pure talk persistently cleansing to the bone and marrow,
 A tiny garden embodying the vital spirit of hermitic life.
 A snail-shell dwelling, spartan pure, nurturing the spirit,
 Dragon pines with ancient coils conferring timeless age.
 Dipping water from a water pipe he makes me some tea,
 Produces a grain or two of refined cinnabar from his bag.
 His desk is stacked high with wonderfully wrought verse,
 Just like the poems Su Hui stitched out for her husband.

IV

Less chance for you to grasp this priest's quiet working
 Than the turtle had of making off with a monkey's liver.
 Just as you think you have the carp, it becomes a dragon
 Spiraling through bottomless pools — impossible to find.
 He may look like a tired old bull enjoying a midday nap,
 But try to cozy up to him, he's over the border in a flash.
 An Udumbara whose radiance light up our dusty world,
 A rare orchid blossoming superbly inside a red-hot kiln.

V

An old dragon has been seen lurking north of Kongō-ji,
 He has sharp crocodile teeth and fearsome tiger stripes.
 His lightning moves expel the wedges from men's minds,
 His thunderings flush dragons from under Arhats' nails.
 His eloquence is stronger than the surging ocean waves,
 His fox-slobber verse an endless spew of cinnabar elixir.
 Most folks don't cotton to his withered, forthright looks,

Bitter as yellow bark, more fragrant than purple orchids.

VI

It's said a priest can size you up from the subtlest stirrings,

For ten years I've observed your deep devotion to the Way.

You turned round the Buddha Sun whose light was failing,

Now you scare off people, slumbering like a golden dragon.

Your Zen evokes teachers like Tiger Hill or Elephant Bone,

In filial devotion you follow Kuei and Yang and Prince Tan.

Rempō must secretly envy you having such a fine successor,

Dharma heirs with Fuhō's virtues are rare in these sad times.

VII

A small room fifteen feet square, a small three-legged pot,

A pine breeze for a pillow — all are purifying to the mind.

He sleeps away like a gull floating with the heaving swells,

He is no inchworm scrunching down so he can get ahead.

When his mind turns, livers freeze up and daylight darkens,

His vicious brush stains the Zen seas with patriarchs' blood.

My lengthy immersion in the scent of his sandalwood forest

Has lent its fragrance to my stinking plot of castor oil plants.

VIII

Not even an immortal sage could understand his secret
tune,
It should be engraved in your bones, etched into your
livers.
Did not Zen masters Nan-ch'uan, Ch'ang-sha, and K'o-
wen
Scold dragons for coiling up and sleeping in stagnant
ponds?
Then master Yun-men with his formidable rhythms
emerged,
His true elixir later passed on into our land in the eastern
sea.
Under Hsi-keng's mattock a marvelous seedling burst
forth,
A secret orchid that would astound masters Daiō and
Bukkō.

IX

If their aims are different, even liver and gall are
estranged;
But if their joys and sorrows are one, the whole world is
kin.
I suspect his decision to set the Buddha's Dharma seal
aside
Perturbs priests who relish the comforts of wealth and
fame.
A man who leaves home to doze quietly in a small
hermitage
Does it to refine the divine elixir bequeathed by the
Buddha.
Once he matures the elixir, transcending both life and
death,
He becomes a boon companion of the First Buddha himself.

.....

Notes

VERSE I

Like a dog suddenly biting a pig is an allusion to the sudden means a Zen teacher uses to destroy ignorance in students.

His poems are transformative, like the elixir of the sages. Borrowing the language of “elixir” from ancient Taoist sources, Hakuin depicts it in his many writings as the life-giving product of Zen’s “inner alchemy,” in which the student refines cinnabar elixir by concentrating his vital energy in the “cinnabar field” (*tanden*) below the navel during Zen meditation. In the original, “elixir of the sages” is literally “elixir that penetrates the jar,” i.e., the fragrance of the precious elixir, preserved in a jar of purest crystal, is so potent that it seeps out and pervades the entire world.

Ch’un is a fabulous tree whose springtime and autumn lasts for eight thousand years (*Chuang Tzu*, p. 30).

VERSE II

Thirty years you burrowed . . . an old gimp-legged cat. “[This was] Unzan’s everyday behavior as he taught his students” (annotation). If he had indeed served as head priest of Kongō-ji for thirty years, Unzan would have been installed there at quite an early age — unusual, but not unprecedented, at this time.

“Rat livers” stands for what is worthlessly small, perhaps alluding to the delusions of his disciples. The term appears in the *Chuang Tzu*, referring to a possible site of reincarnation: “How marvelous the Creator is. What is he going to make of you next? Where is he going to send you? Will he make you into a rat’s liver? Will he make you into a bug’s arm?” (Watson, p. 85).

Hou Hei is a legendary Chinese thief. *Fan Tan* (d. 189 B.C.) became minister of state, but was so poor in his youth that he was unable to leave the house because he lacked clothing.

VERSE III

Su Hui (4th century) was the wife of an official banished to the western desert regions; she passed her time embroidering verses to

send to her exiled husband.

VERSE IV

Than the turtle had of making off with a monkey's liver alludes to a story found in the Fo-pen-hsing-chi ching. Hakuin made it the subject of one of his paintings (HZB #550).

The following version of the story is from *Tales of Past and Present (Konjaku Monogatari, kan 5)*, a collection of tales from the late Heian period:

Long ago, on a hill by the shores of the Indian sea, there was a monkey who lived on fruits he found. In the ocean nearby lived a turtle and his wife. The wife said to her husband, "I am pregnant with your child, but my womb is unsound and I am certain to have a difficult birth. If you give me some medicine, I will be able to give birth easily." When the husband asked what kind of medicine she wanted, his wife replied, "I've heard that raw monkey liver is the best medicine for afflictions of the abdomen."

The turtle went down to the seashore and got into a conversation with a monkey. "Do you have all the food that you need where you live?" asked the turtle. "I never have enough," said the monkey. "Near my house is a vast forest," offered the turtle. "The trees and bushes are filled with fruit throughout the year. Let me take you there, and you can eat as much as you want." Unaware that he was being tricked, the monkey joyfully agreed. "Come, let's be off," said the turtle, letting the monkey crawl up onto his carapace. Once out at sea, he said to the monkey, "You don't know this, but my pregnant wife is afflicted with an illness of the womb. We heard that a monkey's raw liver is the best medicine for such an ailment. I tricked you into coming with me so that I could get your liver." "How unfortunate," said the monkey. "I appreciate your being so truthful, but haven't you heard that we monkeys don't keep our livers in our bodies? We hang them in trees. If you had told me about this before we set out, I could

have given you my liver, and the livers of the other monkeys as well. So even if you kill me here, I'm sorry but it won't do you any good. I have no liver."

The turtle, believing what the monkey said, replied, "All right. Let's go back. You can give me your liver when we get there." "Of course," said the monkey. "If we go back, I could do that with ease." With the monkey still on his carapace, the turtle paddled his way back to the shore. As soon as they arrived, the turtle let the monkey down. The monkey immediately scampered up to the highest branches of the nearest tree. Looking down at the turtle far below, he said, "How could you be so dumb? Who ever heard of anyone having a liver apart from his body?" The turtle, realizing he'd been tricked but powerless to do anything about it, looked up at the monkey and said, "You're the stupid one, monkey. The bottom of the sea is filled with delicious fruit," and he swam off and disappeared beneath the waves.

Even in the past, the animals were lacking in wise judgment, but human foolishness is no different.

VERSE V

His thunderings flush dragons from under Arhats' nails. "It is said that when dragons descend to earth, they conceal themselves under the Arhats' fingernails" (annotation). "Dragons" indicates the advanced states of realization to which Arhats become attached.

His fox-slobber verse. "Fox slobber kills off Buddhas and patriarchs alike" (annotation).

Bitter as yellow bark. The bark of the *phellodendron amurense* tree, used in Chinese medicine; it has a strongly bitter taste.

VERSE VI

It's said a priest . . . the subtlest stirrings. "A clear-eyed monk is endowed with the eye that sees through barriers. He can tell

everything about a person from the slightest stirring of the grass in a gentle breeze” (annotation).

Buddha Sun (Butsujitsu) is the “mountain name” of Unzan’s temple Kongō-ji.

Now you scare off . . . like a golden dragon. “Unzan was living in retirement in a small hermitage near Konryū-ji [Golden Dragon Temple]” (annotation). “Unzan’s Dharma heir was residing in a hermitage at Konryū-ji” (annotation).

Tiger Hill is Hu-ch’iu (“Tiger Hill”) Shao-lung (1077–1136), whose teacher nicknamed him “Drowsy Tiger.” “Elephant Bone” is Hsueh-feng I-ts’un.

In filial devotion . . . Kuei and Yang and Prince Tan. Kuei-shan Ling-yu (771–853) and his Dharma son Yang-shan Hui-chi (807–883) co-founded the Kuei-yang school of Chinese Zen. Prince Tan (d. 226 B.C.), son of Prince Hsi of the Yen state, held as a hostage by the Ch’in state, escaped and returned to Yen. Engaging the mercenary Ching K’o, he sent him to the Ch’in court to assassinate the Prince of Ch’in (later the First Emperor) on the pretext of offering allegiance. Ching K’o failed in his attempt to assassinate the Prince and was himself killed. When the Prince of Ch’in threatened to attack the Yen state, Prince Hsi was forced to put his son Prince Tan to death.

Rempō must secretly envy . . . rare in these sad times. Hakuin presumably means his friend Rempō Chishō (d. 1770), head priest of Keirin-ji in Kai province who visited Shōin-ji regularly to study with Hakuin for many years. Before moving into his retirement hermitage Unzan had turned Kongō-ji over to his Dharma heir Fuhō Sokan (n.d.).

VERSE VII

A small room . . . three-legged pot describes Unzan’s place of retirement; the pot was for making tea, of which he was fond.

He sleeps away like a gull . . . heaving swells. “Like a white gull bobbing on the sea, surrendering itself mindlessly to the motion of the waves, not needing to seek or follow anything” (annotation).

He is no inchworm . . . can get ahead. The inchworm or looper bends itself double in order to make forward progress; citing this, the *Book of Changes* teaches that to obtain future success, one must sometimes assume an inferior stance.

His vicious brush stains . . . patriarchs' blood. Only a few paintings by Unzan's hand are known to exist, though elsewhere in his writings Hakuin praises Unzan's artistic ability. "His writings and brushwork were drenched with blood from killing off [drawing] the Buddhas and patriarchs" (annotation). "Even among the vast and perilous seas of the Zen school his brushwork was extraordinary" (annotation).

My lengthy immersion in the scent . . . castor oil bush. "If a single sandalwood tree grows in a thicket of stinking castor oil plants, they take on a wonderful fragrance" (annotation). Hakuin says that his long association with Unzan may have helped make more tolerable his own teaching's native stink.

A plant known in Sanskrit as *eranda* (Japanese *iran*), thought to be related to the castor seed bush (*Ricinus communis*), appears in Buddhist texts as a toxic, foul-smelling plant whose stench resembles a rotting corpse and is detectable at a distance of forty *yojanas*. It is often used as a metaphor for sentient beings and the unenlightened state, and contrasted with the sweet-smelling ox-head sandalwood, reputed to have the finest fragrance of all trees, which represents the Buddha and the true Dharma, whose very presence is sufficient to turn the unenlightened toward the truth. Berthold Laufer has a chapter on *Ricinus* in *Sino-Iranica*, pp. 403–4.

VERSE VIII

Did not Zen masters . . . in stagnant ponds? Sleeping dragons are an image for students who fail to go on to the all-important post-satori phase of their training that leads to full enlightenment. K'o-wen is Cheng-ching K'o-wen (1025–1102).

Under Hsi-keng's mattock . . . seedling burst forth. Hsi-keng is a sobriquet used by Sung Zen master Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu. After studying with Hsu-t'ang and receiving his Dharma transmission,

Nampo Jōmyō (Daiō Kokushi) introduced his Rinzai teaching to Japan, establishing the lineage to which Hakuin belonged.

A secret orchid . . . Daiō and Bukkō. Daiō Kokushi (Nampo Jōmyō, 1235–1309) and Bukkō Kokushi (Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan, 1226–86) are teachers who played important roles in the transmission of Zen to Japan. “Secret orchid” (*yūran*) is the title of a well-known tune for the *yueh ch’in* or moon zither in Huan T’an’s *Ch’in Ts’ao (Principles of the Ch’in)*. “On encountering this tune even the greatest masters of the twenty-four Zen lineages [that were introduced into Japan] were thrown completely for a loss” (annotation).

VERSE IX

If their aims are different . . . the whole world is kin. “Confucius said, ‘If you look at them from the standpoint of their differences, liver and gall are as estranged as [the states of] Ch’u and Yueh. But if you look at them from the standpoint of their sameness, then the ten thousand things are all one” (*Chuang Tzu*, cf. Watson, p. 69). Yoshizawa explains these lines thus: “If you say their ways of thinking are different, then like liver and gall, so close within the same body, they become as estranged as warring states Ch’u and Yueh. But if you regard them as sharing the same pleasures and distresses, it can be said that even two states as far apart as Ch’u and Yueh are closely related.”

I suspect his decision to set the Buddha’s Dharma seal aside. . . . Literally, “throw aside the seal of the Dharma King” (*hōō-in wo nageutsu*). An annotation on the term “Dharma seal” explains it as signifying “the guiding and training of students”; setting it aside would allude to Unzan’s retirement from Kongō-ji. The idea seems to be that Unzan’s retirement from active teaching to engage in practice deepening his own enlightenment makes him different from most other Zen priests, whose commitment to Zen diminishes once they become temple priests.

Does it to refine the divine elixir bequeathed by the Buddha. The Buddha passed on the secret of refining the cinnabar elixir that confers timeless life by meditating and concentrating his mind in the

tanden or cinnabar field below the navel. The method is explained in *Idle Talk on a Night Boat (Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 83–114).

The First Buddha (Ionnō-butsumi) is the Buddha Awesome Sound King, who appears in the “Never Disparaging” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. He was the first Buddha to appear in the kalpa that preceded the present one. The idea is that Unzan has attained the timeless realm of all the Buddhas.

321. VISITING KŌGA OSHŌ ON A WINTER DAY, RESPONDING TO A VERSE HE WROTE

Kōga Chidan (d. 1735) was head priest of Daichū-ji, about six kilometers due east of Shōin-ji. Daichū-ji appears in Book Seven in #210–11 and in the current Book in #303.

I trudged quite a few long leagues through heavy snow,
Was given an old man’s sugared sweets when I arrived.
While gazing on rocks and water, working on a verse,
The clouds parted and sunlight came streaming down.
Long talks at night huddled around a glowing brazier,
Conversing in the morning while flaked out in the sun.
At times we just laughed, delighting in our friendship,
At times readying our verses for the temple gatherings.

.....

While gazing on rocks and water refers to the rocks and water of Daichū-ji’s celebrated gardens, which are said to have been designed by Musō Soseki (1275–1351). Hakuin’s final line indicates that Daichū-ji was the site of literary gatherings.

322. UNTITLED [GENTOKU'S FLOWERS]

Hakuin apparently wrote this in 1737, at the age of fifty-three. The Chronological Biography has him “returning from Rinzaï-ji in Izu province where he had delivered lectures during the winter on the Blue Cliff Record” for this year. The lectures may have continued for several months, since he says here that it was summer when he returned to Shōin-ji. Gentoku Rōjin (“Old Man Gentoku”) is Hakuin’s friend and patron Ishii Gentoku, who lived in Hina village, some kilometers north of Shōin-ji. He also appears in #175, #293, #323, and #331.

ON RETURNING TO Shōin-ji from southern Izu in summer of the second year of Gembun [1737], I noticed what seemed to be two or three large blossoms white as snow flowering among the hedges. As I was trying to figure out what they could be, I remembered the magnolia trees Gentoku Rōjin had given us at the beginning of spring.

The lotus certainly does blossom in the mountain heights,
Shaded by green forests, its petals white as freshest
snow.

They have wonderful ability to repulse the summer heat,
A virtue plum flowers in a snowy village can never match.

.....

Lines 1–2: In juxtaposing the white magnolia flowers with the lotus blossom, Hakuin controverts a statement made by Manjusri Bodhisattva in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. Manjusri explains to Vimalakirti the meaning of his claim that the sixty-two erroneous views and all the many earthly desires are the seeds of Buddhahood: “The lotus does not grow on the upland plain; the lotus grows in the mud and mire of a damp low-lying place. In the same way, the Buddha Dharma can never grow in someone who has perceived the uncreated nature of reality and entered into correct understanding. It is only when living beings are in the midst of the mire of earthly desires that they turn to the Buddha Dharma” (Watson, p. 95). An

annotation on this same sutra passage in #163 has: “If the water of deep samadhi is not present, it will never blossom.”

Lines 3–4: “Seeing these flowers in the summer heat makes you feel cool; you cannot enjoy gazing at the cold plum flowers in the winter cold in the same way” (annotation). “I’m shivering, it’s getting cold” (annotation). “No matter how many beautiful blossoms appear on the plum tree, because it is the coldest time of year they aren’t appreciated in the same way as magnolia flowers” (annotation).

323. UNTITLED [FOR GENTOKU]

SINCE GENTOKU RŌJIN had sent me a verse at the end of the year matching the rhymes of one I had written to commemorate the Buddha’s enlightenment, I wrote another one, using the same rhymes, to express my feelings about being out of touch for so long.

I often envisage that old fellow living as he pleases up
north,
Enjoying a pure and tranquil life like one of the sages of
old.
We need not be concerned about being out of touch so
long,
As I opened the letter your smiling face appeared before
me.

.....

That old fellow living as he pleases up north. “Old Man Who Does As He Pleases” renders the literary name, Fang-weng, of the Southern Sung poet Lu Yu (1125–1209). See Burton Watson’s *The Old Man Who Does As He Pleases: Selections from the Poetry and Prose of Lu Yu*. Lu Yu numbered Zen priests among his friends, and contributed a colophon for the *Chia-t’ai p’u-teng lu* (*Extensive Records of the Lamp of the Chia-t’ai Period*), one of the Sung Zen “histories,” compiled in 1204.

324. CELEBRATING LAYMAN GENRYŪ'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY, WITH PREFACE

This piece was written in Hakuin's fifty-fifth year. Layman Genryū is the Buddhist name of Uematsu Michitoki (1660–1743), patriarch of the Uematsu family of Hara. A verse Hakuin wrote on Michitoki's death is given below, #343.

LAYMAN KŌGEN GENRYŪ, the father of Uematsu Koreyoshi, has been devoted to the Buddhist teachings for many years. He has managed his household affairs harmoniously, and has always been on extremely amicable terms with the villagers of Hara. Without study or cultivation, he is by nature a gentleman, pure and upright in character. In spring of this year, the fourth of Gembun [1739], he attained the age of eighty, and his family and relatives all gathered to celebrate the occasion. I was asked to compose a verse. This is what I said in response:

In the *Book of Rites*, in the section entitled *The Imperial Order*, it says, "To reach the age of eighty should be a matter of constant celebration." The poet Tu Fu remarked how rare it was for anyone to attain the age of seventy, so Layman Genryū's eightieth birthday is certainly an event we should celebrate with great joy.

Even as we recognize the auspiciousness of the occasion, however, we must remember that no matter how many years a man may live, he must in the end undergo the great change. Whether he lives a thousand years like a crane, or ten thousand years like a tortoise, or gains the wealth of T'ao Chu or the riches of I Tun, he is nonetheless no different than "a mayfly, visiting between heaven and earth." It is not a situation in which a virtuous man would seek to gain eminence or gain honors.

Layman Genryū, as you listen to my words, your mind is what the Indians and Chinese both call the Great Immortal Sage, the venerable ancient of the Southern Star. But if you want to see him, look right beneath your feet!

Willows are green, flowers are red — *What is that?* It is the mother of heaven and earth, the father of all existing things. Even when existence, down to the finest hairs, are consumed in the world-ending kalpa fire, this Great Immortal Sage will remain ageless and undying, never coming or going, a great mass of absolute emptiness manifesting itself magnificently beyond birth and death, permeating all movement and change and completely filling the trichilial cosmos.

I see no reason why I shouldn't use these words to offer the Layman my congratulations on his eightieth birthday. Seeing a smile flicker across the Layman's lips, I read out this verse:

For four score years, for thirty thousand days and nights,
A true Person has been revealed as he is with total
clarity.

Pink peaches, white plums, the bush warbler's whistlings,
An old gentleman's boundless happiness and timeless
life.

.....

In the Book of Rites . . . "To reach the age of eighty should be a matter of constant celebration." The relevant passage in the *Li Chi* has: "At the age of fifty a man may use a cane in his own home; at the age of sixty, in the county in which he lives; at the age of seventy, in the capital; at the age of eighty, in the imperial palace. . . . When someone reaches the age of eighty, it should be a cause for constant feasting and rejoicing. He should be allowed to use a cane in the Imperial Palace, and he should receive salutations and gifts from the Emperor once each month."

The poet Tu Fu remarked how rare it was for anyone to attain the age of seventy. Tu Fu's precise words "always a rare occurrence," Japanese *koki*, later came to refer to a person's seventieth year.

T'ao Chu (Fan Li, 5th century B.C.) and *I Tun* (Huan Tan, 1st century B.C.) were officials who amassed fortunes, their names becoming synonymous with great wealth.

"A mayfly, visiting between heaven and earth." The Sung poet Su Tung-p'o's famous "Ode to the Red Cliff," musing on the

impermanence of human life, contains the lines, “We are like mayflies visiting between heaven and earth, like infinitesimal grains in the vast sea, mourning the passing of our instant of life.”

Layman Genryū, as you listen to my words . . . call the Great Immortal Sage. In *Idle Talk on a Night Boat* Hakuin says of the “Great Immortal Sage” (Dai-shinsen): “You will realize for the first time [on attaining enlightenment] that you yourself are a great and immortal sage, as birthless as heaven and earth, as undying as empty space” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 103).

The venerable ancient of the Southern Star. The text has Nangyokusei, the Southern Star, which is often personified as Nangyoku Rōjin, Old Man Southern Star, a deity said to control the length of human life. In Japan he became identified with the popular deity Fukurokuju, one of the seven gods of good luck, depicted with an abnormally elongated head, carrying a staff, and accompanied by a crane.

Willows are green, flowers are red. “These things are all intrinsic in each and every person. He also means that these things exist in their suchness — they are as they are” (annotation).

What is that? “None of this is external to you yourself; it is all your original Person” (annotation).

325. SENT TO LAYMAN KIKAN

Nothing is known of this layman. An annotation says simply, “hinin,” that is, a member of the lowest rank of Japan’s Edo-period caste system.

Sad sack of haggard bones dreaming of his native
Naniwa,
The pass had done him in, made him look even
scrawnier.
The dawn frost had ripened the leaves to reds and
yellows,

The mist and dew must have sparkled like strings of pearls.

.....

Lines 1–2: “Naniwa” is a poetical name for Osaka. “It seems [Layman Kikan] was from Osaka. He was constantly thinking of his old home” (annotation). The word translated as “sad sack of haggard bones,” *ginkotsu*, is often used to describe a poet or person of poetic sensibility who wastes away in his preoccupation with his art.

“He had just crossed over the Hakone Barrier that morning. He was emaciated and seemed all bushed out” (annotation). The Hakone pass to the east of Mount Fuji, which travelers must cross when going between the Odawara and Mishima post stations, was considered one of the most difficult stretches of the Tōkaidō road.

Lines 3–4: “Despite the difficulties you encountered on your trip, the autumn colors are now at their most vivid; you must have enjoyed the beautiful autumn scenery along the way” (annotation). “If you’ve heard the sound of one hand, you see shining mists and droplets of sparkling white dew everywhere you look. Otherwise they are a deadly barrage of pitch-black pellets straight from hell” (annotation).

326. ON THE NAME JUZAN

The annotations tell us that Hakuin wrote this verse in giving the Dharma name Juzan (“Longevity Mountain”) to Ijin Jōza, Senior Monk Ijin, a person about whom nothing seems to be known. They also point out that the first and third lines of Hakuin’s verse allude to the word Ju, “longevity,” in the Dharma name Juzan, and the second and fourth lines to the word zan, “mountain.”

Even before form emerged from Chaos your hair was white,

You were the jagged peaks and the swirling mists and
cloud.
The great void is a child that first saw light inside your
home,
Buddha himself would be unable to lay eyes on your
summit.

.....

Even before form emerged . . . was white. “An ageless, deathless sage existing prior to the emergence of the world from Chaos” (annotation). Yoshizawa cites a verse entitled “Poem on an Illustration of Longevity Mountain [*Juzan*]” by the Ming literatus Liu Chi (1311–75): “I have heard that in the land where the Yellow Emperor was born, at the center of the great ocean, short-lived people reach the age of eight hundred years, and long-lived people exist as long as heaven and earth itself.”

You were the jagged peaks . . . and cloud. “The mists of the Hakone Pass, the clouds of Fuji’s peaks, are all Juzan, Longevity Mountain” (annotation).

327. ON THE NAME ZUIKŌ

Zuikō means “Auspicious Light.” Nothing is known about the recipient of this verse, identified in an annotation as Senior Monk Jihon (Jihon Jōza). Hakuin alludes to Zui, “auspicious,” the first character of the name, in the first line, and to kō, “light,” in the second line.

An Udumbara, flowering ever since the Year of the
Donkey,
Its light illuminating all the thousand worlds to the east.
Long ago it made Hsi-yuan saddle P’ing with two wrongs,

A single arrow's been sailing the western skies ever since.

.....

An Udumbara . . . of the Donkey. The auspicious Udumbara plant, said to bloom only once every three thousand years, is often used to describe the rare appearance of a Buddha in the world. There is no Year of the Donkey, hence, in this case, always flowering.

Its light illuminating . . . to the east. Based on a line in the Preface of the *Lotus Sutra*: "At that time the Buddha emitted a ray of light from the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows . . . lighting up eighteen thousand worlds in the eastern direction" (Watson, p. 6).

Long ago it made Hsi-yuan . . . two wrongs. "During his Zen pilgrimage, when T'ien-p'ing Ts'ung-i was studying under master Hsi-yuan, he would say, 'I must never claim I have understood the Buddhist teaching. I have been looking for a person who could use koans to help bring students to awakening, but I have been unable to find a single one.' One day Hsi-yuan saw T'ien-p'ing from a distance and called out to him, 'Ts'ung-i.' T'ien-p'ing looked up. Hsi-yuan said, 'Wrong!' T'ien-p'ing walked two or three paces. Hsi-yuan again said, 'Wrong!' T'ien-p'ing came closer. Hsi-yuan said, 'These two wrongs I just uttered. Were they my wrongs or yours?' 'Mine,' said T'ien-p'ing. 'Wrong!' said Hsi-yuan. T'ien-p'ing broke off the dialogue. Hsi-yuan said, 'Stay for the summer retreat so we can work out these two wrongs,' but T'ien-p'ing left the temple. Later, when he was residing as head priest of his own temple, he said to his assembly of monks, 'When I was traveling the country on pilgrimage, I was blown by the winds of karma to Hsi-yuan's temple. Two times he said I was wrong. Then he tried to get me to stay over for the summer retreat, telling me that we could use the retreat to work out those two wrongs. I did not on those occasions tell Hsi-yuan he was wrong. But my leaving the temple and setting out to the south said, in effect, that he was'" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 98).

A single arrow's been . . . ever since. "Western skies" indicates India. "No one knows even now where these two wrongs finally came to rest" (annotation).

328. ON THE NAME EGOKU

Though nothing whatever is known of Layman Egoku (“Domain of Inlets”), the references to provincial domains and borders in the verse and the annotations suggest he may have held government office.

Here again Hakuin alludes to the words in the Dharma name of his verse: e, “river” or “inlet,” in the first line; koku, “country” or “domain,” in the second. “All the world in the ten directions is a single river country” (annotation).

“Inlet” is the cold mist veiling endless miles of rogue waves.

“Domain” is a spot that creates codes and borders of its own.

Fish the black pearl from these waters and smash it into dust,

A divine light will shine forth, scaring every misfortune away.

.....

“Inlet” is the cold mist . . . of rogue waves. “A perfect sameness as far as the eye can see” (annotation). “Difference within Sameness. You can’t tell what is where and where is what. Absolutely terrifying” (annotation).

“Domain” is a spot . . . of its own. “The realm of Difference. Countries and provinces have thousands of laws. Even aside from them, you’ve got more than five thousand words inside your belly” (annotation). A scholar was said to have thousands of books in his belly.

Fish the black pearl . . . into dust. “The black pearl [is the Buddha-nature] inherent in each person. The words about smashing it into dust are difficult to penetrate, difficult to understand” (annotation).

A divine light . . . away. “Keeping the domain free of misfortune and disgrace” (annotation).

329. ON THE NAME HONKŌ JIKAN

Although this appears to be another in the series of verses written on granting Dharma names to students, one annotation refers to it as a eulogy. Nothing is known about Honkō Jikan (“Fundamental Light, Shining Within”) or his relation to Hakuin.

Nine gut-rending backflips at the tip of a hundred-foot pole,
Empty space melts away, iron mountains crumble into dust.
At that instant there’s no Nirvana or satori, no birth or death,
A Persian from Japan gnaws on a lump of feculent firewood.

.....

Nine gut-rending backflips (chō-kyūkai) are words expressive of the extreme courage and boldness required to break through into satori (making “empty space melt away, iron mountains crumble into dust”). “It’s like when a rat works its way into an ox-horn and gets trapped inside and is unable to free itself. You are at the tip of a hundred-foot pole, unable to go forward or retreat. At that point if you don’t make the most extraordinary effort, you’ll never grasp the truth” (annotation).

A Persian from Japan . . . feculent firewood. The term “Persian from Japan,” *tōkai no bashi*, is iterally “Persian from the land in the eastern seas.” “He can chew on rotten wood or eat sweet jelly (*tokoro-ten*), it’s of no concern at all to anyone else” (annotation). Yoshizawa comments: “The line expresses the absolute

contradiction of the enlightened state transcending time and space in which neither Nirvana nor birth and death exist.”

330. LAMENTING PRIEST YŌSHUN

Yōshun Shudaku (1666–1735) was the head priest of Seiken-ji, a large and important Zen temple at the Okitsu post station on the coast about thirty miles west of Hara. Yōshun died on the first day of the fifth month of 1735, so this verse probably dates from Hakuin’s fifty-first year. Twenty years senior to Hakuin, Yōshun was instrumental in installing Hakuin as head priest at Shōin-ji; he recognized Hakuin’s ability and made frequent trips from Seiken-ji to receive his instruction.

Ugly face, light glaring fiercely from both his eyes,
Leaving kith and kin behind, still he spitting cold frost.
Why is it when night comes, the tears drop like rain?
A vital ridgepole has fallen in the Dharma homeland.

.....

A vital ridgepole . . . in the Dharma homeland. The text has “lands to the south,” that is, India and China.

331. THANKING LAYMAN ISHII FOR THE PRESENT OF A HIGH SEAT

Hakuin’s friend Ishii Gentoku donated a “high seat” (kōza; the seat the head priest takes to preach the Dharma) to Shōin-ji. Hakuin refers to it as the “high, broad seat” (kōkō-za), also as the “Lion

Throne of the Dharma King.” An annotation quoting Hakuin’s own words has, “This is the high seat I now use.”

Old Layman P’ang dwelled in a small room ten feet by ten,
The high seat we’ve been given measures three feet square.
Vimalakirti’s seat soared eighty-four thousand *yojanas* high.
Can any here tell me how far our high seat comes up short?

.....

Old Layman P’ang is P’ang-yun, a well-known Zen layman of the T’ang period. The ten-foot-square room is commonly associated with Vimalakirti, another famous layman.

Vimalakirti’s seat . . . high. “At that time Vimalakirti said to Manjusri, ‘You have visited countless thousands, tens of thousands, billions of *asamkhyas* of countries. What Buddha-lands have the best lion thrones endowed with the finest qualities?’ Manjusri replied, ‘Layman, to the east, beyond countries numerous as the sands of thirty-six Ganges, lies a universe called Merudhvaja (“Sumeru Shape”). Its Buddha is called Sumeru Lamp King, and he is there now. This Buddha’s body is eighty-four thousand *yojanas* in height and the lion throne he sits on is eighty-four thousand *yojanas* high and adorned in the finest fashion” (*The Vimalakirti Sutra*, Watson, pp. 76–7).

Can any here tell me . . . comes up short? “Can anyone here tell me the difference between the Buddha’s lion throne eighty-four thousand *yojanas* and this high seat’s three square feet?” (annotation).

332. UNTITLED [HAKUIN’S BAGGAGE]

This verse was written in Hakuin's fifty-seventh year as he was preparing to leave for Keirin-ji in Kai province to conduct a lecture meeting on the Blue Cliff Record (see #337). It is quoted in the Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 206).

ON THE AFTERNOON of the seventeenth day of the first month of the first year of Kampō [1741], I heard sounds of a commotion from the *kuri* [the monks' lodging quarters]. Upon inquiring, I was told that it was the porters bundling and tying up my baggage. It was being sent ahead to Kai province where I had been invited to deliver lectures. This perturbed me. "I don't want them carrying all this heavy baggage up to Kai province," I said. "Get rid of some things to lighten their load. Then I won't be embarrassed as Hua-yen was, but I'll still need to fear Yun-feng's words." All the bundles were unpacked and a search was made for articles that could be left behind, but I don't think they came up with a single thing.

Priestly paraphernalia all packed for my Dharma sideshow,
I'm ashamed to make the porters carry it all the way to Kai.
If you happen to run into old master Ssu-ma along the way,
Make sure you tell him that it's not master Hakuin's baggage!

.....

Then I won't be embarrassed . . . Yun-feng's words. Hakuin alludes to two anecdotes about priests and their travel baggage. The first, from *Ta-hui's Arsenal*, tells how the official Ssu-ma Kuang discerned the true character of Zen priest Hua-yen from the amount of baggage he carried with him:

Hua-yen was a disciple of Zen master Yuan-chao. On experiencing a realization when he spilled a drink he was carrying, Hua-yen wrote a verse:

This one mistake, this single mistake,

Is worth more than thousands in gold.

Sedge hat covering my head, travel pouch at my waist,

At the tip of my staff is the pure breeze and full moon.

Layman Fa-cheng [1019–83; prominent official, scholar, and poet] constantly studied this verse. One day, seeing a Zen master on the high seat glance quietly right and left, he had a sudden satori. He composed a verse and sent it to master Yuan-chao:

A glance at the master's gaze, I had a deep enlightenment,

His teacher's mind conveying causes and conditions to me.

Your rivers and hills, although thousands of leagues distant,

Are the wondrous sights and sounds beneath my very eyes.

After Fa-cheng retired from his post as minister and went to live in the capital, he remembered the verse Hua-yen had written and invited him to come and stay at his residence. When word reached him that Hua-yen had crossed into his province, he set out to meet him. As he was getting into his carriage, the official Ssu-ma Kuang [1018–86] happened by and asked where he was going. Fa-cheng replied that he had invited Zen master Hua-yen to stay at his home and he was going to meet him. "Do you mind if I go along?" asked Ssu-ma. They rode side by side to the post station to await the master's arrival. Presently, they saw ten loads of baggage passing by. When Ssu-ma asked who the owner of the baggage was, the porters replied that it belonged to Hua-yen. Ssu-ma got on his horse and began to leave. "Why leave now? I thought you wanted to see Hua-yen," said Fa-cheng. "I've already seen as much as I need," replied Ssu-ma.

The second story, told by master Yun-feng Wen-yueh, also concerns Zen monks and their baggage:

The priest Huang-lung Hui-nan said, “Once when I was traveling to Hunan together with Wen-yueh, we saw a Zen monk on pilgrimage who was carrying a large basket. Wen-yueh made a face, expressing his surprise. I scolded him, ‘Instead of ridding yourself of the baggage in your own mind, you add baggage by including what others are carrying as well. Don’t you find that awfully fatiguing?’” (*Precious Lessons of the Zen School*).

Make sure you tell him . . . Hakuin’s baggage! “‘Layman’s saké, three pints’ is an expression a priest might use to excuse himself when buying saké from a wine-seller, meaning ‘It’s not for me. I’m buying it for a layman friend.’ The attempt at evasion only exposes the fraud: His excuse reveals his guilt” (annotation).

333. RESPONDING TO A VERSE BY THE PRIEST OF KEIRIN-JI ON THE DOUBLE FIFTH, MATCHING HIS RHYMES

Hakuin visited Keirin-ji in Kai province to deliver Zen lectures on a number of occasions. As this piece can be dated to 1741, the priest referred to is probably Rempō Chishō (d. 1770). Rempō’s predecessor Ranshitsu Tōiku, who lived until 1743, had turned Keirin-ji over to Rempō in 1735 and moved into a retirement temple, probably Jitoku-ji, a branch temple of Keirin-ji (#68) also located in eastern Kai province. The Double Fifth or Tuan-wu Festival, so named because it falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, was one of the most important annual festivals in traditional China. In Japan it became known as Boys’ Festival.

None of the lineages handed down to us is much good
now,
Where can we turn for help within this growing
desolation?
One monk of old spurred himself on using the tip of an
awl,
Another yanked a monk's ears when he came seeking
advice.
Now air flowers and phantom blossoms enjoy great
esteem,
Garish reds and blaring purples receive the loudest
applause.
Bore into the thousand-year peach kernel's precise
meaning,
Its bitter leaves and noxious blossoms will wither up and
die.
Your verse contains a vital function that can sever hard
steel,
In return for your precious gem, I have only this quince
bud,
A clumsy effort that doesn't scan, whose rhymes don't
match.
How can I give it to the young attendant to take back to
you?

.....

None of the lineages . . . is much good now. It is said that since the Kamakura period twenty-four lineages of Chinese Zen have been introduced to Japan, by émigré Chinese priests and by Japanese priests who studied in China.

One monk of old spurred . . . the tip of an awl. On his Zen pilgrimage Shih-shuang Ch'u-yuan (Tz'u-ming, 986–1039) stopped at master Fen-yang Shan-chao's temple. He stayed on and studied with Fen-yang, carrying on his zazen practice during the severe winters of northern China, sticking himself in the thigh with an awl to keep from dozing off.

Another yanked a monk's ears . . . seeking advice. “Master Fo-yen Ch'ing-yuan was a Dharma heir of Wu-tsu Fa-yen. As a monk in Wu-tsu's assembly he was supremely confident of his understanding, but whenever he asked Wu-tsu anything, the master would say, ‘I don't know. I'm not as clever as you’ or, ‘If you can understand it, isn't that enough?’ But Fo-yen failed to achieve any breakthrough even after being at the temple a long time. He said to Wu-tsu, ‘The gateway leading to your house is so steep and lofty few men can enter it. I would like to receive instruction from someone who has been your personal attendant.’ ‘Senior Priest Yuan-li's understanding is no different than mine,’ Wu-tsu replied. When Fo-yen went to seek Yuan-li's advice it was very cold and he found Yuan-li sitting close to the fire. As Fo-yen explained to him what he wanted, Li suddenly reached out and grabbed Fo-yen's ears, yanking them, and saying as he did ‘I don't know, I'm not your equal. If you can understand, isn't that good enough?’ ‘I've come here seeking your help so I can attain awakening,’ said Fo-yen. ‘You treat it as some kind of joke. How can you help anyone that way?’ Li replied, ‘If you do reach awakening, you'll understand all the trouble you're experiencing now.’ Ashamed, Fo-yen returned to the visitors' quarters. At night, sitting deeply immersed in zazen, he felt cold and got up to stoke the fire. As he did, he entered great enlightenment, suddenly understanding the behavior of his two teachers. He said, ‘In the bitter cold I poked the fire and grasped the small matter. Everything is just the way it's always been’” (*Praise of the Five Schools*, section on Fo-yen).

Bore into the thousand-year peach kernel's . . . will wither up and die. Hsi Wang-mu, “Queen Mother of the West,” served special peaches to her guests that granted them immortality.

Bitter leaves and noxious blossoms. “The dull-witted and worthless [Zen teachers] will just wither away [in the face of his enlightened teaching]” (annotation). “Everyone has just withered away” (annotation).

“If on attaining satori a monk smiles his understanding of the Keirin-ji priest's meaning, he revives the old traditions of the Zen school like a flower that blossoms from a thousand-year-old peach

kernel [and like the Keirin-ji priest who embodies the old traditions], and will become the great teacher of his age” (annotation).

In return for your precious gem . . . this quince bud alludes to an ancient Chinese custom that appears in a verse in the *Book of Odes*: To show her affection, a young girl would give a quince or quince flower to a boy, and he would give her a precious gem in return.

334. ON PERFORMING THE TONSURE FOR JUSHIN

The meaning of the name Jushin, which Hakuin had evidently conferred on this unidentified monk when he gave him the tonsure, is not entirely clear to me. An annotation on the first line of the verse states that “rivers, hills, and the great earth are all Buddha” suggests the name means something like “tidings of timeless, or eternal, life.”

Rivers, hills, and the great earth are tidings of timeless life,

Some refer to this as the precept jewel of the mind-ground.

It is handed down unchanged from one teacher to another,

But ponder it even slightly, you are back in the three paths.

.....

Rivers, hills . . . timeless life. “Rivers, hills, and the great earth are all Buddha. Millet and rice, *soba* and wheat, and everything else too” (annotation).

Precept jewel of the mind-ground (shin-chi kaiju) may be better understood as the “formless precepts,” the precepts of the imperishable, unchanging Buddha-mind that is prior to any fixed

forms such as are set forth in the precepts. Yoshizawa cites a passage in the *Sutra Contemplating the Mind that Gives Rise to the Mahayana*, ch. 8: “Young men of good families, mind is master in the three worlds. Those who contemplate their minds to good effect will eventually achieve emancipation; those who cannot do this will end up falling into unfortunate rebirths. The mind of sentient beings, like the great earth that produces the five grains and five fruits, gives rise both to the world and renunciation of the world, good and evil, the five rebirths, learned and unlearned, Pratyeka-buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Hence it is said, ‘In the three worlds there is only mind.’”

But ponder it . . . back in the three paths. The “three paths” are the *sanzu*, or three lowest states of existence: hell, beasts, and hungry ghosts. “Those unable to see their own minds end up falling into the evil paths” (annotation).

335. SENDING TAIZEN FROM NAGOYA OFF ON HIS RETURN TO HIS HOME TEMPLE

Why worry about farewells if you’ve grasped the essence?

In our Zen tradition, silence is golden and speaking is not.
On the day light and dark begin to mutually interpenetrate,
You won’t have to seek help from that ridiculous old saint.

.....

On the day . . . interpenetrate. “Light and dark interpenetrating” (*meian sōsō*) indicates the interfusing of the realm of differentiation (the phenomenal world) and the absolute realm of sameness experienced in the nondualism of enlightenment.

You won't have to . . . ridiculous old saint is evidently a reference to the “foolish old saint” (*chi-seijin*; a full enlightenment person) Te-yun, who appears in a well-known verse by Hsueh-tou that Hakuin was fond of quoting (see #145, p. 207):

Te-yun, you useless old gimlet, how often
Will you leave the summit of Wonder Peak,
Enlist other foolish saints and work together
With them to fill in the well with snow?

336. LAMENTING SENIOR MONK GU

According to an annotation, “Senior Monk Gu (Tōgu) was from Hachiman village in Suruga province. Before arriving at Shōin-ji he had studied in Kyushu with Kogetsu Zenzai and Kogetsu’s heir Zuigan. . . . Regrettably, he passed away at [nearby] Rinsen-an.” His name appears in the Letter to Senior Attendant Kō (#191), but we know nothing about him. Apparently he was one of a large number of monks who died while engaged in training at Shōin-ji. Their gravestones can still be seen lining the temple cemetery.

Even Han-shan, with all his speed, went not so swift as
you.
Meeting as teacher and student, neither of us yielded an
inch.
The reeds flail, the dead leaves swirl up in the autumn
breeze,
All no more than snowflakes fluttering into a glowing
furnace.

.....

Even Han-shan . . . so swift as you. “Why did you die so young?” (annotation). A reference to Han-shan leaving with great speed appears in passing in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 34: “Hsueh-tou

said, ‘By the way, you happen to know that fellow Han-shan? He was really fast on his feet. After being away for ten years he said he forgot the way back.’” Here the point is simply that Senior Monk Gu died much too soon.

All no more than . . . furnace. “This expresses Gu’s death in a clear, straightforward manner” (annotation).

337. FOR THE HEAD PRIEST AT KEIRIN-JI, USING HIS RHYMES

This long verse letter was written for Rempō Chishō (d. 1770; see #189, #190, #333), the head priest of Keirin-ji, a large Zen temple in the highlands of Kai province north of Mount Fuji, an area Hakuin visited on a number of occasions to conduct practice assemblies. Hakuin is responding to a verse letter from Rempō, presumably the one he mentions in the opening lines. Like Ranshitsu Tōiku (1682–1743; see #56, #68), his teacher and predecessor at Keirin-ji who was still alive at this time, Rempō was a friend and student of Hakuin, one of a number of priests in Suruga, Kai, Tōtōmi, and Izu provinces who visited him at Shōin-ji to continue post-satori practice while training students in their own temples. According to Tōrei, Rempō “applied himself with the greatest determination to koan work under Hakuin, studying with him for many years even after taking over Keirin-ji from Ranshitsu” (Draft Biography). Keirin-ji figures in over a dozen pieces in the Poison Blossoms collection, more than any other temple except Shōin-ji itself. Many of the pieces, like the present verse, are related to the large practice meeting on the Blue Cliff Record, attended by over two hundred people, that Hakuin conducted at Keirin-ji in the winter of 1741.

Although fascinating glimpses of Hakuin’s travels are found in his prose (e.g. Beating the Cloth Drum, #22), none of them is as detailed as this verse letter, or provides the same insights into the day-to-day teaching activity he engaged in on these trips.

Hakuin's narrative describes a night crossing of Kagosaka Pass (elevation 3500 feet) east of Mount Fuji, an important, but in winter sometimes perilous, conduit that linked Kai with Suruga and Shinano provinces and other areas of eastern Japan. Rempō would also have used this route on his frequent trips to visit Shōin-ji.¹³⁴ Hakuin's letter expresses relief at hearing of Rempō's safe return, suggesting that after the meeting he had escorted Hakuin back to Shōin-ji.

An annotation mentions a mishap that occurred on this trip, which perhaps explains why Hakuin's party was late in reaching the pass. It seems his palanquin broke down early in the day, and attendants Daikyū and Tetsu were obliged to dismantle a cart they found in a nearby temple to get the necessary parts to fix it.

I breathed a sigh of relief the minute I learned you were safe,

I then reproved my monks for not opening your letter sooner.

Recalling how inattentive I'd been, a shameful sweat rose up;

Recollecting your kindness, the tears rolled down my cheeks.

How many times have we braved the snow of Kagosaka Pass,

How often raised our teaching banners high over Ujō Castle?¹³⁵

But nothing compares to that anxious night in mud and snow

When you hiked over twenty miles to guide us down to safety.

My litter-bearers were soldering on through thigh-deep drifts;

As darkness fell, we were still only halfway to our destination.

Men were shouting support and encouragement to each other,

My haggard, unfed attendants were almost dead on their feet.

Inching along dark trails, jagged ice bit at their straw sandals,
The frozen trees thrust razor-sharp branches to block the way.
Then someone spotted a light, a faint star off to the northwest,
It came closer, rising and falling, hesitating and then stopping.
Was it a specter of some kind? Was it a dreaded *tengu* demon?
Standing riveted to the spot we watched with wonder and fear.
How could we know it was Rempō, the head priest of Keirin-ji
Climbing his way up the mountain paths to greet us in person!
Straw-sandaled, he held a bamboo staff and flaming firebrand,
Behind him a man packed extra fuel to feed the burning torch.
We waved thankful greetings back and forth across the valley;
The two parties joined, new friends and old, with tearful eyes.
Before all had been spoken we were heading back north again,
Rempō in the vanguard, lighting the way with a blazing torch.
It was midnight when we finally reached the Yoshida post stop
Where lodgings had been readied for us at Mr. Shioya's house.
In my great relief, I was asleep in no time snorting like a horse.
Rempō alone, with much on his mind, passed a sleepless night.

Next morning, we proceeded in a group to Gekkō-ji in
Yoshida,¹³⁶
Stopped to climb the steps and enter Ichijō-ji's sacred
precincts.¹³⁷
At the gate the priest, beaming with joy, was waiting to
meet us,
To tell us a *soba* lunch was ready; the prospect raised our
brows.
He treated us from the first as though we were old
companions,
Engaging us in pure talk, we perceived his deep love of
the Way.
When we left, Rempō refused to allow me to quit my
palanquin;
He walked slowly along beside, never once abandoning
his post,
Like a faithful samurai protecting his lord from possible
danger,
Or a deeply devoted son benevolently nursing his elderly
father.
Priests emerged from temples along the way, trailing
behind us,
Not because of my virtue but because Rempō had sent
out word.
After a long march we reached our hermitage in Yamura
village,
Where young and old were frantically preparing the noon
meal.
They scurried about, yelling and gesturing wildly to one
another,
While we passed over a long bridge spanning a dizzying
chasm,
To find elders from a hundred hamlets had gathered to
greet us;
Villagers with cheerful, smiling faces had clustered all
around.

At the summit, a great bell boomed out to announce our arrival,
Before the temple gate black-robed priests stood in solemn rows.
Entering the austere precincts, we emerged in a different world,
From spots like this, watched over by gods, great priests emerge.
Auspicious clouds crowned the shrine trees high on the summit,
Propitious mists veiled Kinsei and the surrounding countryside.¹³⁸
To the southwest the ageless snow-capped summit of Mount Fuji,
To the northeast behind Keirin-ji a hundred-foot lion towered up.¹³⁹
Inside the elder priests and acolytes both received me as a father,
Training monks queued up like a hedgerow welcomed us warmly.
A perfect reception with everything readied, nothing overlooked,
As visiting clerics, we'd been furnished with all four necessities.¹⁴⁰
I blew into my conch shell, pounded away on my Dharma drum,
Imparting the teachings, showering down the sweet Dharma rain.¹⁴¹
Whose courage, whose vision brought this sacred occasion about?
One who took little sleep, rose early, and never showed fatigue.
Had a man of such spirit served under a king or provincial lord,
He might have risen to the heights, a head minister or chancellor.

Had he shown similar solicitude in caring for his elderly
parents,
He would undoubtedly have gained tremendous stores of
merit.
But he blundered and wasted it all on a blind jackass of a
bonze,
Who was deeply honored to receive such a prodigious
reception.
I greatly regret that the only means I have for repaying
the favor
Is a sharp set of teeth, spikier and more jagged than Nine
Peaks.¹⁴²
They make idle spirits bolt in panic, demons whimper and
flee,
Cripple with grief the gods of poverty hidden in their
darkness.
People today give Zen less heed than the dirt beneath
their feet,
Its life of transcendent wisdom now hangs by a very thin
thread.
When the fruits of Shao-lin are decaying beneath our very
eyes,¹⁴³
How praiseworthy one man works so tirelessly to master
them!

338. SENDING OFF SENIOR MONK JUN

Senior Monk Jun (Jun Jōza) is Enkei Sojun (1715–67), a Dharma heir of Hakuin from Tenrin-ji in Matsue, Izumo province. A mild-mannered priest, Enkei is said to have treated his students with compassion, and during his teaching career in Matsue, he earned the respect of public officials and general populace alike. See Precious Mirror Cave, p. xxvi.

Hsueh-feng climbed up T'ou-tzu's mountain three times,
Didn't he also go on nine occasions and visit Tung-shan?
Shao-lin attended master Prajnatarā for over twenty
years,
So don't forsake additional luster, take on a bit more pain.

.....

Hsueh-feng is Hsueh-feng I-ts'un (822–908). Though late in attaining enlightenment, he is generally praised for his steady devotion to his practice and for traveling to study with many different teachers. His three visits to study with T'ou-tzu Ta-tung on Mount T'ou-tzu and nine visits to Tung-shan Liang-chieh appear in *Essentials of Successive Records of the Lamp* (*Tsung-men Lien-teng hui-yao*), ch. 21.

Shao-lin attended . . . years. The account of Shao-lin's (Bodhidharma) life in *Records of the Lamp* (ch. 1) has him serving as his teacher Prajnatarā's attendant for twenty years.

So don't forsake . . . pain. Now that you are leaving to return to your home temple, you should not relax your efforts but rededicate yourself to your post-satori practice.

339. SENDING OFF ZEN MAN DAN

Dan Zennin (n.d.) was a student of Settō Oshō of Jishō-ji in the city of Nakatsu, on the island of Kyushu.

As Zen man Dan was getting ready to set out for home,
He put some paper in front of me and requested a verse.
Here's what I jotted down to see him off on his journey:
Don't forget to uphold and maintain it on your way back.

.....

Don't forget to . . . on your way back. "Hahaha! What's he supposed to uphold and maintain?" (annotation). "Is this a farewell verse? What's going on here? To know that, you'll first have to hear the sound of one hand" (annotation).

340. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE SENT BY THE PRIEST OF RYŌTAN- JI, WITH PREFACE

The Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province appears in the Chronological Biography for 1742, the year Hakuin mentioned in this piece: "During the summer the master acceded to a request from Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province and went there to lecture on Precious Lessons of the Zen School" (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 207). Annotations inform us that the meeting was held to commemorate the enshrinement of a large sixteen-foot (jūroku) statue of Shakamuni Buddha as the honzon or main image in the Buddha Hall, which at Ryōtan-ji was used as its zendō or training hall.

The Ryōtan-ji priest could be one of three men: Sozan Hōnin, Dokusō Hōun who succeeded him, or Dokusō's successor Kanjū Etsū (d. 1777), but the dates of their tenures at the temple are unknown so it cannot be determined which of them is referred to here.

IN AUTUMN OF the second year of Kampō [1742], the priest of Ryōtan-ji, spurring on the wheel of his vow to revitalize the Zen school, conducted a lecture meeting that far surpassed the standards for such events. I came with my assembly of monks to take part in the proceedings. I would boldly state that it was reminiscent of the lectures that master Hsu-t'ang delivered at the Chui-feng subtemple at Ling-yin-ssu.

The hundred people who made their way to Ryōtan-ji to attend were all of them veteran heroes of the Zen wars. The meeting was

conducted in accordance with the strict and lofty rules of former times, and everyone was delighted with the way it came off. The head priest got carried away and gallantly composed a verse praising my rustic indolence. I wrote one in reply, using his rhymes:

Radiant faces perfectly matching the majestic surroundings,
A rare harmony, like cithers playing melodiously in concert.
Drawn together by some evil karma many kalpas in the past,
Horsefaces sat in the Hall doing zazen before a large Buddha.

I came with my assembly of monks . . . Chui-feng subtemple at Ling-yin-ssu. Hakuin fails to say that he was the priest who conducted this lecture meeting. The annotations say only, “At this meeting Hsu-t’ang gave students three turning words.” There is probably a reference in Hsu-t’ang’s records yet to be identified that would explain this comparison.

Drawn together by . . . in the past. “This [meeting] is definitely not the chance happening of a single morning or night” (annotation). “What unenlightened people like is what Zen people detest. Since [Zen training] is the cause of cutting off the three poisons, the unenlightened may regard it as a cause of evil” (annotation).

Horsefaces sat . . . a large Buddha. “Horse face,” sometimes paired with “swallow jaws,” are terms that appear in the *Book of the Later Han*, where they are described as physiognomy found in the greatest warriors.

341. UNTITLED [GŌUN OSHŌ]

Hakuin dates this to 1743, his fifty-ninth year. “Gōun of Shinano province came to study with the master. As a former student of the Sōtō priest Daibai, Gōun had already penetrated to an unusually

deep realization. The master decided to assign him several koans. In examining Gōun's understanding of the koans, Hakuin subjected him to the most penetrating scrutiny. Gōun did not display the slightest uncertainty or hesitation" (Chronological Biography, age 59; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 208).

In other writings Hakuin mentions visiting Eikō-in, where Gōun resided, "to receive the gusoku-kai [the two hundred and fifty precepts for Buddhist priests]." This was in 1708 when he was practicing under Shōju Rōjin at Shōju-an. He probably met Gōun at that time.

WHEN I MET Gōun Soei Oshō of Eikō-in long ago in Matsumoto, Shinano province, he impressed me as a fine priest. We had no contact for the next thirty years, until the summer of the third year of Kampō [1743], when he made the long journey over the perilous trails from Matsumoto and turned up here at Shōin-ji. When people who are not absolutely dedicated to pursuing the Way visit Shōin-ji, I am not in the habit of greeting them with bows or other forms of respect. Because of this, these worthless idlers get together and start whispering that "Hakuin makes rarely sanctioning students the hallmark of his Zen style." They have no idea that it is the result of a chronic illness.

In any case, I promptly began to check Gōun Oshō with some koans, thrusting and lunging at him for a few days. In responding to them he showed not the least hesitation whatsoever. Feeling very happy, I wrote a verse to thank him for coming to see me:

Sacred life-taking charms, poison fangs of the Dharma
cave
Drain all color from the cosmos, cleave open heaven's
gates;
Deep personal commitment, half a lifetime of devoted
effort,
Has now produced an enduring nine-tiger barrier in
Shinano.

.....

“Hakuin makes ... his Zen style.” “It is the Zen style of a master who will never allow his Dharma sanction [inka] to be sold cheaply [yasu-urī]” (annotation).

An enduring nine-tiger barrier. In ancient Chinese mythology tigers and leopards were said to protect the nine-fold gates of heaven through which people pass into death from the world of the living, ready to devour people coming “from below.” Here “nine-tiger barrier” refers to the difficulty of passing the barriers that Gōun will set up for students.

342. HUMMING VERSES ABOUT A MOONLIT PINE TREE (FOLLOWING RHYMES BY CH’AN-YUEH TA-SHIH)

Ch’an-yueh Ta-shih, Great Master Ch’an-yueh, is the honorific title of Kuan-hsiu (832–912), a Zen priest and poet of the late T’ang period said to have excelled in poetry, painting, and calligraphy. This Record of Ch’an-yueh (Ch’an-yueh lu), which contains a selection of his verse, was widely read in Japanese Zen circles.

“Tōrei said, ‘This is an ordinary, though fine example of religious verse (geju). But since it was expounded by my late teacher, it is an utterance whose form and content emerge from the depths of samadhi’” (annotation).

The whispering pine trees purify a brilliant autumn moon,
Which traces their bright shadows along the ground
below.

A rising wind is scattering moonlight through the
darkness,
Causing a scampering of wild hares in the checkered
shade.

How many years have the branches received this full moon?

The moonlit pine trees in my garden are unusually beautiful.

Pine tree, if you have a heart, make the moon stay in the sky,

And, moon, please come each night and look in on this tree.

.....

Causing a scampering . . . shade. “The moonlight filtering down and checkering the ground under the pine trees makes it seem as though wild hares are moving about” (annotation).

Pine tree, if you have a heart . . . look in on this tree. “Pine tree, if you have a heart, please stay with this moon forever” (annotation). “Moon, if you have a heart, please don’t forsake this tree” (annotation). Hakuin may have in mind a poem by Saigyō, “Saigyō Appeals to the Pine Tree” (see #281): “I made a grass hut at Entsu-ji and resided in it. On seeing an ancient pine tree that had weathered an eternity of time standing before the hut, I made an appeal: ‘After I die, remember a solitary monk whose steps no one will follow.’”

343. LAMENTING THE DEATH OF LAYMAN KŌGAN GENRYŪ

Kōgan Genryū is the lay Buddhist name of Uematsu Michitoki (1660–1743), the father of Uematsu Koreyoshi. Both father and son lent their support to Hakuin in his many building and publishing projects. Their large residence in Hara was almost adjacent to Shōin-ji.

Souls lost in hell endure seething cauldrons and raging
fires,
While you whisk up cups of tea, the springtime of Chien-
hsi.
Awakening with a start from a sleep of immeasurable
kalpas,
The brazier gods collapse in laughter, clutching their
bellies.

.....

Souls lost in hell . . . raging fires. Layman Kōgan will avoid these
hellish torments.

While you whisk up . . . Chien-hsi. The area of Chien-hsi in China is
known for its fine teas; “springtime,” the season when the best
leaves are harvested, refers to the tea as well. “He is able to do this
because he devoted himself diligently to his religious exercises”
(annotation).

The brazier gods . . . clutching their bellies. “Brazier gods” (*bōro-jin*)
are small, goblin-like figures whose forms are depicted on the legs of
tea braziers. “When you overcome the afflicting passions, you’re like
one of the brazier gods” (annotation).

344. INSCRIBED ON A PAINTING OF MOUNT FUJI

*The painting of Mount Fuji on which this was inscribed, probably
dating from Hakuin’s seventy-second year, was done at the request
of his former student Sozan Sosō (d. 1771), the head priest of Jishō-
ji (“Self-nature Temple”) in the city of Nakatsu on the northern coast
of the island of Kyushu. Sozan asked Hakuin for a painting of
Daruma, and Hakuin painted a large picture of Mount Fuji with a
Daimyō procession passing beneath it, explaining in the verse that*

the painting in fact depicted Daruma. The painting is reproduced and discussed in The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 24–25.

Having successfully captured the old Indian's true face,
I can now send this along to the priest in far-off Jishō-ji.
If you have doubts about a Boys' Festival in December,
Prod the straw sheep forward. Go ask the wooden man.

.....

The old Indian's true face. "If you want to see Bodhidharma, look at Mount Fuji. What about this inscription for the painting of Mount Fuji? Everyone sitting in this room is Daruma's true face. You're no Zen monk if you don't know that much!" (annotation).

If you have doubts about . . . ask the wooden man. The "straw sheep" and "wooden man," as well as a December celebration of Boys' Festival — celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month — are typical Zen *impossibilia*. "These lines are give the lowdown on the sound of one hand" (annotation).

345. INSCRIPTION FOR A PAINTING OF THE THREE COUNTRIES

In ancient Indian cosmology, Mount Sumeru is at the center of the world, surrounded by four continents. The southern continent, Jambudvipa, is our world, inclusive of the three countries of India, China, and Japan. Inhabitants of Jambudvipa are unable to enjoy the pleasures experienced by inhabitants of the other continents, but because of that it is only in Jambudvipa that Buddhas appear to guide people to salvation.

These three countries lie off Mount Sumeru's southern flank,

On this paper you can pick them all up between your fingers.

If you are moved to perceive the infinite meaning within this,

Using discrimination of any kind will only bring you distress.

.....

On this paper you can . . . your fingers. “How extraordinary, picking up the three lands on this paper with your fingers!” (annotation).

If you are moved to perceive . . . only bring you distress. “This is, in and of itself, the one bright pearl” (annotation), alluding to Hsuan-sha Shih-pei’s famous saying: “The whole universe is one bright pearl [*ikka myōju*].”

346. SENDING OFF BUTTŌ OSHŌ ON HIS RETURN TO EIGAN-JI

The priest Buttō Shūso (d. 1726), who had apparently resided at Hosen-ji in Suruga province, was, probably for reasons related to his teacher’s retirement (see below), at this time moving back to his former temple Eigan-ji, which had recently been relocated to Utsunomiya, Kōzuke province. Originally located in Takada, Echigo province, Eigan-ji is the temple where in 1708 Hakuin achieved his first dramatic breakthrough into enlightenment, an event he refers to throughout his works. After proclaiming in his autobiography Wild Ivy (pp. 22–26) the “unprecedented profundity” of his satori, Hakuin describes his indignation when neither head priest Santetsu Soran (d. 1727) nor senior priest Buttō would agree to confirm the breakthrough.

Santetsu established Hōsen-ji in eastern Suruga province as a future retirement temple in 1709. Until he stepped down as head

priest of Eigan-ji, his Dharma successor Buttō evidently resided at Hōsen-ji for a number of years, perhaps the nine years “curled up unseen” referred to in the verse below. When Santetsu finally moved into Hōsen-ji, Buttō returned to become the incumbent at Eigan-ji. It would appear that Hakuin wrote this piece at the time Buttō was setting out to return to Eigan-ji. See the letter “To the Priest of Eigan-ji” (#188), dated 1727.

A priest of virtue hits the trail tomorrow,
Instantly I feel an emptiness in my heart.
A spirit steep as a thousand-foot cascade,
Fortified with the might of the mind-seal.
A dragon curled up unseen for nine years
Is now soaring off, a phoenix in the night.

I hope you arrive safely from your long trip,
Your palanquin attended by auspicious mists.

.....

Fortified with . . . mind-seal indicates that Buttō returns to assume the abbotship of Eigan-ji already in possession of his teacher Santetsu’s Dharma transmission (“mind-seal”).

A dragon curled up . . . phoenix in the night. “In the nine years he has been coming to my temple, Buttō lived in a hermitage in Nagasawa village. Tomorrow he’s off for Eigan-ji” (annotation). This comment, from Hakuin himself, suggests that Buttō, who was unable to sanction Hakuin’s satori years before, had been studying with Hakuin during the years he resided at Hōsen-ji in Suruga. It indicates as well that this is a very early piece, probably from around the time Hakuin was installed as head priest at Shōin-ji in 1717.

Your palanquin . . . auspicious mists. “Why? Because Buttō was a priest of great virtue and his palanquin would naturally be sent off by auspicious morning mists” (annotation). “Because the weather was fine” (annotation).

347. *BONSEKI*

This is one of a number of verses Hakuin wrote on the theme of bonseki, bonsan, and spirit rocks of one kind or other. This piece describes a bonseki, or miniature rock landscape, for which Hakuin seems to have had a particular fondness. It is probably the same one he writes about in #210 and #211. The subject of Hakuin and bonseki is dealt with in The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, Chapter Three, "Rocks, Pumpkinhead, Toys, and Birds."

I was born with a powerful love for the rocks and streams,
In this little stone I see an endless range of emerald
peaks.
You don't need Hsieh's special clogs to roam the
summits,
Don't have to purchase it with bags of gold like Chih Tun.
Sumeru is very high, but Lord Indra dwells on its summit,
Lanka steep and rugged, but Buddha climbed it to
preach.
The rock on this tray may be tiny, but no one can climb it,
No celebrated peak on earth can outshine this little stone.

.....

Hsieh. The Chinese nature poet Hsieh Ling-yuan (384–433), known for his feats of mountain climbing, devised a special studded sole which he attached to his footwear to facilitate his ascents.

Chih Tun. The Buddhist priest Chih Tun (314–66) is said to have purchased an entire mountain in his final years to use as a place of retreat.

Lanka is Mount Lanka, where the Buddha is said to have preached the *Lankavatara Sutra*.

348. THOUGHTS ON AN OLD FRIEND

It would be interesting to know the identity of the old friend who inspired this long verse, but here the annotations are silent.

Buddha's teaching in the Lotus of the Wondrous Law
Far surpasses any of his other five thousand teachings.
This is a place about which you can say nothing at all,
Where no signs appear, where no differences emerge.
Give up your cogitating, you're in perfect conformity;
Open your lips, you'll find discord far as you can see.
Not one of the great saints could teach or describe it,
None of the hundred spirits can get their teeth into it.
It is difficult, very difficult, and also easy, so very easy;
It's secret, supremely secret, yet utterly open and clear.
It easily furnishes you seeds for any mistakes or errors,
Easily leads you to the good fortune of a Buddhist robe.
There is basically no difference between self and things,
So why cling fast to fancies that you are close to it or far?
All things in your daily world are a great perfect mirror,
Not even a mote of dust can exist for you to sweep clear.
All things display the forms and shapes of ultimate truth,
How could the sounds or sights you see be any different?
If only you can break free of that habitual discrimination,
You will arrive right away at the place beyond reasoning.
To entice you to follow the path to such a place, Buddha
Devised a parable about the three carts and a burning
house.
Once your mind is cleared of silly partialities for the self,
It suddenly pervades empty space in all the ten
directions.
All the Buddhas who are as countless as the Ganges
sand
Attain final and perfect Nirvana upon reaching this point.
Regarding both birth and death and no birth and no
death,

Oneness with them, delivery from them — it is all the same.

.....

Buddha's teaching in the Lotus . . . his other five thousand teachings. "Tōrei said, 'The true self manifests itself freely and completely unbarred. The koan appears completely unbarred and immediately present [*dattai genjō; genjō kōan*]. This is extremely difficult. Extremely difficult'" (annotation). "Even among the five thousand scrolls of Buddha's sutras, the *Lotus* stands foremost. Even the Buddha can't begin to explain it" (annotation).

Where no signs appear . . . emerge. "You people here, thinking of nothing, having absolutely nothing at all in your bellies — that in itself is the wondrous Dharma" (annotation). "Having no likes or dislikes in your mind is in itself the wondrous Dharma" (annotation).

Give up your cogitating . . . conformity. "When your practice matures into ripeness, all mental contriving and all impulses and desires are forgotten" (annotation).

Open your lips . . . discord far as you can see. "To say that the *Lotus* is this, and the Pure Land is that . . ." (annotation).

It is difficult . . . so very easy. "When it is far, it is a million miles away. When it is close, it is easy. If you have a mind of deep faith, it is easy" (annotation).

The parable about the three carts and a burning house. When fire breaks out in a rich man's house, his children are absorbed in playing games inside. Using expedient means to entice them out to safety, the man tells them that the three carts they have long wanted are outside waiting for them, pulled by a goat, a deer, and an ox. Once they reach a place of safety, their father gives each of them a much finer cart, adorned with precious jewels and drawn by a white ox. The burning house is the threefold world, the flames are the sufferings of birth and death, the rich man is the Buddha, the children are sentient beings, and their games are worldly pleasures. The three carts are the three vehicles — Shravaka, Pratyekabuddha, and Bodhisattva — that Shakamuni provisionally taught to

lead people to the one Buddha vehicle or supreme vehicle of Buddhahood, represented by the white ox (“Simile and Parable” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*).

349. UNTITLED [ESHŌ-NI]

Although Hakuin is known to have had nuns and laywomen among his students, this is one of the few pieces in Poison Blossoms addressed specifically to a nun. Eshō-ni (d. 1764), a student of Hakuin and friend of Tōrei, surfaces from time to time in both their records. Her most prominent appearance is the one in which she probes, in the manner of a teacher, or a wise senior disciple, the satori that Yamanashi Harushige (Heishirō) experienced after a brief but intense period of solitary practice (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 215). When Tōrei fled to Kyoto to foil Hakuin’s plans to install him as head priest of Shōin-ji, he stopped in at Eshō’s hermitage before departing to express his gratitude to her (Beating the Cloth Drum, p. 159).

Eshō had taken religious vows after the death of her husband, being ordained by Yōshun Shudaku of Seiken-ji. According to an annotation, at the time Hakuin visited her and wrote this verse she was residing near Shōin-ji in a hermitage named Kanji-an, no doubt in order to receive Hakuin’s instruction. Apparently she and six other nuns who were staying with her traveled to Kai province to attend the lectures Hakuin gave on the Blue Cliff Record at Keirin-ji in 1741. They may have encountered the same difficult weather conditions Hakuin experienced on his trip a few days later, though most likely without the assistance he received (see #337).

SEVEN SAGE NUNS set out ahead of me to make their way to Keirin-ji in Kai province. The day before they left, they invited me to their hermitage. In their devotion to the Dharma they had made great efforts, foraging far and near to obtain some tea and rice cakes to offer. Moved by their kindness and sincerity, I expressed my thanks

to them by chanting one of my rustic verses. Ah, you nuns are in love with your ears. Me, I'm in love with my mouth. *Haahhah!*

Zen practice is like travel, you pick up friends along the way.

Especially ladies who have seen the east wall strike the west.

Before you became ready to completely penetrate that koan,

Everything was like a silver mountain or towering iron cliff.

But when the time arrived and you bored straight through it,

You knew that you yourself were the mountain and the cliff.

There yet remains one single difficult barrier for you to pass:

“At sunrise, the robber burrows through the storehouse wall.”

.....

Zen practice is like travel. “Confucius said, ‘Virtue is not alone. It invariably has neighbors’” (*The Analects of Confucius*, p. 34).

Seen the east wall strike the west. From *the Poems of Han-shan* (*Kanzan-shi, Iritani, p. 167*):

Cold Mountain has a house
Without beams or partitions
Six doors open left and right
A hall bared to emerald skies
All rooms completely vacant
East wall striking against west
With not a single thing inside.

“Hakuin wrote this because Eshō-ni had already grasped those words” (annotation).

A silver mountain or towering iron cliff. “The ancients left behind a phrase or half a phrase for you. Before you penetrate a phrase, it is like a silver mountain or an iron wall. One day you suddenly break through and know for the first time that you yourself are the mountain and the wall” (saying by Po-yun Shou-tuan in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 19; quoted in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 57).

“At sunrise, the robber burrows through the storehouse wall.” “What a dumb robber, waiting until dawn to break in” (annotation). There is another annotation, attributed to Tōrei: “The first arrow was not so important. The second one was.” He implies that the “burrowing” arrow was to help Eshō-ni achieve a second breakthrough even more important than the one she had experienced while working on Han-shan’s words, “East wall striking against west.”

350. UNTITLED [JITOKU RŌJIN]

Old Man Jitoku (Jitoku Rōjin) is identified in an annotation, apparently transmitting Hakuin’s own words, as Bō Shuso, or Senior Monk Bō, who styled himself Jitoku-an. The annotation adds that “there was a monk named Ensui of Eishō-ji in Sawada, near Numazu, at the time. Bō Shuso and Ensui were kindred spirits, a pair of great and utter fools.”

OLD MAN JITOKU, whose real name will remain unspoken here, fashioned a hermitage at the southern foot of Mount Ashitaka. He tills his field, gathers firewood down along the river. He is an accomplished writer, a fine calligrapher, and he also does some painting. If someone brings him paper and asks for something, he takes up his brush and draws a picture for them. The kind of life he leads makes him forget the mornings and nights. He told me that he had engaged in Zen practice with Ryūtan Oshō at Daishō-ji in Numazu. Since he takes life easy and is free from worldly cares, he is called Jitoku Rōjin, the Old Man Who Is Content With His Lot. He is seventy-five years old this year, but he is healthier and more

robust than ever. I wrote a verse to congratulate him on reaching the ripe old age of seventy-five:

It is said the age of seventy is hard to reach,
You've tacked another five years on to that.
All value the benefits old age brings with it,
They applaud the years, deem them virtuous.
They say pine trees live for a thousand years,
A tortoise lives to see ten thousand autumns.
The Dharma-body's age is beyond reckoning,
And you yourself are a man of infinite worth.

.....

Ryūtan Oshō. Ryūtan Genjo (n.d.) served as head priest of Daishō-ji in Numazu, where Hakuin later began his Zen career. Hakuin's uncle Daizui Sōiku, who founded Shōin-ji, was a student of Ryūtan.

351. CLIMBING UP TO UMPŌ-JI

Umpō-ji is a temple in Unzan, Kai province, affiliated to the Myōshin-ji line of Rinzai Zen. According to a temple legend it was built to enshrine a statue of Kannon Bodhisattva carved by Gyōgi (also Gyōki, 668–749), the celebrated Hossō priest who was awarded the title of Bosatsu (Bodhisattva) by the Imperial Court. "Priest Rempō of Keirin-ji wrote a verse on this subject; Hakuin wrote this one using the same rhymes. There was an enormous boulder on the mountain where Umpō-ji was later built. One day the boulder split into two pieces, and it was found that a bush clover plant had grown up within it. From the wood of this bush clover plant Gyōgi Bodhisattva carved a figure of the Bodhisattva Kannon" (annotation).

I'd long heard of Umpō-ji, it even cropped up in my dreams,

Now, from its summit, I see the universe opening out below.

A tiered waterfall of silken floss purges the mind of passion,

A spyglass gives you sight to survey the distant Isles of Ying.

An image of Kannon bears the telltale grain of a storied past,

Hosshō-in's magnificent banner has a string of golden words.

Where now do you see the tiger of Kai's intimidating power?

At this site a millennium ago Gyōgi benefited sentient beings.

.....

A tiered waterfall . . . the mind of passions. Evidently such a waterfall, falling in three tiers, existed somewhere within the temple precincts. White silk floss is a common trope used to describe cascading waterfalls.

A spyglass gives you . . . Isles of Ying. The Englishman John Saris brought the first telescope or spyglass (*bōenkyō*) to Japan as a gift from King James to Tokugawa Iyasu in 1613, only four years after Galileo is said to have produced the first usable model. There was apparently a spyglass at Umpō-ji, which Hakuin used to survey the surrounding countryside. In the 4th- or 5th-century work *Hai-nei shih-chou chi* (*Record of the Ten Continents in the World Ocean*), the Isles of Ying, the dwelling place of the immortal sages, are said to exist in the seas around China.

An image of Kannon . . . of a storied past. The “telltale grain” shows that the figure was carved from the bush clover tree, as told in the legend of Gyōgi (see headnote).

Hosshō-in's magnificent banner . . . golden words. Hosshō-in is one of the sobriquets of Takeda Harunobu (1521-73), the famous Daimyo of the late Sengoku period better known by his lay Buddhist name Shingen. When Shingen's son Takeda Katsuyori was defeated by

Tokugawa Ieyasu at the battle of Tenmokuzan in 1582, the famous long banners — vertical scrolls with Chinese characters embroidered with golden thread — that Shingen and his followers had carried in battle were donated to Umpō-ji. The banner Hakuin refers to here, still preserved at Umpō-ji, bears the *myōgō* or sacred name of the *kami* of the Suwa Shrine — Namu Suwa Nangū Hōsshō Kamishimo Dai-Myōjin; the Chinese characters are embroidered in bold gold characters on a crimson ground.

The tiger of Kai's intimidating power. For his martial prowess on the battlefield, Takeda Shingen (see previous note) was called “the tiger of Kai” (*Kai no tora*).

352-1. AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE PATRIARCH OF SEIBON-JI, MATCHING HIS RHYMES

Seibon-ji is a Rinzai temple several hundred yards to the east of Shōin-ji. Hakuin refers in the verse to his Zen pilgrimage with the Seibon-ji priest “forty years ago,” so the Seibon-ji patriarch in the title would have to be the previous abbot, Kannō Genchi (d. 1743), a contemporary of Hakuin who had previously accompanied him on his youthful pilgrimages. As Hakuin was nineteen when he visited Zensō-ji (see first note below), his first stop on his travels, this piece can be dated tentatively to his sixtieth year, which would be the first, or perhaps second, anniversary of Kannō Genchi's death. Sempo Zenju (1702–85) was the head priest at Seibon-ji at the time.

Forty years back we were as inseparable as body and shadow,
Trudging the country on our pilgrimage to seek Zen teachers.

Although you have left me now and vanished off down south,
We were both born in Hara village, stood on the same hillock.
We who shared a single bed now will die our separate deaths;
You've returned to the darkness, leaving me, enfeebled, alone.
Looking back over the way we occupied our dotage, I can see
We'd become like Fen-yang's broken dish, useless to anyone.

.....

Forty years back we were . . . Zen teachers. “I traveled together with you from Zensō-ji in Shimizu. We were like a body and its shadow. It was forty years ago” (annotation). Hakuin refers to the Zen pilgrimage he undertook in the spring of his nineteenth year (1703), setting out from Daishō-ji and walking the short distance west on the Tōkaidō to enter the training hall of the Zensō-ji. According to his own accounts, he left Zensō-ji the following spring. Kannō Genchi and perhaps some other young monks may have joined him at this point.

Although you have left me . . . down south. “You have died and gone south or somewhere” (annotation).

We were both born . . . the same hillock. “They were both born and grew up in the village of Hara” (annotation).

We'd become like Fen-yang's broken dish. “Broken dish” (*wan dakkyū*) refers to something altogether useless. Tōrei points out in an annotation that Fen-yang is a mistake for Hsing-hua.

352-2. UNTITLED [FOR ATTENDANT GIZAN]

This verse was apparently written at the same time as the previous one. Hakuin's note states that he wrote it for "Attendant Gizan," Ōkoku Gizan (d. 1813), who was Sempo Zenju's Dharma heir and later successor at Seibon-ji. Gizan, perhaps for reasons related to the immaturity Hakuin alludes to in the verse, was unable to compose a suitable tribute on the occasion of the Kannō Genchi's Death Anniversary.

I attended to your needs, got cudgeled by your stinging fists,
But didn't acquire the strength to reach the place of freedom.
Ashamed to face you now with these feeble words of thanks,
I can only emulate Ying-an when he bowed before Hu-ch'iu.

Composed in place of Attendant Gizan [by Hakuin]

.....

I can only emulate Ying-an . . . Hu-ch'iu. On the anniversary of Hu-ch'iu Shao-lung's (1077–1136) death, his disciple Ying-an T'an-hua (1103–63) offered incense and said, "I ran into this mindless old priest's ups and downs daily. No matter how assiduously I attended him, I was never able to satisfy him. After his death, I conducted the funeral services, and then I continued to wear the black robe and eat my daily rice. For twenty years I sat in the crooked chair [assumed by abbots], hanging out a sheep's head and purveying dog meat. In spite of that, once each year, I offer incense on the day that my teacher died, infinitely increasing the depth of my resentment towards him" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 20).

353. PAYING MY RESPECTS AT NATIONAL MASTER DAITŌ'S BIRTHPLACE IN ISEI IN HARIMA PROVINCE

Daitō Kokushi, National Master Daitō, is the honorific title of Shūhō Myōchō (1282–1338), the founder of the Daitoku-ji in Kyoto and the Japanese priest Hakuin revered above all others. This verse probably dates from 1750, Hakuin's sixty-sixth year, when he visited Harima province to lecture at various Zen temples.

I found nothing to mark the sacred spot but a thatch hut
And the old well, still brimming with gleaming cold water.
You should explore the matter of your own self, old monk,
With a broken pot in a hut covered with handfuls of straw.

.....

You should explore the matter . . . with handfuls of straw. “The old monk who was in charge of the hut came out and welcomed the master” (annotation). The final line alludes to a passage in *Daitō's Final Admonitions (Daitō Yuikai)*: “If only one person focuses his practice on investigating the self, though he may be living in the wilderness in a hut thatched only with a bundle of straw, subsisting on the roots of wild plants cooked in a pot with a broken leg, he is nevertheless the one who is face to face with me every day, and he is the one who requites his debt to me. Who should ever despise such a person? Ah, strive diligently you monks, strive diligently.”

354. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE BY MR. OGURA, CHIEF RETAINER OF THE AKASHI CLAN

“In winter in 1750 the master was invited by Ryōkoku-ji in Akashi, Harima province, to deliver comments on the Record of Hsi-keng” (Chronological Biography, age 66; Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217). See also the following piece, #355.

In one of the manuscripts of Poison Blossoms a notation is added to this piece: “One day when the master was in the castle at Akashi, the chief retainer [karō] presented him with a Chinese verse.” Two verses that Yanada Zeigan, the Confucian scholar retained by the Akashi clan, also wrote at this time, matching Hakuin’s rhymes, are found in Yanada Zeigan Zenshū, ch. 4.

Men have slept on sticks or drunk bear bile to settle a score,
We brave unlimited karmic oceans to reach the other shore.
A person who wishes to know if his satori is authentic or not
Should stand facing south at noon and see the Northern Star.

.....

Men have slept on . . . to settle a score. These are two examples drawn from the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shih-chi)* about men who prepared to avenge themselves on their sworn enemies by subjecting themselves to great hardships: Kou Chien, king of the Yueh State, slept on a bed of firewood, and Fu Ch’a, king of the Wu State, drank bear bile.

We brave. . . . “People in our Buddha-mind sect [Zen]” (annotation).
Should stand facing . . . the Northern Star. “It’s just like seeing my [one] hand” (annotation).

355. UNTITLED [WHILE STAYING AT RYŌKOKU-JI]

The dialogue given below took place during the sojourn at Ryōkoku-ji in Akashi, described in the previous piece. It is also recorded in the Chronological Biography for 1750, age 66: “One of the men attending the meeting posed the question: ‘Does life end when we die. Or does it go on?’ ‘Does what just asked that question end?’ replied the master. ‘Or does it keep on going?’ The man made no reply” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217).

SOMEONE ASKED, “DOES life end when we die. Or does it go on?”

I replied, “Does what just asked that question end? Or does it keep on going?” I illustrated this with a verse:

Living in a dream, the six paths appear to be crystal clear,
When you achieve *kenshō*, no trace of soul or spirit
exists.

For his karma-denying notion that everything ends at
death,
Sunakshatra fell while living into the depths of the Avici
Hell.

.....

Living in a dream, the six paths . . . no trace of soul or spirit exists. “It is because you live as though in a dream, in a world of delusion, that the six paths or realms [*rokudō*] in which you transmigrate all seem real to you. But upon hearing the sound of one hand you transcend dualities such as being and nonbeing; there is no spirit or soul to fall into hell and no hell to fall into either” (annotation).

Sunakshatra (Jap. *Zenshō-biku*). A disciple and perhaps son of the Buddha, Sunakshatra mastered the four stages of meditation, but because he regarded this attainment as ultimate and became attached to emptiness and the view that there is no Buddha, Dharma, or Nirvana, he fell alive into the Avici Hell, the lowest level

of Naraka, the underworld, where the dead who have committed the gravest misdeeds are reborn with no hope of leaving. The story is told in the *Nirvana Sutra* and the *Great Wisdom Sutra*.

356. KAN ZENNIN

Kan Zennin (Zennin means “Zen man”) is unidentified. He was apparently from Hizen province in Kyushu and suffered from some mental imbalance (kyōshitsu).

If you grip the world in your fingers, it’s only an inch wide,
And you can use it all, like your raggedy old zazen
cushion.

When you’re seated like this on the Dharma King’s
throne,
You’ll obliterate the root-source of all your sundry
ailments.

.....

Yoshizawa’s paraphrase is helpful here: “When you [are able to] take the whole world in your fingers, you find it is no more than a grain of millet. When your attainment has reached this point the whole world becomes your own, like the throne of the Dharma King [Buddha]. By putting it under your buttocks and sitting on top of it all, from the twenty-seven heavens above to the floors of hell below, you will be able to eradicate the root of your countless illnesses.”

If you grip the world . . . inch wide. “This too is the sound of one hand. If you pick up the great earth in your fingers, you will avoid falling into hell” (annotation).

When you’re seated . . . all your sundry ailments. “Everything that exists all over the great earth is, as such, the throne of the Dharma King” (annotation). “If only you could come to understand this, there would be no troubles in your mind. What a pity” (annotation).

357. FOR A MEAL OF ACCUMULATED FRAGRANCE

A “meal of accumulated fragrance” (kōshaku-han) is a vegetarian meal offered at religious services. The term derives from the Vimalakirti Sutra, “Fragrance Accumulated” chapter, in which Layman Vimalakirti is said to provide wonderfully fragrant meals, which are described as “wafting to immeasurable worlds in the ten directions,” and to the multitude of monks assembled in his room. For Hakuin, however, the “meal” refers to a different fare: the koans he gives his students.

At my place we serve you a fragrant meal,
Each person who partakes attains the Way.
Chew it very well and digest it thoroughly,
Act like an infant clinging to mother’s teat.

.....

At my place . . . attains the Way. “It isn’t rice. It isn’t barley. It isn’t millet” (annotation).

Chew it . . . digest it thoroughly. “If you want to know where the accumulated fragrance is found, it is right down there in your lower belly. It is in this room too, and in the fields and hills as well” (annotation).

Act like an infant . . . teat. “Work diligently at it mornings and nights, never slackening your efforts” (annotation).

358. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE AT MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE FORMER ABBOT OF CHŌKŌ-JI

The abbot referred to in this piece cannot be identified, but he may be Daigi Sotei (1685–1759), a lifelong friend of Hakuin who accompanied him on some of his youthful pilgrimages (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 176) and later served as head priest at Chōkō-ji, a Rinzai temple in Hara not far from Shōin-ji.

I hoped to match his fine rhymes, then they slipped my mind.

At midnight I yelled to Little Emptiness: “Do you recall them?”

“The rhymes are lofty,” he said, “hard to find words to match.”

He employed three rhymes, and the first of them was “eastern.”

.....

Little Emptiness. Ch’an master Hua-lin had two tigers named Ta-k’ung, “Big Emptiness,” and Shao-k’ung, “Little Emptiness,” which he used instead of monks as his attendants (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 8). Both names came to be used for an attendant monk.

He employed three rhymes . . . was “eastern.” This line seems to have stumped the annotators, e.g., “What in heaven’s name does this mean? . . . Is this the Buddha Dharma? Is it the worldly Dharma? Is it a vegetarian feast?” (annotation).

359. IMPROMPTU

On seeing that the world’s troubles and afflictions are such
That even an emperor is powerless against their onslaught,
How precious is the clear moon of your original self-nature,

Shining through the clouds and mists and settling all things.

.....

How precious is . . . self-nature. “How valuable is the study of Zen. If you clarify your self-nature, there is nothing you cannot achieve” (annotation).

Shining through . . . all things. “Even though you live amid the troubles of the world’s dust, the clear moon shines through and illuminates it” (annotation).

360. ON THE NAME UNGAKU

Hakuin awarded the Dharma name Ungaku (“Cloud Peak”) to Akiyama Fumizō (n.d.) in the autumn of 1739 during a meeting he was conducting on Ta-hui’s Letters (referred to here as the “Letters of the Master of Ummon Hermitage”) at the residence of his lay student Akiyama Michitomo in Izu province (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 204). This meeting also figures in #150 above.

“Akiyama Fumizō was the former head of one of three branches of the influential Akiyama clan of northern Izu” (annotation). The name Ungaku, “Cloud Peak,” was no doubt suggested to Hakuin by Ta-hui’s sobriquet “Cloud Gate” (Chin. Yun-men, Jap. Ummon).

IN AUTUMN OF the fourth year of Gembun [1739] I responded to a request from Mr. Akiyama and delivered Zen lectures for over two weeks on the *Letters of the Master of Ummon Hermitage*. An old man who lives next door to the Akiyama residence came every day to attend. Being hard of hearing, he always sat as close to my desk as he could get. One day as the meeting was nearing its end he came to me and asked for a Dharma name. I gave him the name Ungaku Jimon Jōza. He was the father of Akiyama Masanaga.

CLOUD PEAK

Originally traceless, it embraces the entire mundane world.

When ratiocination is exhausted, understanding will begin.

A solitary peak, gulping and spitting out clods of emptiness,

Students cram the courtyard so as not to miss a single word.

.....

Originally traceless . . . mundane world. An allusion to the first character of the name, Cloud.

A solitary peak . . . clods of emptiness. “Like the moon of true suchness illuminating all things in creation. Not even Buddhas and patriarchs can get close to it” (annotation). “Clouds are being gulped down and spit out [negated and affirmed] by the great solitary peak” (annotation).

Students cram the courtyard. The original has “clerics and lay followers” for “students.”

361. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE BY GYŪ ZENNIN

Gyū Zennin (Zennin is “Zen man”) is Chōsen Chigyū (n.d.), a Zen monk from Bungo province on the island of Kyushu. Hakuin also calls him Senior Priest Gyū (Gyū Jōza) in the verse. After completing his study with Hakuin he is said to have had a successful career as head priest of Jiun-ji in Suruga province.

The great Way is perfectly clear, free of any sound or smell,

But grope for it and it will swirl up like dust and blind you.

The more satoris you attain the more you have got to strive.

Remember Chao-chou, Gyū Jōza, that gray ash on his head?

.....

Free of any sound or smell. The original has the Zen term *kan-buji*, which is used to describe a person who is “idle” because he has finished his training and has nothing left to do. The translation is based on a gloss on the term in the annotations: “It has no voice, no breath, no smell or sound.” For Hakuin the “great Way” (*daidō*) is equivalent to perfect enlightenment.

But grope for it . . . blind you. “All you do when you say things like ‘this is delusion,’ ‘this is enlightenment,’ ‘this is a woman,’ ‘that is a man,’ is to stir up storms of dust that fly wildly about, getting into your eyes and blinding you, so that you are unable to see the Buddha-mind” (annotation).

The more satoris you attain . . . strive. Elsewhere Hakuin quotes these words as one of the admonitions he received from his teacher Shōju Rōjin.

Remember Chao-chou . . . on his head? Hakuin is telling Gyū to emulate Zen master Chao-chou, who is renowned for his constant application to practice, which he continued throughout his long life. The words “gray ash” (*seikai*), which may be taken to mean “worldly dust,” appear in Chao-chou’s “Song for the Twenty-four Hours,” in which he depicts the circumstances of his daily life: “The cock crows early in the morning. I get up, sadly contemplating how down and out I’ve become. . . . On my head is a considerable quantity of gray ash.”

362. ON SENDING DŌKA ZENNIN OFF TO VISIT HIS FATHER

Dōka is a name Hakuin's Dharma heir Tōrei Enji (1721–92) used prior to his thirty-seventh year (1755) when, at Hakuin's urging, he received the title of First Seat from the Myōshin-ji in Kyoto. This rank was required before a priest could be installed as head of a Myōshin-ji line temple. Born in Ōmi province, Tōrei entered the priesthood at the age of nine. At seventeen (1737), he travelled to Daikō-ji on the island of Kyushu and studied for two years with Kogetsu Zenzai. On leaving Daikō-ji he visited other teachers including Daidō Bunka at Hōjō-ji, a mountain temple west of Kyoto. He attained enlightenment while engaged in rigorous solitary practice near his home temple in Ōmi. He then headed to Shōin-ji, entering Hakuin's brotherhood in 1743 at the age of twenty-three and having his enlightenment confirmed in 1749, at the age of twenty-nine. In 1752, at Hakuin's insistence, Tōrei became head priest of Muryō-ji, a tiny temple near Shōin-ji, but when Hakuin tried to persuade Tōrei to succeed him at Shōin-ji, Tōrei refused and left Muryō-ji for the Kyoto area. He returned in 1760, acceding to Hakuin's request to serve as the head priest of Ryūtaku-ji, a new training temple that Hakuin had rebuilt in nearby Mishima.

Although the records show Tōrei leaving his training at Shōin-ji more than once to return to his home in Ōmi province to nurse his ailing mother (d. 1748), no visits are mentioned to his father, who died in 1749. This visit probably took place around 1745, a few years after Tōrei first arrived at Shōin-ji.

About to set out for home to visit his ailing father,
Dōka set paper down before me asking for a verse.
As he insists on a phrase that is "right to the point,"
I sit chewing my brush, secretly furrowing my brow.

.....

I sit chewing . . . my brow. "Is this the line that is 'right to the point'? People who have heard the sound of one hand find this extremely interesting" (annotation).

363. REPLY TO A LETTER FROM SENIOR MONK DŌKA

Tōrei's Chronological Biography for 1745 records that "he sequestered himself in the tenth month in a hermitage he called Yamato-ya in front of Hōkō-ji [the Hall of the Great Buddha, in the Higashiyama area of Kyoto] and began a solitary retreat. He devoted himself assiduously to his practice for one hundred and fifty days, without shaving or bathing and taking little food.

"Suddenly, on the fiftieth day, he smashed the one bright pearl. Fifty days later he penetrated and clearly saw the Zen working in master Hakuin's everyday life. . . . The following spring he sent a letter to Hakuin expressing the attainment he had achieved. Taking one look at it, Hakuin said, 'Dōka has passed through,' and joyfully composed a verse to answer him."

Hakuin's Chronological Biography for the following year (1746) has: "A letter arrived from Dōka, who was then residing in the eastern hills of Kyoto, informing Hakuin that he had accepted the Dharma transmission Hakuin had offered him. The master responded with a verse: 'A golden carp . . . [see below]'. When Hakuin expressed a desire to make his sanction of Tōrei public, several senior disciples tried to dissuade him. 'If you can't bring yourself to believe in the man from reading what he writes,' Hakuin told them, 'how are you going to understand what is written in those books about the ancient Zen masters?' None of those present dared make a reply." (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 210–11).

A golden carp tailing through the weeds of Ōmi's vast waters

Surmounted endless perils butting through the Dragon Gates.

Free at last to sport amid the lethal waves of the Buddha Sea,

He carries out the true charity, by giving not a drop to others.

.....

A golden carp . . . Ōmi’s vast waters . . . Dragon Gates. Lake Biwa, the largest Japanese lake, is located in Tōrei’s home province of Ōmi. According to Chinese legend, carp that scaled the formidable three-tiered waterfall at the Dragon Gate transformed into dragons.

The true charity. “Later, when you raise your Dharma standard [and begin teaching], don’t sell the Buddha’s Dharma cheaply” (annotation).

364. UNTITLED [FOR THE PRIEST OF HEIDEN-JI]

Heiden-ji is a Rinzai temple in Tōtōmi province. The identity of the priest is unknown. The phrase “grassy pastures” alludes to the name Heiden-ji, literally, “temple of the level fields.”

THE PRIEST OF Heiden-ji said, “For twenty years I haven’t felt even a whisker of doubt. It is an exhilarating feeling.” I made this playful verse to send to him:

The Lord of Elk grazes in the verdant meadows of Heiden-ji,
A pity he never was able to fully mature his fangs and claws.
“Living together, sharing beds” — he’s like a tiger with horns,
“Not dying in the same bed” — he’s like a drooling young calf.

.....

The Lord of Elk. “A monk asked Yao-shan, ‘A herd of elk gathers in the meadow. How do you decide which is the elk king so you can

shoot it'? Yao-shan said, 'Follow the arrow.' The monk toppled over onto the ground. Yao-shan said to his attendant, 'Drag that dead man out of here!' The monk fled. Yao-shan said, 'When's he going to get tired of playing with these mud pies?' Hsueh-tou commented on this: 'He was alive for the first three steps, but by the fifth he was dead'" (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 81).

A pity . . . fangs and claws. "Is he putting him down, or is he raising him up?" (annotation).

"Living together, sharing beds" . . . a drooling young calf is based on Yen-t'ou's well-known saying: "Hsueh-feng and I shared the same life, but we do not share the same death. If you want to know the final word, it's this, it's this!" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 7) For a fuller account, see #253. With horns, a tiger would be even more formidable.

"He [the Heiden-ji priest] is not devoid of attainment, but it is still shallow. He has yet to die completely, so he still has a way to go. He still has a pulse" (annotation).

365. INSCRIBED ON A PHOENIX-SHAPED KITE

Paper skin and bamboo bones and veins of crimson string,
A wonderful bright-colored phoenix is dancing in the sun.
There's no need for you to feed this bird any bamboo seed,
With a rising breeze its belly immediately fills to repletion.

.....

There's no need . . . seed. "A phoenix eats nothing but bamboo seeds. It drinks nothing but water from a sweet spring" (*Record of Hsu-t'ang*).

366. INSTRUCTIONS FOR A MONK

Anyone who practices Zen and spurns the use of koans,
Is no better than a farmer who won't cultivate his fields.
If you want to enjoy a bountiful harvest come autumn,
Be like Chao-chou and strive harder the further you go.

.....

Be like Chao-chou . . . you go. Zen master Chao-chou Ts'ung-shen (778–897), considered one of the greatest of Chinese Zen masters, known for his continuing dedication to his practice, is said to have lived to be one hundred and nineteen years old. Chao-chou studied with Nan-ch'uan for forty years; when Nan-ch'uan died, he set out at the age of sixty on a pilgrimage that lasted twenty years. At the age of eighty, he became head priest of a temple in Chao-chou, where he continued instructing students until his death.

367. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF CHŪ JŌZA'S NEW YEAR'S DAY VERSE

Chū Jōza is Bunchū Jōza (n.d.), a monk from Onryō-ji in Okayama, Bizen province, who arrived at Shōin-ji in 1738 (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 204) and studied with Hakuin for many years. Later he resided at Funi-an in Matsunaga (present-day Numazu city) and at Sōrin-an south of Kyoto. Tōrei said that Bunchū was largely responsible for spreading Hakuin Zen in the Kyoto area.

Friends come from all around bearing New Year's
greetings,
Hard to choose between them, they all need further
training.

Strive hard, you monks, until you reach the ultimate source,
Make haste and urgency your standards for the coming year.

.....

Friends come from . . . all need further training refers to the monks studying at Shōin-ji, who would lodge in derelict shrines and temples over a wide area surrounding the temple and commute to take *sanzen* with Hakuin.

Make haste and urgency . . . for the coming year alludes to a popular saying, *ichinen no kei wa gantan ni ari*, “The measure of the whole year is taken from the first day.”

368. LAMENTING THE DEATH OF KUN JŌZA

Kun Jōza was a student of Hakuin’s Dharma heir Reigen Etō, who served as head priest of Zenshō-ji in Tango province on the coast of the Japan Sea.

You cracked “the eastern mountain walks across the water,”
You triumphantly entered the Dharma-body’s heady realm.
With one seat empty, the hall is now steeped in mourning,
Today, as always, fragrant breezes blow in from the south.

.....

You cracked . . . the Dharma-body’s heady realm. Entering the realm of the Dharma-body (*hosshin*) indicates Kun Jōza had passed the

barrier into *kenshō*. See the next note for “the eastern mountain walks across the water.”

With one seat empty . . . fragrant breezes blow in from the south. “Fragrant breezes” refers to the absent Kun Jōza, whose name Kun means “fragrant.” “One day when Ta-hui was residing at Yuan-wu’s temple, Yuan-wu ascended to the teaching seat and said: ‘A monk asked Yun-men, “From whence come all the Buddhas?” Yun-men said, “The eastern mountain walks across the water.” If it were me . . . I would say, “A fragrant breeze sweeps in from the south, a refreshing coolness pervades the halls and pavilions”’” (*Record of Ta-hui*, ch. 16). For a full translation of this passage see #189, supplementary note 2, p. 344.

“[His death was] a misfortune for the Zen school” (annotation).
“The fragrant breeze is not going anywhere” (annotation).

369. ONE DAY IN THE THIRD MONTH BUTSUJITSU OSHŌ WAS KIND ENOUGH TO DROP BY MY HUMBLE HERMITAGE. HE COMPOSED A VERSE, WHOSE RHYMES I MATCHED. I WROTE THIS VERSE IN PLACE OF SHŌJI NORIFUSA

Butsujitsu (“Old Man Buddha Sun”) is the sobriquet of Hakuin’s close friend Unzan Sotai (see #269, #289, #290, #315, #320). *Shōji Norifusa* is *Shōji Rokubei*, sobriquet *Yūsai* (d. 1750), an influential citizen of Hara who was related to Hakuin’s family. *Yūsai*, his brother *Yūtetsu*, and his daughter *O-Satsu* (1714–89) all studied with Hakuin. *Shōji Norifusa* also appears in #207 and #308.

Unzan Oshō, always free and footloose whatever he
does,
Has bent his steps to my humble temple to pay me a visit.
Our tatami may be fraying, their borders are wearing thin,
But fortunately we still can offer a cup of tea to our
guests.
The servant is out in the garden looking for suitable
greens,
A lady who lives by the gate came by with a flower or two.
It is hard to come up with a comparison to describe all
this:
An empty boat moving aimlessly over the boundless
ocean.

.....

Our tatami may be fraying . . . tea to our guests. / The servant is out . . . suitable greens. “Since Shōin-ji was extremely poor, the tatami mats were frayed and unsightly. Fortunately, we do have some tea to offer him” (annotation). “The servant lady who lives outside the temple gate came with some flowers for Unzan” (annotation).

The servant is out . . . suitable greens is, literally, “the servant looks for greens in the three lanes,” an allusion to the gardens of Chiang Hsu, a hermit of the Han dynasty. He fashioned three lanes in the garden of his retreat, planting them with pine trees, chrysanthemums, and bamboo, and allowed only Yang Chung and Ch’iu Chung, his two best friends, to enjoy the garden with him (*San-fu chueh-lu, Miscellaneous Notes on the Han Capital*, a collection of Later Han dynasty biographies by Chao-ch’i [d. 194]).

It is hard . . . describe all this. “That is, [a comparison to describe] the meaning of the servant going to get vegetables and the lady bringing flowers to Unzan. It is difficult to compare these acts to matters in the ordinary world” (annotation).

An empty boat . . . the boundless ocean. Yoshizawa paraphrases the final two lines: “Our engaging in Dharma talk this way is like an empty, unmanned boat passing beyond the boundaries of the ocean vastness (*Mu* illuminating *Mu*).”

370. THANKING NAKAI MASAATSU FOR CREATING AN ARTIFICIAL MOUNTAIN, WITH PREFACE

This piece was written to commemorate the completion of a temple garden at Shōin-ji, created thanks to a donation from Nakai Masaatsu (also Zenzō, n.d.) of Yoshiwara village. The project was apparently launched after Hakuin received two large rocks from Ishii Gentoku, described in #293 above, pp. 488–9.

I WAS BORN with a love for the simple and unadorned. I have less skill in human affairs than a pigeon. I'm slower on my feet than any turtle. Despite an innate love of rocks and streams, I have no high mountains around here to climb, no flowing rivers to gaze upon. Fortunately, I am not deficient in wonderful companions — Mr. Ishii, a physician celebrated for his healing skills, and Mr. Nakai, a fine gentleman of great taste and refinement. Pitying my chronic illness, this weakness for the rocks and running waters, Mr. Ishii put his young men to work, having them transport some remarkable spirit rocks to Shōin-ji from a far distant spot. This inspired Mr. Nakai to come and personally construct a range of mountains in the temple gardens. Beautiful scenery burgeoned forth, creating splendid vistas soothing and satisfying to the heart. On seeing what they had done, I thought to myself that in spite of Mr. Nakai's wonderful landscaping skills, if Mr. Ishii had not sent the rocks, this beautiful garden would not exist. And in spite of Mr. Ishii's effort to transport the rocks here, without Mr. Nakai's skills those gemlike stones would probably still be lying among the weeds. Indeed, the two most desired but difficult things to obtain had been obtained, but even so, if the monks training at Shōin-ji had not lent a hand, Mr. Ishii and I would have had no way of moving the rocks. And finally, even after all that effort, had I not been blessed with some free time, how could I have enjoyed this wonderful scenery? Seen in this way, it can be said that all the four necessary elements have now been obtained. Hence I have written a verse to thank all concerned for their effort:

A thousand-foot waterfall cleanses the mind to its depths,
Makes the soaring pine trees seem even greener to the
eye.

Mount Hua, soaring beside Mount Li's magnificent crags,
The splendors of Mount Lu beside those of Mount Chiu-i.
Old Huang is returned to the world once again, poising
The cliff with his stick in hand as if herding his white flock.
Gazing at my new garden, I have to laugh at old Chih Tun
Out begging funds for a hermitage to foster poetic
thoughts.

A gentle breeze murmurs through the emerald pine
boughs,
The rain brings out the tiger stripes on the rocks and
stones.

Silver sand spreads like eternal snow from a yawning
cave,

The mossy valley torrent retains its frostlike gleam all
year.

Sitting in my humble hut, deep creases furrowing my
brow —

This setting sun is one thing you could never turn into
verse.

.....

The two most desired but difficult things to obtain. In the preface to his poem "Ascending the Pavilion of King T'eng," the T'ang poet Wang Po (648–75) called fine weather, beautiful scenery, appreciative hearts, and enjoyable occupations the four excellent conditions; he also said that the two things most desirable, but most difficult to obtain, were a worthy host and an elegant guest. The terms "four excellent conditions" and "two rarities" became proverbial.

Old Huang is the Taoist sage Huang Ch'u-p'ing. Born into a family of poor shepherds, at the age of fourteen Huang met a Taoist priest who discerned his capability and took him to study at Mount Chin-hua. For forty years his brother Ch'u-ch'i searched in vain for him.

One day he met a Taoist who told him that a man named Ch'u-p'ing who tended sheep at Mount Chin-hua was surely his lost brother. He set out immediately with the priest and was finally reunited with Ch'u-p'ing. When asked about his sheep, Ch'u-p'ing said they were on the eastern side of the hill, but when Ch'u-ch'i went to see them he found only white rocks on the hillside. "There are no sheep there," said Ch'u-ch'i. "There are," said Ch'u-p'ing, "it's just that you were unable to see them." When they went together to the spot, Ch'u-p'ing shouted out, "Get up, sheep!" The white stones immediately transformed into tens of thousands of sheep. Ch'u-ch'i said, "You can do this because you have mastered the sages' arts, elder brother. Do you think I could master them too?" "If you practice diligently you can," he replied. Ch'u-ch'i left his home and family and devoted himself to the study of the Way under Ch'u-p'ing, and both men ended up living to be five hundred years old (*Biographies of Divine Sages*).

Chih Tun (314–66), an influential scholar and priest of the early period of Chinese Buddhism, was said to have purchased an entire mountain in which to spend his retirement. See also #347.

371. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF SHŌGAN OSHŌ'S DEATH

Shōgan is apparently to be understood as "the priest of Shōgan-ji," Shōgan-ji being the temple where this priest resided. Neither the priest nor the temple has been identified.

Eighteen thousand days have now passed since his
death,
Still the old priest fully displays a stark spiritual presence.
Hanging in the hall, his words hum like poisoned arrows,

Penetrating readers' hearts like fire from his baneful eyes.

.....

Lines 1–2: “Left and right, the fields and hills, they are all the Shōgan-ji priest” (annotation).

Lines 3–4: Evidently the priest's death verse was hung up in the hall during the memorial ceremonies. “When you hear his verse that hangs in the hall [being read], you seem to see fire flashing from Shōgan's eyes” (annotation).

372. MATCHING THE RHYMES OF THE PATRIARCH'S VERSE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

There are several verses in Poison Blossoms simply titled “the patriarch's death anniversary,” without naming the priest in question. In this case, an annotation suggests it is either Tōhō Sokin (d. 1729) of Tokugen-ji in Hara, who aided Hakuin in his early attempts at Zen practice, or Sokudō Fueki (d. 1712) of Daishō-ji in Numazu, where Hakuin studied and served as attendant from the age of sixteen until leaving on his pilgrimage. Since Hakuin mentions serving as the priest's attendant, Sokudō seems the more plausible candidate.

Ashamed to have wasted the years I served as your attendant,
Your words now sting harder than any blows from your staff.
How many times an encouraging word sought to educate me,
How often your tender leaves inched this young grub forward.

.....

Ashamed to have wasted . . . attendant. “Because when I served as his attendant I was young and innocent, clumsy and ill-mannered” (annotation).

Your words now sting harder . . . your staff. “Recalling the things he tried to make me understand is more painful than those blows from his staff” (annotation).

How many times an encouraging word . . . young grub forward. “He consoled me, he scolded me. He was very kind” (annotation). “In his kindness during these years he was like a man trying to prod a newly hatched silkworm to start making its cocoon [achieve satori]” (annotation) by feeding it tender leaves. “Telling a young apprentice monk to hurry and reach satori is like trying to force-feed a person who has lost his appetite” (annotation).

373. UNTITLED [RYŌGO]

Hakuin wrote this piece for a Sōtō monk named Ryōgo (n.d.) from Nagato province at the western tip of Honshu. It should perhaps be seen in the context of Hakuin’s sharp criticism of contemporary Sōtō Zen for failing to use the koan to bring students to the breakthrough experience of kenshō.

A MONK [RYŌGO] came and said, “I penetrated to a wonderful understanding of ‘The Buffalo Passes Through the Window’. Whatever capping phrase I might give you would choke off any words you or old Wu-tsu tried to spit out.”

“Can you tell me what you have understood?” I said.

“I present you with the nose and tail that didn’t make it through the window!”

I responded with a burst of laughter. The monk bristled.

“In the future,” I said, “if you really do grasp that koan, your face is going to be red with embarrassment when you recall those words,

and you will have nowhere to hide.”

Then I composed a verse:

Fire is used to test a jewel, a black stone is used to test
gold,
Now this koan reveals how phony your understanding
was.
Giving the Buffalo Through the Window to an eyeless
monk
Is like offering tea to a parrot, or donating gold coins to a
cat.

.....

The Buffalo Passes Through the Window is a koan from the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 38: “Master Wu-tsu said, ‘It is like a buffalo going through a lattice window. Its head, horns, and four legs all pass through. Why can’t its tail pass through too?’” See #131, p. 173.

374. SENDING OFF SŌ JŌZA TO HIS HOME PROVINCE

Sozan Sosō (d. 1771) came to study with Hakuin from Jishō-ji in Nakatsu, Buzen province, on the island of Kyushu. According to this verse, he stayed at Shōin-ji for three years. He then returned to assume the abbotship of Jishō-ji. Daishū Zenjo (1730–78), the editor of Poison Blossoms, was Sozan’s successor at Jishō-ji.

It was for Sozan that Hakuin, in his early seventies, drew a large painting of Mount Fuji entitled Daimyō Procession Passing Beneath Mount Fuji (see #344). Sozan had evidently asked Hakuin for one of his large Daruma paintings, but instead Hakuin gave him a large picture of Mount Fuji with a Daimyō procession passing under it. An

accompanying verse explained that this did, indeed, depict Daruma's "true face."

Your three years of strenuous practice has had good effect,
Still I'm worried, so many bog down partway to their goal.
Bear down in zazen, and exert yourself in daily life as well.
Restore Tung-shan's tradition now buried deep in the dust.

.....

Your three years . . . had good effect. "Indeed, you did gain some measure of [Zen] strength" (annotation).

Still I'm worried . . . partway to their goal. "I tell the monks residing around Shōin-ji: 'Master the Five Ranks!'" (annotation).

Restore Tung-shan's tradition . . . in the dust. Tung-shan, "Eastern Mountain," refers to Fa-yen Wen-i (885–958), who resided there, and to the Zen style of the Fa-yen school he founded. Fa-yen's utterances, said to possess a marvelous efficacy in teaching Zen students, were described as "secret ciphers" or passwords, a term Hakuin often used to refer to the post-satori koans he assigned students. See #379.

375. UNTITLED [SENIOR MONK BENTEKI]

This verse was written for Senior Monk Teki (Benteki, n.d.), one of Hakuin's earliest students. Teki came to Shōin-ji from Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province. He served as Hakuin's attendant at Shōin-ji from around 1717, Hakuin's thirty-third year, until the tenth year of Kyōhō (1725), when this verse was written, and later resided as head priest at Kenchū-ji in Kai province. Teki figures in #115 in Book Two, pp.

148–9, and also in a story from *Hakuin's Chronological Biography* found in the note following the piece.

ZEN MAN TEKI of Mino province has served as my attendant for eight years now, devoting himself to his training with determination. If he continues in this course without faltering he will surely experience an immense joy, of a kind he has never known before.

In autumn of the tenth year of Kyōhō [1725], a letter arrived from Teki's home urging him to return. On the day of his departure he came and asked me to write some words for the occasion. I'm not good at composing poems. I don't know much about Zen, either. But if Teki is truly after the matter of greatest importance to a Zen monk, the horses and carts he encounters on his way home, the tea he drinks at the roadside teahouses, are all koans presenting themselves to him. How can I add anything to that? Still, since I am not unmoved by feelings of sadness at his parting, I can perhaps squeeze out for him a phrase or two straight from my vital organs.

Teki came asking for a word or two to take home with him.

Whatever I said would be off the mark the moment I said it.

But since he has ground ink and laid some paper before me:

“Beneath the falling red leaves, a brow darkened in sadness.”

.....

Benteki appears as Teki Zōsu in the *Chronological Biography*, age 39 (1723): “The quality of provisions in the temple larder grew steadily worse. The monks made the rounds of nearby shops begging for *shōyu* that had gone rancid and was about to be thrown out. Once at mealtime the temple cook, Teki Zōsu, served some cold miso soup, the surface of which was alive with wriggling maggots. ‘Pay more attention to your work,’ scolded Hakuin. ‘Maggots breed in rancid *shōyu*,’ said Teki. ‘I couldn’t bring myself to kill them, so I just poured it all into the stock and made the soup without heating it.’

‘You mean that’s all there is?’ asked the master with a laugh. ‘We never have extra provisions,’ said Teki. ‘We beg what others are about to discard and use it for the morning and evening meals. Why don’t we set the soup aside and wait until the maggots have all hatched? Then we can ladle them out’” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 196).

376. ON THE THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF LAYMAN MUGAI SŌKAN

Apart from an annotation, “This anniversary was apparently for the father of one of the monks studying at Shōin-ji,” nothing is known about Layman Mugai (n.d.), or the identity of his son.

Breaking bones for your father, gouging flesh for your
mom,
You returned to conduct rites, opening the gate of sweet
dew.
I will respond with a phrase for the occasion; listen
carefully:
A pig stands alone in the village dusk with a shoe on its
head.

.....

Breaking bones . . . for your mom. Hakuin compares the monk who requested these memorial services for his father with Prince Nalakuvara (Jap. Nata Taishi), the eldest son of the three-faced, eight-armed demi-god Vaishravana (Jap. Bishamon). After gouging out his flesh and returning it to his mother, and breaking up his bones and returning them to his father, Nalakuvara manifested his true shape and employed his great supernatural powers to preach

the Dharma to his parents. The story is found in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 2.

You returned to conduct . . . sweet dew. The “gate of sweet dew,” *kanromon*, a teaching that leads students to Nirvana, imparts the timeless life of enlightenment to all who partake of its exquisite nectar. “[Here,] sweet dew stands for the teachings that were preached at the memorial services” (annotation).

377. SENDING OFF SHOKU JŌZA

Shoku Jōza, originally from Hizen province in Kyushu, came to *Shōin-ji* from *Daian-ji* in Sakai, south of Osaka. The leaping fox in the first line of the verse, and the carp in the second line, both appear in Old Granny’s Tea-Grinding Songs (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 125):

*Without passing through the uplifting barriers [koans], Zen
is not Zen,
Carp leap past countless barriers at Dragon Gate [and
become dragons];
Foxes leap the high torii at Inari shrines [and become
gods]*

For a fox, leaping the *torii* at Inari Shrine is the hardest thing,
For a carp, it is butting through the three-tiered Dragon Gate.
But skipping over a *torii*’s shadow furtively in the moonlight,
Landing face first, would be mortifying: you’d best go home.

.....

For a fox, leaping . . . the hardest thing. Foxes are messengers of the *kami* of the hundreds of Inari Shintō shrines throughout Japan. Popular folklore held that only those able to jump over the high *torii* at the shrines could become deities. “Unless you can jump over it, you don’t reach [even] the first of the Five Ranks” (annotation).

In commenting on the koan “Nan-ch’uan’s Flowering Tree”, Hakuin says, “Nan-ch’uan called to the Governor and said, ‘People today see this flowering tree as though they were in a dream.’ This [says Hakuin] is the *torii* at the Inari Shrine. They are words of the most difficult kind; they are like the poison-lacquered drum, the Lion King’s milk” (*Hekiganshū Hishō*, Case 44).

“The master was always telling his monks, ‘The robe from the Ch’ing-chou koan is the Inari *torii* of our Zen school” (annotation). This annotation makes reference to a koan that Hakuin recounts several times in *Poison Blossoms*: “A monk asked Chao-chou, ‘All things return to the one. What does the one return to?’ Chao-chou said, ‘When I was in Ch’ing-chou, I made a robe that weighed seven pounds” (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 45).

For a carp, it is . . . Dragon Gate. Carp able to swim beyond the Dragon Gate (Lung-men), a three-tiered cascade in the Yellow River, were said to transform into dragons (cf. #320, IV; #363). The carp is a metaphor for a superior Zen student.

But skipping over a torii’s shadow . . . would be mortifying. Annotations allow us to make sense of these otherwise incomprehensible lines. “You, my friend, are . . . like a shameless fox who sneaks out in the moonlight and just hops over the Inari *torii*’s shadow” (annotation). “A phony, sub-standard fox sneaks out at night and tries to jump over a shadow of the *torii*” (annotation). “He still can’t leap over Hakuin’s *torii*; he’ll only end up falling on his face and embarrassing himself” (annotation).

The significance of “you’d best go home” is not entirely clear in this context. I follow Yoshizawa’s suggestion: “You’re better off going straight to the fundamental source in your own mind.”

378. HUMBLY REQUITING MY DEBT TO SHŌJU RŌJIN

It is surprising — in view of the frequent expressions in Hakuin’s writings of the great debt he owed to Shōju Rōjin — that this is the only verse dealing with his former teacher in the entire Poison Blossoms collection.

New grudges follow old ones like a flight of migrant geese.
I regret being the turtle that got roasted over mulberry coals.
Cooking one of my father’s sheep now as an offering to him,
I will be divesting a secret orchid of its true native fragrance.

.....

Yoshizawa’s paraphrase is helpful here: “My fresh new grudges [against my former teacher], over and above the old ones lingering from the past, follow one another like a skein of wild geese flying across the sky. . . . Now, using some of the cooked sheep I received from my father Shōju, I make an offering in his memory. He lived like a fragrant orchid, blossoming unknown to anyone among the hidden streams and deep valleys. But because I have gone out into the world to teach, he too has become a presence there. Have I frivolously undermined all my teacher’s dedicated efforts to maintain his solitary life?”

Line 1: Hakuin equates the “grudges” he holds toward his old teacher with the great debt he owes and must requite. “When the ancients practiced Zen they regarded the words and teachings of the Buddhas and patriarchs as deadly enemies” (annotation). “New grudges’ must include words the mouth utters that become a source

of misfortune; ‘old grudges’ are those lingering from the years I spent as Shōju’s attendant” (annotation).

A flight of migrant geese. There are two annotations for this phrase: 1. “Honk! Honk! Honk!” 2. “Cry honk, honk, honk as you push yourself tirelessly in your practice.”

Line 2: “I am ashamed even as I say this” (annotation). The allusion to “the turtle who got roasted over mulberry coals” is based on the following story, found in the *I-yuan*, a collection of fabulous tales from the Six Dynasties Period: “During the reign of Sun Ch’uan of Wu [3rd century] a man walking in the mountains came upon a large turtle. As he bound it up to carry home with him, the turtle said, ‘You caught me unawares when I was out for a stroll.’ Amazed to hear a turtle speak, the man put it on his back and set out for home. He decided to present it to the King of Wu. On his way he stopped for the night at a place called Yueh-li, tying his boat to a mulberry tree on the riverbank. When evening came, the mulberry tree called out to the turtle, ‘Poor creature, how did you end up like this?’ ‘A man tied me up and I’m sure he intends to cook me and eat me. But they will never be able to cook me, even if they use up all wood in the southern mountains,’ replied the turtle. ‘There is a very wise man in the capital,’ said the mulberry tree. ‘If they ask him he will surely know how to deal with you.’ ‘You are a very clever tree, but you shouldn’t talk so much. It will get you into trouble, just as it did me.’ With that, the tree ceased speaking. The woodsman took the turtle to the capital and presented it to the king, who promptly ordered his kitchens to cook it up. But even after countless cartloads of firewood had been used to stoke the cooking fire, the turtle remained unscathed. ‘Bring that old mulberry tree here and use it for the fire,’ said the king. When the wood from the mulberry tree was used to fuel the fire, the turtle was soon fully cooked. Mulberry wood is to this day the preferred wood for cooking turtles.”

“The mulberry tree is Shōju, the turtle Hakuin” (annotation).

Line 3: “Talking with Confucius, the lord of She said, ‘In our district there’s a fellow called Honest Body. When his father stole a sheep, the son testified against him.’ Confucius said, ‘In our district the honest people are different from that. A father covers up for his son;

a son covers up for his father. There's honesty in that, too" (*The Analects of Confucius*, p. 91).

Line 4: The *yūran* ("secret orchid") grows in secluded mountains and valleys, blossoming and sending out its wonderful fragrance unbeknownst to the world. For Confucians it is a metaphor for the man of perfect virtue (*kunshi*) who maintains a solitary existence with great care. Here *yūran* represents Shōju Rōjin, who spent his entire life teaching and "hiding his virtue" in Shōju-an, a tiny hermitage deep in the remote mountains of Shinano province.

379. CONGRATULATING KAIGAN ZOGEN ON HIS NEW POSITION

According to an annotation Kaigan Zogen (Kaigan Kotetsu, n.d.; Zogen means "Senior Monk") had been "promoted" at the Myōshin-ji headquarters temple in Kyoto, perhaps signifying that he had received the rank of Dai-ichiza, or "First Seat," a title Myōshin-ji priests were obliged to acquire before they could serve as head priest of a temple.

"He was from Chōkō-ji in Kai province, and originally named Kotetsu. After making a pilgrimage in the Kantō region [the area around Edo], he went to Hyūga province in Kyushu and spent some years with Kogetsu Zenzai. He received a request to reestablish a temple named Hōshaku-an and became head priest of that temple. He traveled to Kowaraya-ji in eastern Ōmi province to study under Daidō Bunka. He happened to see a verse by master Hakuin on the koan, 'Precept-breaking monks do not fall into hell; monks who rigorously uphold the precepts do not enter Nirvana.' He said to [his traveling companion] Daikyū, 'There is something very strange about that verse,' and the two monks proceeded together to Shōin-ji" (annotation).

Another account, in Stories from a Thicket of Thorn and Briar (pp. 125–31), has Kaigan and Daikyū leaving Kogetsu in Kyushu and

traveling to the mountains of Kumano to undertake a prolonged practice retreat to mature their attainment. At a temple on the way, they chance to see an inscription hanging on the wall, a verse comment in Chinese on the koan, “Precept-breaking monks do not fall into hell; monks who rigorously uphold the precepts do not enter Nirvana.” Unable to make sense of the verse, they decide it must be gibberish some foreigner had scribbled down, but on learning it was the work of a priest named Hakuin they change their plans and go directly to Shōin-ji. After their personal interviews with Hakuin convince them they are no match for him, they decide to stay on, pledging not to leave until they complete the great matter of Zen practice. Later in his life, Kaigan wrote that Daikyū’s capacity was much superior to his own: “Daikyū knew after he’d once crossed lances with the master that he had lost. I was unaware that he had taken me alive until I’d used up all my arrows and my bow was broken” (see #123, note, p. 166).

Striving in adversity half his life, he trod thousands of miles,
Fired by a determination to crack Tung-shan’s secret ciphers.
The claws and fangs in the Dharma cave are cruelly difficult,
They don’t allow even a syllable of ordinary logic to enter in.

.....

Fired by a determination . . . Tung-shan’s secret ciphers. Tung-shan, “Eastern Mountain,” refers to Fa-yen Wen-i (885–958) who lived there, and to the style of Zen taught in the Fa-yen school he founded. Fa-yen’s Zen utterances, used as koans in later Rinzai Zen, were celebrated for their marvelous efficacy in teaching students. “Secret ciphers,” originally passwords (*angō-rei*) used in wartime, refers here to the post-satori koans (“the claws and fangs in the Dharma cave”) that Hakuin assigned students.

The claws and fangs . . . ordinary logic to enter in. “Don’t sell even a single phrase or half a verse cheaply! Don’t lower yourself to any secondary principle” (annotation). The term “selling cheaply” (*yasu-uri*) is used to describe a teacher who is overly generous in accepting a student’s understanding of a koan. The “secondary principle” (*dainigi-mon*) is the relative plane, where a teacher instructs students using words.

380. FOR A SHOSHI

Shoshi is generally used for a samurai who is not employed in government service. Hakuin’s verse was written for this unidentified layman who came from Jitoku-ji in Kai province to urge Hakuin to conduct a lecture meeting on the Vimalakirti Sutra. According to the Chronological Biography, the meeting was held in spring of 1745, Hakuin’s sixty-first year, so the layman probably came to invite Hakuin sometime in the previous year. An annotation to this piece adds the following sidelight: “Master Hakuin promised to hold a lecture meeting at this time on the Vimalakirti Sutra at Jitoku-ji in Kai province, but his monks held a meeting and determined that the event should be cancelled. The master wrote Jitoku-ji that he would be unable to keep his promise due to illness. Rempō Oshō of Keirin-ji in Kai, who was to sponsor the meeting, arrived at Hakuin’s temple with a lay member of Jitoku-ji and indignantly pressed the master to change his mind. Hakuin agreed without uttering a word.”

Like great Manjusri, you came to inquire about my
sickness,

Like envoy Lin, you succeeded in retrieving the precious
jade.

What can I do but mimic the silence of Layman
Vimalakirti?

I’ll hurry into your courtyard when the warblers start to
pipe.

.....

Like great Manjusri . . . my sickness. As explained in the headnote, Hakuin had tried to cancel the lecture meeting by citing sickness, but the unidentified layman came to visit him with Priest Rempō to change his mind. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, when Vimalakirti falls ill, the Bodhisattva Manjusri goes to pay him a visit and the two discuss the Dharma teaching of nonduality (the central theme of the sutra). After Manjusri and the other assembled Bodhisattvas voice their opinions as to the nature of the teaching, Manjusri points out that all their explanations are themselves dualistic. He then asks Vimalakirti to explain how to enter the gate of nonduality. Vimalakirti maintains a “thunderous” silence. Manjusri proclaims that Vimalakirti has shown the entrance into nonduality.

Like envoy Lin . . . precious jade. “When the King of Ch’ao acquired the priceless jade of Pien Ho, the powerful King of Ch’in offered him fifteen cities for it. Not trusting the King of Ch’in to keep his promise but unable to refuse the exchange, the King of Ch’ao, on the advice of Lin Hsiang-ju, accepted the offer and appointed Lin to take the jade to Ch’in. When the King of Ch’in said nothing about the cities after receiving the jade, Lin realized that he did not intend to keep the bargain. Telling the king that there was a flaw in the jade which he would show him, when the jade was brought out, Lin grabbed it and threatened to smash it against the pillars of the palace. The King of Ch’in, deciding it was in his best interest not to press the matter any farther, allowed Lin to return to Ch’ao with the jade” (*Records of the Grand Historian*, ch. 81). Here the *Shoshi* (or perhaps Priest Rempō) is envoy Lin, and Hakuin the King of Ch’in.

I’ll hurry into . . . start to pipe. “Overwhelmed by the vigor of your incursion, I [Hakuin] will have to go to your temple next spring [‘when the warblers start to pipe’]” (annotation). The phrase ‘I’ll hurry into your courtyard’ appears in the Confucian *Analects*: “Ch’en Kang asked Confucius’s son Po-yu, ‘As a son, have you received any special instructions?’ ‘No,’ Po-yu replied. ‘But once when my father was standing by himself and I hurried across the courtyard, he said, “Have you studied the *Odes*?” “Not yet,” I replied. He said, “If you

don't study the *Odes*, you won't know how to speak properly." So after that I studied the *Odes*. Another day, when he was standing by himself and I hurried across the courtyard, he said, "Have you studied the rites?" "Not yet," I replied. He said, "If you don't study the rites, you won't have any basis to stand on." So after that I studied the rites" (*The Analects of Confucius*, pp. 117–18).

381. LAMENTING THE DEATH OF GAN JŌZA

The full name of Gan Jōza (Senior Monk Gan) is not known, though annotations tell us he was from Kōfuku-ji in Hachiman, a city in Ōmi province.

After standing in the snow three difficult years seeking
truth,
The plum tree in the frigid darkness was about to form a
bud.
Now to my infinite regret and sorrow, turbulent spring
winds
Have prematurely snapped the twig with the half-opened
bud.

.....

Now to my infinite regret and sorrow . . . with the half-opened bud.
"One day he fell ill and, halfway to his goal, he died" (annotation).

382. UNTITLED [SENIOR MONK GENKYOKU]

This verse was written for Senior Monk Genkyoku (d. 1771), also known as Sojun, who had come to study with Hakuin from his home temple Daihi-ji in Akita in the far north of Honshū. It apparently dates from 1743, the year Genkyoku was called back to his home temple on the death of his teacher (annotation).

SENIOR MONK GENKYOKU came and joined the crew of frozen starvelings who dwell in this old Dharma reprobate's cave. After enduring the suffering here for a number of years, he felt the blowing of the autumn wind and suddenly became nostalgic for his northern home. I wrote a poem to send him off:

In my Dharma cave claws and fangs are not skin or marrow,
Before I even show them demons and gods begin lamenting.
Studying here for three years, you've had your share of pain.
Come back Genkyoku, come lend this doddering old gaffer a hand.

.....

This old Dharma reprobate is Hakuin, from his sobriquet Sendai-ō (Sk. *Ichchantika*).

Not skin or marrow alludes to words Bodhidharma is said to have spoken on transmitting his Dharma to four disciples: "Tao-fu has attained my skin, Tsung-chi my flesh, Tao-yu my bones. Hui-k'ō [who became the second Zen Patriarch] has attained my marrow" (*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 3).

Doddering old gaffer is a term that refers to a priest who is totally inactive and ineffective. Annotations for an earlier appearance of the term (#189) had: "No different from a stone Buddha" and "Completely and utterly useless!"

There is a lengthy annotation on this piece, apparently written by one of Tōrei's students: "Genkyoku studied with Kogetsu Zenzai in Kyushu for ten years, then with Daidō Bunka in Tamba west of

Kyoto, before coming to Hakuin. His devotion to his practice was rigorous in the extreme. When master Tōrei first arrived at Shōin-ji at the age of twenty-two, master Hakuin assigned Genkyoku to show him the ropes. . . . While studying at Shōin-ji, Genkyoku lived at Shinkō-in in Hara. Because he never had proper food or clothing, he was always sickly, and suffered during the summer months from an undulant fever. . . . A person of uncompromising integrity, his style of Zen style resembled that of Senior Monk Ting [see next paragraph]. He is said to have lived in a hut he fashioned next to Akita Castle, but he was such a formidable presence that monks avoided him, and he lived without an attendant. One day Morin, the head priest of Daihi-ji, asked Genkyoku to become his successor at the temple. Genkyoku said, ‘What are you saying? I wouldn’t think of transmitting my Dharma to you. Why would I want to receive yours? Just leave, and don’t ever ask me that again.’”

Senior Monk Ting (n.d.) is regarded as having faithfully transmitted the severe, uncompromising spirit of his master Lin-chi’s Zen. Often depicted in Zen paintings, he is usually shown engaged in a violent assault on other monks. He once had to be stopped from throwing a monk off a bridge when the monk couldn’t answer a question. Case 32 of the *Blue Cliff Record* relates an exchange Ting had with three monks: “‘What did your teacher Lin-chi say in teaching his monks?’ one of them asked. Ting cited Lin-chi: ‘You monks, there is a true man in this lump of red flesh with no rank or station. He is always going in and out through the gates of your senses. Those who have not proved this, look! look!’ Another of the monks said, ‘Why didn’t he say, “There is no true man of no rank or station?”’” Ting immediately grabbed him and began throttling him. ‘How is a true man of no rank different from an untrue man of no rank?’ he demanded. ‘Speak quickly! Say something!’ The monk was unable to open his mouth. His face turned yellow and green. Ting seemed on the verge of finishing him off then and there, but the other two monks separated them. ‘If you two hadn’t been here,’ said Ting, ‘I would have choked the life from the piddling little imp.’”

383. ON THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY, USING SOMEONE ELSE'S RHYMES

Casting all obligations aside, abandoning his filial duties,
He left home to master the Way and help men and devas.
At his birth in Kapilavastu he blurted out bits of hogwash,
No one but Yun-men could ever grasp what he was
saying.

.....

He left home . . . help men and devas. “He [the Buddha] preached the Dharma to keep people like you from falling into your self-created hells” (annotation).

At his birth . . . bits of hogwash. Kapilavastu is claimed to be the Buddha's childhood home. When he was born, the Buddha was said to have uttered the words, “In the heavens above, on earth below, I alone am the honored one” (see next note for more).

No one but Yun-men . . . was saying. This is literally, “Only Yun-men could divine his dreams.” “When the World-Honored One was born, he pointed one hand up at the sky and one hand down toward the earth, made seven circumambulations, contemplated the four directions, and said, ‘In the heavens above, on earth below, I alone am the honored one.’ Master Yun-men said, ‘If I had been there and seen that, I would have beaten him to death with my staff and fed his carcass to the dogs’” (*Comprehensive Records of Yun-men*).

384. LAMENTING JUN SHUSO'S DEATH

Jun Shuso was a monk from Ryōtan-ji in Tōtōmi province.

Jun Shuso, youthful dragon rising from a dragon pool,

Was certainly not a garden-variety minnow or shrimp.
He came here to my tiny wheel-rut of a country temple
Resolved to penetrate the Dharma to its ultimate roots.
I had high hopes of rearing this splendid phoenix chick,
A golden carp that promised to transform into a dragon.
Now a Dharma shoot I had yearned to see in full flower
Has withered, a victim of the fire god's merciless wrath.
He kept his illness from me, facing the suffering alone,
When I learned about it, I was surprised and dismayed.
Although unable to treat him as though he were my son,
When serving as my attendant he treated me as a father.
When I learned the news his condition had turned grave,
I prayed to the deities of heaven and earth night and day.
Why take a young monk capable of uplifting our school,
Why spirit him away in such haste to the nether regions?
Thirty years at Shōin-ji I'd sought a true Dharma friend,
Now my interest in guarding the vital crossing dwindles.
A cool breeze stirs the curtains, but I'm unable to sleep,
Crickets sing outside the screen, but I am sunk in
thought.
I hear the pines at far-off Ryōtan-ji sighing their dirge,
A rare gem of our school has shattered right in our hands.

.....

Jun Shuso . . . from a dragon pool. The temple name Ryōtan-ji, from whence Jun Shuso had come, means “temple of the dragon pool.”

My tiny wheel-rut of a country temple alludes to the *Chuang Tzu*, “External Things” chapter: “‘As I was coming here today,’ said Chuang Tzu, ‘I heard someone calling me on the road. I turned around and saw that there was a gudgeon in the wheel-rut made by carriages. “What are you doing here?” I asked. “I am a Wave Official of the Eastern Sea. Couldn’t you give me a dipperful of water so I can stay alive?’”

A victim of the fire god's merciless wrath. The god's name is literally, “the fire god of afflicting heat” (Jap. *hanshoka-shin*), evidently coined

by Hakuin. Jun Shuso seems to have fallen victim to a fever of some kind.

Now my interest in . . . dwindles. The “vital crossing” (*yōshin*) is where monks cross over to enlightenment. “When Jun Jōza died, my interest in attending to my monks’ needs vanished” (annotation).

385. VERSES ON READING THE WORDS OF NATIONAL MASTER DAIKYŪ, WITH PREFACE

Daikyū Sōkyū (1468–1549) was a Rinzai priest who lived during the Sengoku (Warring States) period. A student of Tokuhō Zenketsu at Ryōan-ji in Kyoto, he received Tokuhō’s Dharma sanction and succeeded him as head priest at Ryōan-ji after the latter’s death. Daikyū also served as abbot at the Myōshin-ji headquarters monastery, and it was at the Myōshin-ji subtemple Reiun-in, built for Daikyū’s retirement, that Emperor Go-Nara (reigned 1526–57) is said to have visited him. Go-Nara awarded him the honorific “National Master” title Enman Honkō Kokushi.

In old age, Daikyū established Rinzai-ji in Suruga province at the behest of Imagawa Yoshimoto, an influential daimyō who was later killed by Oda Nobunaga. Daikyū’s records, Kentō-roku (Record of Kentō, or Viewing the Peach Blossoms Record), were divided into sections, each section devoted to the teachings he gave at the various temples where he had served. It was first published in Kyoto in 1748, at about the same time this piece was written. Hakuin mentions reading a manuscript version preserved at Rinzai-ji in his native Suruga, and also the newly printed version, both of which he praises highly. He pays tribute to Myōshin-ji priest Muchaku Dōchū for the deep understanding he showed in editing the text for publication. But he expresses concern about the completeness of Dōchū’s edition, since it does not include the records of the

teachings Daikyū delivered when he resided at Rinzai-ji. Hakuin says he himself has readied a complete manuscript of Daikyū's records that contains the omitted material as well, in hopes that it will one day be published. (The whereabouts of Hakuin's manuscript are unknown.)

IN WINTER, THE fifth day of the eleventh month, first year of Kan'en [1748], a large meeting and vegetarian feast was held at Dairyū-zan Rinzaizen-ji in Sumpu to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of National Master Enman Honkō's death. I attended the meeting together with a score or so monks from my temple. I asked head priest Kanjū to offer his comments on the deadly verses in *Hsu-t'ang's Verse Comments on One Hundred Koans*. He tried to refuse, but I kept after him until finally he agreed. Ascending the Seat of the Dharma King, he taught with free, unhindered eloquence, using steep and lofty Zen means, striking fear deep into the hearts of those assembled.

After the ceremony, one of the monks came back and said, "I've kicked Lin-chi's 'Three Barriers' over on their back. As for leaping beyond Ch'ang-sha's 'Seven Steps', what is that?"¹⁴⁴

Raising my hand I stopped him, and said, "Something isn't right. Those words don't match your attainment. Where did you find them?"

The monk said, "They're from the Dharma words Daikyū Kokushi spoke when he was installed as founder of Rinzai-ji."

Instinctively I rose, solemnly offered incense at the altar, and performed three prostrations. "I thought that after the passing of Daitō Kokushi and Kanzan Kokushi, founding fathers of Daitoku-ji and Myōshin-ji, the patriarchal groves had gone completely to seed," I said. "I never expected to discover this old priest [Daikyū] alive and teaching two hundred years after them. It's like talking about salted plums and finding your mouth watering, or like knowing the taste of everything in a cooking vessel by sampling a single morsel. What a shame we can't see the entire contents of that pot!"¹⁴⁵

While I was in Sumpu on official business in the middle of the tenth month of this year, I had the good fortune to visit Rinzai-ji and have a look at Daikyū's records. As I had expected, they were not a

bit different from the morsel I had already sampled. They were, to the last drop, as virulently poisonous as *Chen* feathers or wolf's fangs. They possessed the abundance of T'ao Chu or I Tun, were expressed with the potent vigor of Hsiang Chi or Chao Yun, had stratagems as unconventional as Fei Ch'ang or Chang Hua, and subtle charms as seductive as those of Yang Kuei-fei or Chao Chun.¹⁴⁶ They yielded nothing whatever to Tz'u-ming's glorious utterance, Chen-ching's informal talk, Ling-yuan's general discourse, Hsi-keng's addresses from the high seat, or the long letters Ta-hui sent his students.¹⁴⁷ Gooseflesh began rising all over my body. I slapped my knees in admiration and gratitude.

While at Rinzai-ji I was shown a piece of silk brocade ten foot square which I was told Daikyū had received from Emperor Go-Nara. It was exceedingly beautiful, its lustrous colors dazzling to the eye. I said, "As rare and priceless as this is, it can't compare to even half a word or partial phrase from the National Master — it's the difference between mud and cloud."

I declared to a Rinzai-ji monk named Bon Zennin seated next to me, "We can be proud that our country produced a priest of Daikyū's caliber. This record of his is a true validation of Hsi-keng's prophecy that genuine Zen followers would increase daily in our country.¹⁴⁸ It is unique, a truly peerless treasure, unsurpassed in the annals of our school. It is in no way inferior to the *Blue Cliff Record* or *Record of Hsu-t'ang*. Its enduring radiance will shine forever, gloriously illuminating our land. To show my gratitude to the National Master, I want to make a fair copy of these records in their entirety to preserve them for posterity. In the future, if a congenial spirit appears and offers to help, it might be published as well. What better way to make our school thrive and prosper!"

Bon was nodding his head in agreement, almost dancing with joy. I tried to remember how many times I had visited Rinzai-ji in Sumpu since I began teaching at Shōin-ji, but never once had I experienced a joy like this. On the trip back to Shōin-ji I was telling everyone I met about Daikyū's records.

Prior to a recent *rōhatsu* training session, a Zen man named Ryōta — a disciple of the head priest of Kaifuku-in at the Myōshin-ji headquarters monastery in Kyoto¹⁴⁹ — who had accompanied me to

the Rinzai-ji meeting, came to me with a packet of books. “These are the Zen records of National Master [Daikyū] Honkō,” he said. “They are called the *Kentō Record* and were compiled by Priest Ryūge of Myōshin-ji.”¹⁵⁰

I felt as though I’d been given a bright torch on a dark road. I offered incense, opened the book reverently, and began reading. I found a lofty Zen style, rich in profound and subtle principles. Daikyū’s records were marked by a profound erudition, sharp and thrusting discernment, a beautiful literary style, and truly extraordinary religious verses. It all shone out clearly, beyond any doubt, right under my very eyes. Ah, a book such as this is the face — the very eyebrows and eyes — of our Japanese Zen school.

If the priest of Ryūge-in had not possessed the true Dharma eye, Daikyū’s records would have disappeared into the bellies of bookworms and been lost forever. But Ryūge’s Dharma eye notwithstanding, unless old Daikyū had first achieved that profound attainment, how could these wonderful records ever have appeared? Still, this book of records must stand as one of the finest fruits of Ryūge’s enlightened scholarship.

I was surprised, however, that only three or four pages had been included from the record of Daikyū’s teaching at Rinzai-ji. I wondered why the material that is preserved at Rinzai-ji had not been incorporated into this edition of the *Kentō Records*. Was this a case of the priceless jade that the experts had failed to recognize?¹⁵¹

I told Brother Ryōta to write a letter to Bon at Rinzai-ji: “Tell him that he should not relax his efforts in transcribing a fair copy of the *Kentō Record* [including the material in the Rinzai-ji manuscript] just because it has recently been published. Don’t let him say that because the saltiness of the vast ocean can be known from tasting a single drop, the National Master’s fundamental meaning can be known from this new edition alone. To believe a puddle made by a horse’s hoof is sufficient is the view of a clam or mussel. To believe the vast ocean is limited is the perspective of a whale or other monster of the deep. The men who long ago compiled the Buddhist canon in the Pippali Cave did not think it was sufficient to include the *Flower Garland Sutra* alone, and because of that today we have the

Buddha's teaching in all its variety — both partial and full, sudden and gradual. Be sure that you tell Bon all of this.”

I am old and lazy. I can't recite the poems I could when I was thirty. I am fully aware how disgraceful my talents are. So why do I go on composing rustic verses like these? In certain circumstances even Mother Mu was known to laugh. Even Hsi-shih was sometimes seen to break into a smile. The ugly woman of Wu-yen and the beauty Yang Kuei-fei had equally good reasons to weep. They laughed or wept not caring what people thought. I wonder, though, will these verses of mine make Mother Mu laugh?¹⁵²

I

I once thought no Dharma eye had opened in our eastern seas,
My troubles with the *Kentō Records* proved that I was wrong.
Quiet words, perfectly expressed, exposed my dim perceptions.
What a truly extraordinary collection of Zen records these are!

II

Rich displays of verbal insight from the depths of *prajna* samadhi,
Dharma claws and fangs striking to the truth of the seven schools.
A great priest, the kind who is seen once every five hundred years,
A divine dragon that emerged from the depths of our Dharma seas.

III

His verses struck like thunderbolts, throwing my mind for a loop,
A profusion of peach buds flowering on the Dragon Flower Tree.
Struggling sheepishly in my dotage, lacking meditative strength,

Plagued by these complexities, I cannot get a good night's sleep.

IV

As springtime splendor slowly fades from the Purple Fields,
Who could imagine finding such a branch in Flower Garden?
Because Ryūge gathered and compiled these peach blossoms,
When Maitreya appears in the world he'll be a few hours late.

V

Serene minds are silent, water will not move on level ground.
For that reason all I can do is shed a tear or break into a smile.
This old duffer, who hasn't hummed a verse these thirty years,
Has been trilling like a thrush since he set eyes on these records.

VI

Ever since master Daikyū's records arrived at my temple,
I've been exhausted, my zazen cushion is worn to shreds.
You might take a page or two and send them off to China,
I don't think the folks there could grasp his meaning either.

VII

If a person really desires to read the *Record of Kentō*,
He must first resolve the question of Chao-chou's Mu,
Then bore though the koan about Nan-ch'uan's Death —
He'll have it rolling like a gem in the palm of his hand.

.....

Notes

VERSE I

Our eastern seas: Japan.

VERSE II

Claws and fangs are metaphors for the ruthless way Daikyū's Zen utterances function.

The seven schools are the Kuei-yang, Lin-chi, Ts'ao-tung, Yun-men, Fa-yen, Yang-ch'i, and Huang-lung lines of Chinese Zen.

VERSE III

Peach buds alludes to the *Record of Kentō* (literally "seeing or viewing the peach blossoms"), no doubt also alluding to the story of Ling-yun's enlightenment upon seeing peach blossoms.

Dragon Flower (Ryūge) is a sobriquet used by Muchaku Dōchū, the Myōshin-ji priest who edited the *Record of Kentō*. The same name Ryūge or Dragon Flower also refers to the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who resides in the Tushita Heaven. It is said that when Maitreya descends into the world and becomes a Buddha far in the future, he will teach and liberate beings at three assemblies under a Dragon Flower Tree.

These complexities (kattō) are those Hakuin struggled with in reading through and understanding the record.

VERSE IV

Purple Fields (Murasakino) and *Flower Garden (Hanazono)* are the locations in Kyoto of Daitoku-ji and Myōshin-ji. Although Daitoku-ji was the older temple, by Hakuin's time his Myōshin-ji line was assuming a growing dominance that it would retain throughout the Edo period.

Because Ryūge gathered and compiled . . . he'll be a few hours late. Hakuin says that when Maitreya finally does appear in the world (see second note to verse III), he will find that the work he intends to carry

out — guiding beings to enlightenment — is, thanks to his namesake Daikyū's Zen records, already being performed.

VERSE VI

My zazen cushion is worn to shreds because Hakuin had used it so much in meditating on Daikyū's records.

VERSE VII

Chao-chou's Mu. From the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 1: "A monk asked Chao-chou, 'Does a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?' Chao-chou said, 'Mu!'"

Nan-ch'uan's Death. "Master San-sheng sent a senior monk named Hsiu to ask Ch'ang-sha some questions. 'When Nan-ch'uan passed away, where did he go?' asked Hsiu. 'When Shih-t'ou was still a novice, he visited the Sixth Patriarch,' said Ch'ang-sha. 'I'm not asking about when Shih-t'ou was a novice,' Hsiu said, 'I want to know where Nan-ch'uan went when he died.' 'Investigate it thoroughly,' said Ch'ang-sha. 'You're like a noble old pine tree towering thousands of feet in the winter sky,' said Hsiu, adding 'You're not like a bamboo shoot springing straight up through the rocks.' Ch'ang-sha was silent. 'Thank you for your answers,' said Hsiu. Ch'ang-sha was still silent. Hsiu returned to San-sheng and told him about his meeting with Ch'ang-sha. 'If that's the way Ch'ang-sha is,' said San-sheng, 'he's a good seven steps ahead of Lin-chi'" (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4).

386. THOUGHTS ON A WINTER DAY

This verse dating from the winter training period of 1744, Hakuin's sixtieth year, alludes to a lecture meeting on the Vimalakirti Sutra at Jitoku-ji in Kai province that was scheduled for the following spring (see #380).

Over a hundred monks hum to themselves in the frigid
cold
Without a single grumble about the numbing frost and
snow.
The wonders of spring will be unfolding in Amra's
gardens,
But first enter the Snowy Mountains. Seek the hidden
scent.

.....

Amra gardens, in the ancient Indian city of Vaishali, is the site where the *Vimalakirti Sutra* was preached.

The Snowy Mountains, the Himalayas, alludes to the site where Shakamuni undertook his famous practice retreat.

Hidden scent. The hidden scent of plum flowers, which blossom in the winter snow at the coldest time of the year, connotes the opening of satori.

387. SENDING OFF REIGAKU ZOGEN, WITH PREFACE

Reigaku Zogen (n.d.; Zogen, also read Zagen, signifies "Senior Priest") appears twice in the Chronological Biography, once in the year 1741 when Hakuin was giving lectures on the Blue Cliff Record at Keirin-ji in Kai province, and once in the the fourth month of the following year (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 206-7). Both appearances focus on Zen dialogues between Reigaku and Hakuin which are similar to the ones in the piece below. Aside from the information in these records, Reigaku Zogen is a historical blank, though one annotator, perhaps with a hint from Hakuin's verse, suggests he may have been a Sōtō priest.

IN SPRING OF the first year of the Kampō era [1741], when I was lecturing on the *Blue Cliff Record* at Keirin-ji in Kai province, Reigaku, the venerable master of Keiun-zan, came to see me. I asked him the question, “Where do you come from when you are born? Where do you go after you die?” Reigaku made no reply. Now in the second year of Kampō [1742], just before the Buddha’s Birthday, Reigaku boarded a boat in Kai province, rode down the swift Fuji River to Suruga province, and came to Shōin-ji to continue his study with me. I asked him, “Where do you come from when you are born? Where do you go after you die?” Reigaku raised a finger. “You aren’t there yet,” I said. “Go on, say something else.” “Where do you come from when you are born? Where do you go after you die?” he replied.

Cherishing the awakening that old priest had achieved, I composed a verse to give him. He tucked it in his sleeve and took it back to Kai province.

Don’t you regret the misfortune of a wasted life and idle death?
Those many years of sitting and silently illuminating yourself?
Don’t say the practice of Zen does not yield miraculous results,
Eyes won’t open for some till they’re losing their hair and teeth.

.....

Reigaku, the venerable master of Keiun-zan. Keiun-zan is evidently the “mountain name” of Reigaku’s temple in Kai province, but it has not been identified.

Reigaku boarded a boat . . . the swift Fuji River to Suruga province. Reigaku would have had a quick and exciting journey down the rapidly flowing Fuji River. It arises in the highlands of Kai province north of Mount Fuji, flows down west of the mountain, and empties into Suruga Bay. On his return trip to Kai province he probably would have made the long and strenuous hike over the high passes to the east of the mountain.

388. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, MATCHING THE RHYMES OF A VERSE BY SENIOR MONK SAI

Senior Monk Sai (Sai Shuso; Shuso is a title used for senior monks) is Ryōsai Genmyō, who has appeared a number of times before (#32, #314, #316, #317, #319). According to an annotation this verse was written during a ninety-day winter practice retreat that incorporated the twelve-month rōhatsu training period. Another annotation states: "This dates from the period when Kokurin [Hakuin] first raised his Dharma banners and was beginning to teach." This statement seems at odds with the known facts since Ryōsai arrived to study at Shōin-ji in 1734, when Hakuin, at fifty, had already been teaching for many years. But as this was also the time when he began to conduct the large practice sessions that characterized the teaching activity of his later years, perhaps that is the meaning of the phrase "first raising his Dharma banners," supporting the dating of the verse to around 1735, soon after Ryōsai first arrived at Shōin-ji to begin his study under Hakuin.

Seated in zazen deep in white cloud with four or five
others,
One flaggy-haired senior monk is showing special
diligence.
Freed from all ties, our lives for the entire ninety-day
retreat
Will be as flavorless as water, and chaster and purer than
ice.
The New Year will draw near, with no white rice to mete
out,
Spring will find us still sitting here nodding in the taper
light.
I'm deeply gratified you have all chosen the rigors of this
life,

Heedless of profit or fame — you are true Zen heroes indeed!

.....

Deep in white cloud. “White cloud” denotes a state of unfettered freedom liberated from all attachments.

One flaggy-haired senior monk is Ryōsai, who, according to an annotation, “left his head unshaved during the winter months.”

389. ON A VISIT TO KONRYŪ-JI, I RESPONDED TO A VERSE BY THE TEMPLE MASTER, FOLLOWING HIS RHYMES

Konryū-ji was a small temple under Shōin-ji’s jurisdiction located east of Hara in the foothills of Mount Fuji near Mount Ashitaka. This verse seems to date from about the same time as the previous one. An annotation on the identity of the “Temple Master” has, “It was perhaps Ryōsai [Genmyō],” the first student Hakuin gave permission to teach. Although there is nothing in Ryōsai’s biography to connect him with Konryū-ji, it is possible Hakuin installed him there to look after the temple for a time.

Yen Hui lived his whole life in a shack savoring adversity,
Ts’ao Chih took only seven paces to compose a fine
verse.

Your free, unfettered existence puts both of them to
shame,

Like the green pine tree humbles every flower in creation.

.....

Yen Hui was Confucius's favorite disciple. He lived in extreme poverty while following the master's teachings.

Ts'ao Chih (192–232), brother of the first Emperor of the Wei dynasty, was a prodigy who could produce poems easily on any given theme. At his brother's bidding he is said to have composed an impromptu verse in the time it took him to walk only seven steps.

390. COLOPHON BY LAYMAN KIDA

This colophon by Layman Kida (Kida Taneshige, Kida Genshō, n.d.; see #226) appeared at the end of the first edition of Poison Blossoms, which was published in nine fascicles. Kida's role in the printing of Poison Blossoms and the possibility that Hakuin wrote the colophon for him are more fully explained in the Introduction (pp. 8–9). In the woodblock text, Layman Kida's colophon is followed by a printer's device and a statement dedicating the book to two people, referred to by their posthumous names. They are said to be the names of Kida's parents or grandparents.

On my way through Suruga to the northeastern provinces in the winter of the sixth year of the Hōreki era [1756], I stopped at Shōin-ji for an audience with Zen master Hakuin. As he was indisposed at the time, I was obliged to wait until his condition improved before I could receive his teaching. This gave me an opportunity to read through a manuscript of his Zen records that was kept in the attendants' quarters. It had been compiled in nine fascicles by his student Daishū from Hōki province. In the pages of this work master Hakuin vigorously attacks the sham Zen teachings that have arisen around the country with words and phrases of great power and penetrating insight. It is like hearing the roars of the lion king, or the deep rolling of ground-shaking thunder. He points out errors in the *Blue Cliff Record*. He clarifies the meaning of Tung-shan's Five Ranks. Anyone who reads it is certain to cast false teachings aside and turn to the authentic path of Zen.

The guidance Hakuin gives in these pages to students negotiating the secret depths emerges with great strength and vigor that is totally beyond our ordinary, unenlightened understanding. If a work such as this did not exist, how could students become aware of the genuine path of Zen practice? To me it seemed that publishing this manuscript would help students to more readily penetrate the Zen source, so I mentioned the possibility to Hakuin Rōshi. “No, don’t do that,” he replied. “If notions I chanced to mumble off while I was asleep were to find their way into print, it would only steer future generations off course. Take the manuscript and consign it to the flames! I see no need to go out of my way to make a jackass of myself!” Despite my most earnest attempts to make him change his mind, he remained adamantly opposed to the idea.

So when it came time for me to leave Shōin-ji, I bundled the manuscript secretly in with my belongings and took it back to Ōsaka with me, and immediately began making arrangements for it to be published. There was no time for the manuscript to undergo proper editing, so it is possible some of the Chinese characters in the text are mistaken. For that I must beg the reader’s indulgence. It is nonetheless my hope and prayer that once these records are published, they will become a standard against which future generations of Zen students can measure themselves.

Respectively inscribed by Kida Taneshige, Naniwa
[Ōsaka]

BOOK TEN: SUPPLEMENT ONE

Supplement to Poison Blossoms from a
Thicket of Thorn (*Keisō-dokuzui shūi*)

Heart Sutra — Capping Words for the
Heart Sutra

Instructions to the Assembly (*Jishū*)

Miscellaneous Writings (*Zatsubun*)

Inscriptions for Paintings (*San*)

Religious Verses (*Geju*)

This one-volume supplement to Poison Blossoms contains material that for some reason did not appear in the original compilation, perhaps because it was unobtainable, or simply forgotten at the time. It was published and financed separately from Poison Blossoms, although the two works seem to have appeared at about the same time (see Introduction, p. 12). A large portion of Keisō-dokuzui shūi, which for convenience I refer to as Book Ten, almost two-fifths of the book, is taken up by Hakuin's Zen commentary on the Heart Sutra, entitled Shingyō Jakugo (Capping Words for the Heart Sutra).

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HEART SUTRA — CAPPING WORDS FOR THE HEART SUTRA

391. CAPPING WORDS AND VERSES FOR THE HEART SUTRA (SHINGYŌ JAKUGO NARABI NI JU)

Hakuin's Zen commentary on the Heart Sutra, which later came to be known as Dokugo Shingyō (Poison Words for the Heart Sutra), is one of Hakuin's main contributions to Zen jakugo (capping word) literature, his other important work in that line being Kaian-kokugo (Dream Words from a Land of Dreams). I published an extensively annotated translation of this work twenty years ago under the title Zen Words for the Heart. I have made some changes to the text for the present version. For convenience, I have inserted a translation of the Heart Sutra before Hakuin's commentary.

Like the thirty or so other works that make up the prajna, or Wisdom, family of sutras, the teaching in the Heart Sutra focuses on the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of sunyata or emptiness. Although one of the briefest works in the Buddhist canon, the sutra is thought to embody within its two hundred and seventy Chinese characters — less than a page of text — the heart or essence of the Wisdom philosophy that is developed with great richness and resonance in such kindred sutras as the Larger Prajna-paramita Sutra, an enormous work that amplifies the wisdom theme for fully six hundred volumes.

Through the centuries the Heart Sutra has been the most popular and widely used religious text in all East Asia. It is chanted on virtually every occasion in the Zen school and in many other Buddhist sects as well.

The teaching of the sutra is preached by the Bodhisattva Free and Unrestricted Seeing (Kanjizai in Japanese). This Bodhisattva,

who is one of the most popular figures in the Mahayana Buddhist pantheon, is perhaps better known to Westerners by the Sanskrit name Avalokitesvara, or the Chinese name Kuan-yin. The Bodhisattva preaches at the request of Shariputra, who is reputed to be the wisest of the Buddha's disciples. Shariputra can be said to represent the teachings of the sage or Arhat, the ideal Buddhist disciple of the older "Small Vehicle" or Hinayana tradition that arose after the death of the Buddha and flourished prior to the appearance of the Mahayana teaching.

In setting forth the essentials of the prajna-paramita, or "perfection of wisdom," the Bodhisattva reveals to Shariputra how wisdom is achieved and the "other shore" of Nirvana is reached through a process of negation, in the course of which all existence and all assertions about existence, including the classic tenets of Buddhism, are shown to be empty and void of substance.

The Heart Sutra is thought to have been composed in India about fifteen hundred years ago and was translated not long after that into Chinese. Since that time it has been explained and elucidated countless times. Commentaries in Japan alone run well into the hundreds, ranging from sophisticated expositions of Buddhist philosophy to simple religious tracts for the faithful. They all generally attempt to spell out the sutra's terse assertions along more or less rational lines, appealing primarily to the intellect. But even those by Zen monks with the most hardnosed reputations seem somehow conventional and well-mannered compared with the incisiveness and radical, shake-all attitude Hakuin brings to the text.

Hakuin's commentary derives in large part from Zen lectures (teishō) he delivered on the Heart Sutra at a practice meeting held in the winter of the first year of Enkyō, 1744, at a country temple in the province of Kai (present-day Yamanashi prefecture), near Mount Fuji. He was, at the age of sixty, at the peak of his teaching career. Hakuin states in the final verse that the work was completed in 1744, and that he is extremely pleased students have decided to pool their meager resources and have a printing made of the text. As no copy of that printing is known to exist, we cannot be sure that it ever appeared, and there is no way of knowing whether that text was identical to the present one. The central fact, clearly stated in the

work itself, is that Hakuin's commentary on the Heart Sutra, or some form of that work, was composed in or about 1744, his sixtieth year.

The earliest printing that can be verified is the one published in Poison Blossoms. No independent printing of the work is known. It is, or was well into the past century, usually encountered in an edition that pairs it with Hannya Shingyō chū (Notes on the Heart Sutra), a commentary Tōrei made at Hakuin's request to help elucidate the difficulties of his own uncompromising treatment of the sutra text. This edition was first published sometime in the mid-19th century, and went through many printings well into the 20th century.

Hakuin begins his Zen commentary by making the subject of his first capping words (jakugo) the capping words and verses he himself has attached to the sutra text. Opening sections deal with the five individual words that make up the full sutra title, Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra — Great Wisdom Perfection Heart Sutra. Hakuin then proceeds to the sutra proper, confronting it phrase by phrase in a series of thirty-five sections.

The glosses on the translation have been gathered freely from the pages of the many commentaries on the work produced by leading Rinzai teachers since the Meiji period — a true compilation, in its Latin sense of "pillage." Those by Kawajiri Hōgin (1908), Sugawara Jihō (1920), Shibayama Zenkei (1958), and Yamada Mumon (1981) have been particularly helpful.

THE HEART SUTRA

Maha-prajna-paramita Heart Sutra
(Great Wisdom Perfection Heart Sutra)

Kanjizai (Free and Unobstructed Seeing) Bodhisattva was practicing the deep wisdom *paramita*. At that time he clearly saw all five *skandhas* are empty and was delivered from all distress and suffering.

Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. And it is the same for sensation, perception, conception, and consciousness.

Shariputra, all things are empty appearances. They are not born, not destroyed, not stained, not pure; they do not increase or decrease.

Therefore, in emptiness there is no form; no sensation, perception, conception, or consciousness; no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind; no form, sound, scent, taste, touch, dharmas; no realm of seeing, and so on to no realm of consciousness; no ignorance, no end of ignorance, and so on to no old age and death; and no ending of old age and death; no pain, karma, extinction, Way; no wisdom, no attaining.

As he has nothing to attain, he is a Bodhisattva. Because he depends upon the wisdom *paramita*, his mind is unhindered; being unhindered, he knows no

fear, and is far beyond all topsy-turvy thought, and reaches final Nirvana.

Because all Buddhas of past, present, and future depend upon the wisdom *paramita*, they attain the highest enlightenment. Know therefore that the wisdom *paramita* is the great mantra, the great and glorious mantra, the highest mantra, the supreme mantra, which is capable of removing all suffering. It is true, it is not false.

Therefore I preach the wisdom *paramita* mantra, I preach the mantra that goes

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha!

Capping Words and Verses

A BLIND OLD geezer inside a dark cave thick with a maze of vines and creepers. He returns and sits stark naked in the weeds. Poor master Fu, a pity he's going to lose all those lovely mansions! And don't say these words are cold and indifferent, that they have no taste. One bellyful eliminates your hunger to the end of time.

Casting a thicket of thorn over the entire universe,
He enwraps in its tangles every monk on earth;
I pray that they will find the way to deliverance,
And enjoy themselves hawking in a lotus thread.

.....

A blind old geezer refers to the Bodhisattva Free and Unrestricted Seeing (Kanjizai, or Kannon Bodhisattva), who preaches the sutra, but by extension refers to Hakuin himself, the author of the capping words and verses.

A maze of vines and creepers are verbal complications and conceptual understanding. Unable to stand on their own, they attach and constrict intrinsic wisdom and prevent it from working freely. Beneath the hard words is suggested the proper role of the Bodhisattva, who leaves the naked suchness of his own enlightenment and, undisturbed by the obstructing senses, preaches to beings in the world of relativity ("the weeds"). Of his blindness, the modern Rinzai teacher Sugawara Jiho writes, "Not being blind, we see mountains, rivers, men and women and other things, and we think this gives us a kind of freedom, while in fact it is the cause of our unfreedom. . . . The great Buddhist teachers of the past are people who went forward to become blind men" (*Kenchō Donge Shingyō*, p. 3).

Poor master Fu alludes to lines from Hsueh-tou's *Ancestral Heroes Collection*. Fu Ta-shih, a celebrated layman of early Chinese Buddhism, was regarded as an incarnation of Maitreya, the Buddha

of the future. Maitreya is depicted in the *Flower Garland Sutra* as dwelling in the splendidly bejeweled palaces of enlightenment which he created in the Tushita Heaven. The wisdom expounded in the sutra, and at work in Hakuin's comments as well, negates all things; nothing can escape it, not the dwellings of sentient beings immured within their selfhood, not even Maitreya's enlightened universe.

A lotus thread. Lotus threads are fine, string-like filaments that appear when the lotus root is cut, formed from the viscous substance that exudes from the severed surfaces. Here they stand for something infinitesimally small and narrow. Hakuin exhorts students to free themselves from the entanglements of discriminatory attachment and attain the perfect, unfettered activity that comes with total attainment.

- Maha

THE CHINESE TRANSLATED this as "great." But what is it? You won't find anything in the universe to compare it to. Almost everyone thinks *maha* means "wide and vast" — they're wrong! Even a Superior Man has a love of wealth, but he knows the proper way to get it. Bring me a *small* wisdom!

A million Sumerus in a dewdrop on a hairtip,
The entire universe in a foam-fleck on the sea.
A pair of young lads in the eyes of a midge
Play games with the world; they never stop.

.....

Even a Superior Man . . . the proper way to get it. To the Superior Man (a Confucian term here signifying a Bodhisattva), wisdom is the only true wealth, and the only proper way to get it is through the attainment of *kenshō*. See #46, first note, pp. 64–5.

Sumeru is the mountain said to stand at the center of the world.

The entire universe, literally "the trichiliocosm," is comprised of three thousand worlds each made up of a thousand worlds, the total constituting the universe in its entirety.

Midge translates *chiao-ming*, described as an infinitesimally small insect whose universe is a follicle of hair in a mosquito's eyebrow.

- Prajna

THE CHINESE TRANSLATED this as “wisdom.” Everyone has it in consummate perfection. No one's excepted. When is this fellow going to stop making these mud pies? You'll never see it until your fingers let go from the edge of the cliff. Why? Do not trim your nails at the foot of a lamp. You might get an inchworm to measure lengths, but don't ask a snail to plow a rocky field.

Ears like the dumb, eyes like the blind.
The empty sky losing itself to midnight.
Even Shariputra couldn't get a good look.
The clubfoot Persian crossed at another ford.

.....

Mud pies are words and phrases.

Do not trim your nails at the foot of a lamp was a popular Japanese saying, based on the belief that cutting one's nails at night when spirits and demons were about was dangerous. It is said to have been a favorite “turning word” of Hakuin's teacher Shōju Rōjin (*Shōju Rōjin Shū*, p. 33). Here it apparently cautions students against relaxing their efforts as they strive toward realization.

You might get an inchworm to measure . . . rocky field. Even supposing an inchworm or “looper” is measuring lengths as it hunches along, a snail with horns, somewhat resembling an ox, cannot plow a rocky field. Don't ask the impossible. “There is a sweetness in *prajna*, but without passing through many difficult spots, you'll never know its taste” (annotation).

Shariputra was foremost in wisdom among the Buddha's followers. The *Heart Sutra* was preached by the Buddha at his request.

The clubfoot Persian . . . ford. Even as Kannon explains it, wisdom is long gone.

- Paramita

THE CHINESE TRANSLATION for this is “reach the other shore.” But where is that? He’s digging himself into a hole to get at the blue sky. Shrimps wriggle and jump, but they don’t escape the dipper. The place where the Treasure lies is near at hand — take one more step! “Master Hsieh sits in his boat wringing water from his line. Even the clearest-eyed monk is stricken with grief.”

Is there anyone on earth who’s a man of this shore?
How sad to stand mistaken on a wave-lashed quay!
Pursuing practice with your roots to life unsevered
Is a pointless struggle, however long it lasts.

.....

Shrimps wriggle . . . the dipper. The *paramitas*, or “perfections,” are the practices Bodhisattvas undertake to escape the suffering of “this shore” and reach the enlightened realm of Nirvana or Buddhahood on the “other shore.” Instead of getting worked up about leaving “this shore” and reaching the “other shore,” just grasp directly the Buddha-nature within.

Master Hsieh sits . . . from his line. Hsieh is the family name of the 9th-century Chinese monk Hsuan-sha Shih-pei, who lived as a fisherman before entering religious life. Hakuin uses these two lines in a verse comment on the koan “Hsuan-sha’s Triple Invalid” in *Hekiganshū Hishō*, Case 88. As the fishing line is always in the water, it is futile to attempt to wring it dry. Hsuan-sha’s attempts suggest the purposeless activity of the Bodhisattva in helping fellow beings cross to the other shore, but such depth of attainment is something even the most deeply enlightened monk finds difficult to grasp. See also #129, where Hakuin uses a similar quote to comment on a koan.

Pursuing practice . . . however long it lasts. “This zazen cushion discerns *prajna* wisdom. It is right here that the other shore is reached” (annotation).

- Heart

FOR UNTOLD AGES this didn't have a name. Then they blundered and gave it one. Even gold dust blinds when it gets into your eyes. A mani gem is just another blemish on the Dharma. What is *This!* Most people are like the fellow who confused a saddle remnant for his dead father's jawbone. People who study the Way are ignorant of the truth simply because at the start of their practice they confound it with their own discriminations. "Those have been the very source of birth and death since the beginning of time, yet the fools take them for their original Self."

Clearly this is ungettable within the Three Worlds —
An empty sky swept clean away. Not a particle left.
On the zazen seat, in the dead of night, cold as steel.
At the window moonlight filled with plum blossoms.

.....

Heart (Sanskrit *Hridaya*). "Also called Amida. Also called Hell. Even in *Compendium of the Five Lamps* and *Records of the Lamp* [the two most important Zen collections], few priests are found who have grasped the truth of the Bodhi-mind. Lacking the Bodhi-mind, you will fall into hell, even if you are a prince or a shōgun, not to mention ordinary men and women" (annotation, probably reporting Hakuin's own words).

"Those [*discriminations*] have been the very source . . . for their original Self." Ch'ang-sha Ching-ts'en's well-known saying.

Clearly this is ungettable . . . the Three Worlds. Quoted from the *Diamond Sutra*. The "Three Worlds" are those of past, present, and future.

- Sutra

"THUS I HAVE heard. The Buddha was once . . ." *Faugh!* Who wants to roll *that* open! Most people go fossicking inside piles of paper trash for yellow scripture scrolls with little red knobs. Just plucking another clove off a lily bulb.

This is one sutra they didn't compile

Inside that cave at Pippali.
Kumarajiva had no words to translate it;
Ananda himself couldn't get wind of it.
At the north window, icy drafts whistle through cracks,
At the south pond, a wild goose stands in snowy reeds.
Above, the mountain moon is pinched thin with cold,
Freezing clouds threaten to plunge from the sky.
Buddhas might descend to this world by the thousands,
They couldn't add or subtract one thing.

.....

"Thus I have heard. The Buddha was once . . ." The traditional opening for Buddhist sutras.

Just plucking another . . . lily bulb. The bulb of a lily is composed of a number of smaller bulbs or cloves, and has no real core. Pluck them off one by one and you are left with nothing. To seek wisdom by reading sutras one after another is like picking cloves off a lily bulb, looking for its center. An annotation adds, "When you are not yet enlightened, sutras are not really sutras. When you are enlightened, a lily bulb, even one clove, is a sutra of ultimate suchness."

Kumarajiva (344–413) was a central Asian monk celebrated for his translations of Buddhist sutras into Chinese, among which was a translation of the *Heart Sutra*.

Ananda was a disciple of the Buddha who is reputed to have heard and memorized all the teachings the Buddha preached during his lifetime. He played an important role in the compilation of the first collection of sutras, said to have taken place inside the Pippali cave in central India.

At the north window, icy drafts . . . They couldn't add or subtract one thing. "This is the true *Heart Sutra*. No one, not even a Buddha, can change that in any way" (annotation).

• Kanjizai (Free and Unobstructed Seeing)

WHY, IT'S THE Bodhisattva of Butuoyan! The Great Fellow who's found in us all. Search the whole earth, you'll never find a single unfree

person. You clear your throat. You spit. You move your arms. You don't need help from others. Who clapped chains on you? Who's holding you back? Lift up your left hand. You just may scratch a Buddha's head. Lift up your right hand. When will you be able to avoid feeling a dog's head?

Fingers clasp and feet walk on without the help of others,
As thoughts and emotions pile up great stocks of Wrong.
But if you cast aside pros and cons, all likes and dislikes,
I'll call you a Kanjizai right there where you're standing.

.....

The sutra begins with the Bodhisattva entering deep meditation (samadhi) prior to preaching.

Kanjizai (Sanskrit, Avalokitesvara; Chinese, Kuan-yin) is the embodiment of wisdom and compassion, the basic forces that inform all Bodhisattvas. In Japan he (or she) is more commonly known by the name Kanzeon (shortened form: Kannon). Kanjizai, meaning "free and unrestricted seeing," is said to represent the student or religious seeker striving for the highest level of wisdom; Kanzeon, "perceiver of the sounds of the world's (suffering)," is said to represent the role of the compassionate teacher, one who has postponed final attainment in order to teach others, vowing never to rest until the last being has also crossed the sea of suffering to the other shore of enlightenment.

Butuoyan (Butuo-shan), "the mountain crag Butuo," or Potalaka, is the mythical mountain dwelling place of the Bodhisattva. The Chinese associated Butuoyan with an island off the coast in the East China Sea. But, Hakuin says, don't look for him there; find him within your own mind.

Lift up your left hand . . . feeling a dog's head? This is said to have been a favorite of Gudō Tōshoku, Hakuin's great-grandfather in the Dharma.

- Bodhisattva

TO DISTINGUISH HIM from Shravakas and Solitary Buddhas. To set him apart from full-fledged Buddhas. It's a provisional name, that's all it is. He's on the road but hasn't budged from home; he's away from home all the time but isn't on the road. I'll snatch the practice of the Four Universal Vows away from you, Bodhisattva — that's the very thing to make you a Superior Man, able in all eight ways.

He has transcended the formless nest of personal emptiness,
Is tossed in the troubled waves of the sea of birth and death.
Seek refuge in the Great Merciful One, reliever of suffering,
In many million different forms over endless space and time.

.....

Shravakas and Solitary Buddhas are Buddhist practitioners of the Two Vehicles, viewed as seeking enlightenment for themselves but making no effort to teach others. To Hakuin, they represent a type of practice he regards as incomplete and inferior to that of the Mahayana Bodhisattva, who while striving toward Buddhahood attempts to assist others to enlightenment as well.

He's on the road but . . . but isn't on the road. A passage from the *Record of Lin-chi*.

I'll snatch the practice . . . away from you, Bodhisattva. The truly Superior Man (Bodhisattva) lives in the world to respond to the needs of suffering beings while at the same time always dwells at home within the timeless realm of enlightenment. This mode of being is reflected in the Universal Vows (*shigu seigan*) that he takes: "Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them; the deluding passions are inexhaustible, I vow to destroy them; the Dharma gates are manifold, I vow to know them; the Buddha Way is supreme, I vow to master it."

Able in all eight ways refers in its original Confucian setting to the eight Confucian virtues: benevolence, propriety, filiality, and so on. In

Hakuin's Zen context the statement as a whole would seem to be that a Bodhisattva is not fully fledged until any taint of Bodhisattvahood is transcended as well.

- Was Practicing

WHAT'S HE PRATTLING about now! Just making waves, stirring up trouble. You sleep at night, you're up and about during the day. You piss, you shit. The clouds sail on, the streams flow along, leaves fall, flowers scatter. But when you hesitate or stop to think, Hell rears up in all its hellish forms. Practicing is like that, all right, but unless you penetrate by the sweat of your own brow and see it for yourself, there's trouble in store for you, and plenty of it!

Who is the one that works your hands and feet?
Eats and drinks when you're hungry and thirsty?
If a hair of discrimination enters into these acts,
You've killed Mr. Chaos boring holes for his eyes.

.....

You've killed Mr. Chaos . . . for his eyes refers to a story in the *Chuang Tzu*: The gods, having finished creating a new world, decided to show their appreciation to Mr. Chaos, whose self-effacing help had been essential to their work, by supplying him with the same senses they themselves enjoyed. They began by boring holes in him to give him the sense of sight, but as they were congratulating themselves on the splendid results, Mr. Chaos died. Chaos denotes a state prior to the arising of discrimination. See also #25 in Book One.

- The Deep Wisdom *Paramita*

BAH!! GOUGING OUT good flesh and creating fresh wounds. Queer thing, this "*wisdom*" of his! What's it like? Deep? Shallow? Like river water? Tell me about this wisdom, with its deeps and shallows. Mistaken identity, I'm afraid. Confusing a pheasant with a phoenix.

Eradicating all form in the quest for emptiness is called shallow,
Seeing emptiness in the fullness of myriad forms is called deep.
Blathering about wisdom with form and emptiness in his hands,
Like a lame tortoise in a glass jug clumping after a bird in flight.

.....

Confusing a pheasant with a phoenix. This phrase is based on an old Chinese tale. The king of Ch'u was a great bird lover who filled his palace with feathered creatures of every kind. An enterprising merchant hoping to gain his favor went to Mount Tan where the phoenix was said to nest and searched high and low for the mythical bird. As he was about to give up and return home, he met a man carrying a strange-looking fowl. It was actually a pheasant, but the man told him it was a famous Mount Tan phoenix, so the merchant bought it and took it to present to the king. The king thought it a rather poor-looking phoenix, but it did have a long tail like a phoenix, and since a phoenix was said to be an auspicious bird, he accepted it with great pleasure (*T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*, ch. 461).

• (At That) Time

HE'S DONE IT again! Scraping out another piece of perfectly good flesh. Before all the infinite kalpas in the past and after all those in the future, the Feather Cutter Blade gleams cold in its sheath with a wonderful vibrant radiance, a luminous night-shining pearl is brought forth on its tray in the blackness of night.

Yesterday morning we swept out the soot of the old year.
Tonight we pound the rice for the New Year's goodies.
There's a pine tree with roots, oranges with green leaves.
Putting on a fresh new robe, I await the coming guests.

.....

The Feather Cutter Blade is a sword so sharp it will slice feathers blown against it. Hakuin uses it as a metaphor for the mind of wisdom.

Yesterday morning we swept . . . for the New Year's goodies. The lecture meeting at which Hakuin delivered these comments on the *Heart Sutra* was apparently held during the winter months, hence the description of New Year's preparations at Shōin-ji.

The full verse expresses the essential oneness of time and being in the ordinary activities of temple life.

• He Clearly Saw

AN IMMACULATE DIAMOND Eye. It is free of even the finest dust. But don't go blinking it open over a bed of flying lime cinders! Where does this "seeing" take place? The entire earth is the eye of a Buddhist monk. It's exactly as Hsuan-sha said.

An ant is walking around a mill inside a mite's eye.
A tiny spider is spinning a web inside a midge's ear.
Tushita Heaven, the world of man, the floors of hell,
Clear as a mango fruit lying in the palm of the hand.

.....

Where does this "seeing" take place? Seeing presumes seer and seen, but no such duality exists in the deep wisdom *paramita*, where, as a Zen saying asserts, "The entire world is the eye of a Buddhist monk."

It's exactly as Hsuan-sha said. On hearing that Ling-yun had attained enlightenment on seeing flowering peach blossoms, Hsuan-sha Shih-pei said: "It is all fine and good, fine and good, but I guarantee you brother monk Ling-yun still hadn't got it all." The words came to be known as "Hsuan-sha's utterance" (*Gensha dōtei*). Hakuin uses the phrase to denote something not yet fully achieved, and to stress the necessity of post-satori training. See the explanation in the note to #269, p. 456.

- All Five *Skandhas* Are Empty

THE SACRED TURTLE'S tail sweeps away her tracks, but how can the tail keep from leaving tracks of its own? Forms are like the towering Iron Hoop Mountains, sensation and perception like a razor-edged Diamond Sword, conception and consciousness like a mani gem that fulfills the heart's desires. But you must realize how far there is to go. Before you know it, darkness will overtake you once again.

Seeing some other's five you think they're you,
You cling to them with personal pride or shame.
It's like a bubble of foam on top an ocean wave,
It's like a lightning bolt streaking across the sky.

.....

Five skandhas or “five aggregates” are the component elements of all sentient beings: form or matter, sensation, perception, conception, and consciousness.

How can the tail keep from leaving tracks of its own? After having said “All things are empty,” the words “all things are empty” still remain.

The *Iron Hoop Mountains* circle the outer limits of the world. Emptiness is far from being mere vacuity. Form (one of the *skandhas*) has a presence as undeniable as mountains; the functions of the mind (the other four *skandhas*) work like an invincible *Diamond Sword* to annihilate illusion, and like the fabulous mani gem that fulfills every wish. To grasp the true meaning of the *skandhas*' emptiness in this way takes years of hard training, and human life is all too brief.

Seeing some other's five . . . pride or shame. The five *skandhas* of which you are made are originally empty, but mistakenly thinking them to be real, you attach to them.

- And Was Delivered from All Distress and Suffering

THE SHADOW IN the guest's cup never was a snake. How clear, in a dream, the three worlds are. When you wake, all is empty, the

myriad worlds are Mu.

An ogre outside shoves the door,
An ogre inside holds it fast.
Pouring sweat from head to tail,
Struggling for their very lives,
Fighting on throughout the night,
Until the dawn appears at last,
And laughter fills the early light —
They were friends from the first!

.....

The shadow in the guest's cup never was a snake alludes to an old Chinese story. A Chinese official named Yueh invited a friend to help him celebrate his appointment as governor. He poured his friend a large cup of wine, but when the friend raised it up to drink he saw a snake wriggling on the surface of the wine. He closed his eyes and gulped it down, but immediately begged to be excused and rushed home. Certain that he had swallowed the snake, he became ill and took to his bed. The governor, on learning what had happened, invited him over again. He set a wine cup before his friend and asked him if the snake was still there. When the friend nodded yes, Yueh pointed to a bow hanging on the wall, a reflection of which had been cast on the surface of the wine. In conjuring up illusions such as the five *skandhas*, we create the cause of our suffering. Hakuin quotes this line from a verse in the *Lin-kuan lu (Records from the Groves of Zen)*, ch. 2.

An ogre outside shoves the door . . . They were friends from the first! The verse recasts a story from *Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom*, ch. 92, about a pair of travelers who lost their way and became separated deep in the mountains. One of them wandered aimlessly until darkness began to fall. He approached a small, lonely cottage and asked the householder for lodging. The householder refused, saying he was being haunted by night goblins, but the traveler persisted and the householder finally allowed him to stay. After supper, he heard a vigorous rattling at the door. He ran to the door and put his shoulder against it, holding it fast. All night long the

banging and clawing continued outside the door. Inside, the traveler kept holding it just as tenaciously. But when daylight came, the traveler saw that the goblin he had been struggling against was the friend he had been separated from the previous day, who had also come to the cottage seeking shelter. The ogre inside is the courageous and resolute heart of the Buddhist practitioner, the ogre outside his illusions and desires. Dawn is the opening of enlightenment, when it is realized that illusions are no other than enlightenment.

- Shariputra

PHUH! WHAT COULD this pipsqueak of an Arhat have to offer, with his measly fruits! Around here, even Buddhas and patriarchs have to beg for their lives. Where is he going to hide, with his Hinayana face and Mahayana heart? At Vimalakirti's, he couldn't even get his manhood back. He surely can't have forgotten the way he sweated and squirmed.

In the Deer Park his wisdom surpassed all the rest.
He startled Uncle Long Nails while still in the womb.
He studied with the Great Man himself, took down his
sutra,
Was Rahula's private tutor, the clever Mynah Lady's kid.

.....

With his Hinayana face and Mahayana heart. Shariputra, a follower of the Hinayana, or Smaller Vehicle, tradition who lived prior to the appearance of the Mahayana teaching, was at heart already a follower of that teaching. In the *Lotus Sutra* the Buddha predicts that in the future disciples like Shariputra will surpass the stage of Arhatship and achieve Buddhahood.

At Vimalakirti's, he couldn't . . . the way he sweated and squirmed. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, when Layman Vimalakirti and the Bodhisattva Manjusri discuss the role of the Bodhisattva, Shariputra is present along with a celestial maiden of Bodhisattvic attainment. Shariputra is resentful that a woman should be there, thinking she will defile the

gathering, He engages her in debate on the possibility of enlightenment for women, intending to put her in her place. He reveals instead his inability to transcend the distinction of sex. She transforms him into a celestial maiden and challenges him to change himself back into a man, which he is unable to do because of the attachments that remain in his mind.

Uncle Long Nails was the brother of Shariputra's mother. Returning home after long and diligent study in great centers of learning, he found that his sister was pregnant. He was surprised to see that she had become extremely intelligent and eloquent, and was impossible to best in argument. Remembering that a woman carrying a child of great wisdom was said to acquire such wisdom herself, he resolved to study with greater diligence in order not to be overshadowed by his new nephew. From then on, he grudged even the time it took to cut his fingernails, which grew to great length as a result.

The Great Man is Kannon. *Rahula*, the son whom Shakamuni fathered prior to his entrance into religious life, was taught by Shariputra and later became one of the Buddha's disciples. The *Mynah Lady* is Shariputra's mother Shari (Shariputra means "son of Shari"), who received her name, meaning "mynah bird," because of her eloquence and piercing eyes.

- Form Is No Other Than Emptiness, Emptiness No Other Than Form

A NICE HOT kettle of stew, and he ruins it by tossing a couple of rat turds in. It's no good forcing delicacies on someone with a full belly. Striking aside the waves to look for water, when the waves *are* water!

Forms don't hinder emptiness, emptiness is the tissue of form.

Emptiness doesn't destroy form, form is the flesh of emptiness.

Inside the Dharma gates where form and emptiness are not two,

A lame turtle with painted eyebrows stands in the evening breeze.

.....

The *rat turds* are form and emptiness.

• Form Is Emptiness, Emptiness Is Form

WHAT UTTER RUBBISH! A useless collection of junk. Don't be teaching gibbons how to climb trees. These goods have been gathering dust on the shelves for two thousand years. Master Hsieh sits in his boat wringing water from his line.

A bush warbler pipes intermittently in the spring breeze.
A thin mist hovers over the peach trees in the warm sun.
A group of young girls, cicada heads and moth eyebrows,
Twirl sprays of blossom, one over each brocade shoulder.

.....

Master Hsieh sits . . . water from his line. Earlier in his commentary, in the capping words for *Paramita*, Hakuin used this same phrase in alluding to the apparently useless effort Bodhisattvas exert as they strive to lead others to enlightenment. Here he chides Kanjizai for needlessly repeating these assertions about form and emptiness.

The verse depicts forms from the actual world, which are in themselves no other than emptiness. *Cicada heads and moth eyebrows* are stock descriptions of female beauty.

• And It Is the Same for Sensation, Perception, Conception, and Consciousness

NOW LOOK AT him — wallowing in the sow-grass! If you take no notice of these strange apparitions when they appear, they self-destruct. A Snow Buddha is a terrible eyesore when the sun comes out. You certainly won't see funny things like that around here.

Earth wind fire water — tracks left when a bird takes flight.

Form sensation perception conception — sparks in the eye.

A stone woman works a shuttle, her skinny elbows flying,
A mud cow barrels through the surf baring her bicuspid.

.....

Snow Buddha. Hakuin comments in *Hekiganshū Hishō*, Case 44: “When the snow melts, all the horse shit becomes visible.”

Earth wind fire water are the four great elements of the material world. *Sparks* are spots that appear when you rub your eyes.

The final lines of the verse exemplify the principle that sensation, perception, conception, and consciousness are empty, cautioning against the error of falling into a passive state of “empty” emptiness. The 20th-century Zen teacher Sugawara Jiho calls them “secret passwords that allow you to enter into the truth of ‘all things are empty.’”

- Shariputra, All Things Are Empty Appearances

IT'S LIKE HE'S rubbing his eyes to make himself see flowers in the air. If all things don't exist to begin with, what do we want with “empty appearances”? He is defecating and spraying pee all over a spotlessly clean yard.

Earth and all its hills and streams are mere palaces of air,
Heaven and hell are bogey bazaars atop the ocean waves.

Pure lands and impure lands are like brushes of turtle fur,
Nirvana and samsara, riding crops carved from hare horn.

.....

Flowers in the air (kūge) are illusory spots seen by those with eye disease; they can also be made to appear by rubbing the eyes.

Pure lands are the Buddhist paradise, the “other shore” of Nirvana. *Impure lands* are the realm of transmigratory births and deaths in which we live.

Turtle fur and *hare horn* are stock Zen metaphors for that which does not exist and, by extension, false notions and delusions.

- They Are Not Born, Not Destroyed, Not Stained, Not Pure; They Do Not Increase or Decrease

REAL FRONT-PAGE STUFF! But is that how things really are? How did you find out they weren't born or destroyed? Don't try to swindle us. Elbows don't bend outward.

Two little chaps in your eyes are awaiting their guests.
The Valley Spirit isn't dead, she is expecting your call.
No one ever got dirty by residing in the human world;
There is not a single clean face in Buddha's pure lands.
Eighty thousand shares of Dharma — isn't that enough?
Billions of Buddha-lands, contained in next to nothing.
The pillow-prince of Hantan getting fame and respect,
The governor of Nanke assiduously raking in the taxes.

.....

The first couplet of the verse corresponds to “Not Born, Not Destroyed,” the second to “Not Stained, Not Pure,” the third to “Do Not Increase or Decrease.”

Two little chaps in your eyes are “eye babies” reflected in the viewer's eye. Working freely and mindlessly, they reflect all things as they truly are.

The Valley Spirit refers to the echo, which, though void of any fixed substance or self, responds instantly to someone's call.

Eighty thousand shares of Dharma. There are said to be eighty thousand (it is usually eighty-four thousand) Buddhist teachings, one for each of the afflicting passions.

The pillow-prince of Hantan . . . fame and respect alludes to a Chinese folktale about a young man who left home for a career in

the capital and stopped at a place called Hantan. While waiting for his lunch to cook, he took a nap and dreamed he passed through an illustrious career that culminated in his appointment as chief minister of state. When he awoke and saw the food still cooking on the fire, he realized the vanity of human life and returned home. "The world is a dream within a dream" (annotation).

The governor of Nanke . . . taxes is another folktale. A man fell asleep under a locust tree and dreamed he was summoned to the court of a king and asked to govern the difficult province of Nanke. Under his rule the people became wealthy enough to pay him taxes and make him a rich man. One day a messenger arrived to tell the man that the kingdom was in danger. He advised him that the capital must be moved, and asked him to return to his original home until he was needed again. The man awoke in the midst of a great storm. He later found a deserted anthill in the trunk of the locust tree; the ants had all left before the storm had struck.

- Therefore, In Emptiness

A REGULAR JACKAL'S den. A cave of shadowy ghosts. How many pilgrims have fallen in here! A deep, black pit. The unutterable darkness of the grave. What a terrifying place!

A hundred cold, hungry monks, a phoenix brotherhood,
Spread their winter fans and offer New Year's greetings.
On the wall hangs a blue-eyed, purple-bearded old man,
In a jar blossom fragrant flowers of the chaste plum tree.
Cold muffling even the bush warbler's bright clear notes,
Warmth rising up to the Zen seats from a red-hot brazier.
There are presents of wild yams, in plaits of straw,
And for old men, sugared sweets, laid in their wrappers.

.....

A hundred cold, hungry monks. . . . The verse describes the New Year's scene at the small rural temple in Kai province where Hakuin was delivering these comments; or perhaps he is thinking of Shōin-ji.

In the previous section he warned against attaching to “empty” emptiness; now he gives concrete descriptions of true emptiness.

A blue-eyed, purple-bearded old man is Bodhidharma, founder of the Zen school, whose picture is hung during the New Year period.

Cold muffling . . . bright clear notes. The winter cold is still too severe for the *uguisu*, or bush warbler, whose familiar pipings herald the coming of spring.

Warmth rising . . . from a red-hot brazier. In the Zen hall, a brazier is set out for the guests who will come to pay their respects.

Presents of wild yams . . . sweets, laid in their wrappers. The yams and sweets, of which Hakuin was inordinately fond, are presents sent by members of the lay congregation.

• (There Is) No Form; No Sensation, Perception, Conception, or Consciousness

DREAMS, DELUSIONS, BLOSSOMS in the air — why bother grasping at them? Profit and loss, right and wrong — toss all that out. You’re being too scrupulous. Just stirring up trouble. What’s the good of making everything an empty void?

A boundless, unencumbered place — empty, open, still.
The earth and hills and rivers are labels,
Splitting mind four ways, bundling forms up into one,
Nothing more than echoes ringing in an empty ravine.

.....

Splitting mind four ways, bundling forms up into one alludes again to the five *skandhas* or aggregates that together constitute the self — dissecting mental function into sensation, perception, conception, and consciousness (representing the spiritual aspect of self), then adding form (the physical aspect). “Attaching names such as mind or form, but originally they don’t exist” (annotation).

• No Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue, Body, Mind; No Form, Sound, Scent, Taste, Touch, Dharmas; No Realm of Seeing, and So On To No Realm of Consciousness

WELL I'VE GOT eyes and ears, a nose and tongue — a body and mind too! And forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and thoughts do exist! Beneath a clear autumn sky stretch endless wastes where no one goes. A horseman comes riding from the west. Who is he?

When the six senses stir the slightest, six dusts appear.
When the mind-root is quiet, the six dusts rest as well.
The roots, dusts, consciousnesses, all eighteen realms —
Are foam flecks rising on the waves of a shoreless sea.

.....

Beneath a clear autumn sky . . . where no one goes. Hakuin uses these lines by the 8th-century Chinese poet Wang Ch'ang-ling to express the realm of absolute emptiness and the marvelous working of enlightenment that emerges from within it. He calls on students to affirm the sutra's negations for themselves. "Unless you've already grasped this, words like 'exist' or 'don't exist' are childish prattling. Why is this verse used here? It has poisonous thorns and razor-sharp brambles that snarl up into the very heavens. But they won't help one bit until you break free of their virulent poison by hearing the sound of one hand" (annotation).

When the six senses stir the slightest, six dusts appear. . . . The six senses or roots (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, sense of touch, and faculty of mind) interact with the six dusts (shape and color, sound, odor, taste, touch, and mental objects or dharmas) to produce the six consciousnesses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and mind), manifesting the external world as a result. The first five roots and consciousnesses function in conjunction with the sixth, mind or faculty of mind, which is their source. When the mind-root remains quiet and unattached, the six dusts do not arise.

• No Ignorance, No End of Ignorance, and So On To No Old Age and Death; and No Ending of Old Age and Death

BRIGHT PEARLS SCATTERED inside a silken purple curtain. Bright pearls stuffed inside a beggar's filthy old bag. It takes a wise man to know *those* are precious jewels. The water a cow drinks turns to cream; the water a snake drinks turns to poison. The sages' twelve-storied mansions are wrapped in perpetual five-colored clouds, beyond your reach.

Twelve causes are created, twelve causes extinguished,
Creators are called ordinary men, extinguishers sages.
Such is the universe that appears to a Solitary Buddha,
The dusts in his eyes are wheeling about in Emptiness.
Who's the one who can see the dusts flying in his eyes?
How estimable the perfect, sudden Mahayana teaching!
If you enter into its radiance and make it truly your own,
You will break free from that festering wild fox carcass.

.....

No Ignorance, No End of Ignorance, and So On To No Old Age and Death. The sutra gives an abbreviated list of the twelve links in the chain of causation (*nidāna; jūni-innen*): ignorance, activity, consciousness, names and forms, six sense organs, contact with external objects, sensations, desire for pleasure, grasping, state of existing, birth, and old age and death. Ignorance (*avidya*, literally, “no light”), the first of these, is the cause of all the rest; each in turn causes and affects the others in an endless and unbroken chain. The chain of causation is associated with the Solitary Buddha (Pratyeka-buddha), who contemplates it and goes on to gain enlightenment by exhausting ignorance and the other links in the chain. It is also the fundamental Buddhist conception of human existence, based on the relationship between causal origination and karmic transmigration. In the Mahayana tradition, when “no light” is replaced by “light,” or wisdom, all the links of the chain become, as such, functions of wisdom.

Bright pearls . . . silken purple curtain . . . filthy old bag. The pearls are a metaphor for the mind manifested in total perfection. Unable to see clearly the shining pearls (symbols of the original self) scattered out inside a silk curtain, an ignorant person can only wonder what

they are; the enlightened know they are a treasure. “Ignorance is in and of itself a beautiful and splendid thing. To someone who truly understands, it is the precious treasure of the Bodhisattva’s myriad virtues” (annotation).

The sages’ twelve-storied mansions . . . five-colored clouds. “Twelve-storied mansions” alludes to the twelve-linked chain of causation within the self, and the “five-colored clouds” are the five *skandhas* that make up the material and mental aspects of the self; they are all seen and experienced by the enlightened as an abode of tranquility and bliss.

The dusts in his eyes are wheeling about in Emptiness. The causes and effects in the twelve-linked chain are like flecks in the eye. Though the enlightenment of the Solitary Buddha allows him to realize tranquility and the emptiness and formlessness of all things, to the Mahayana Bodhisattva these too are no more than particles of dust floating in the eye.

You will break free . . . fox carcass is an allusion to a remark attributed to the Buddha that Hakuin frequently cites: “I’d rather you be transformed into the mangy old carcass of a wild fox than for you ever to accept the one-sided truths of the Shravaka and Solitary Buddha.” A similar statement appears in Zen master Bassui Tokushō’s *Covered in Mud, Steeped in Water (Wadei-gasui)*. If there is an Indian or Chinese source, it has not been traced.

- No Pain, Karma, Extinction, Way

GEMS SHINING IN the dawn light beyond the bamboo blind. The blockhead goes at them with an upraised sword. The salt in the seawater. The size in the paint. Egrets settling in a field — a thousand flakes of snow. Yellow warblers alighting on a tree — branches bursting into bloom.

Four burning bullets, white-hot to the core, put on
Straw sandals at midnight, soar beyond the clouds.
The Four Noble Truths (pain, karma, extinction, Way)
Are not at the end or beginning, not perfect or sudden.
Kaundinya, Bhadrīka, and Kulika, and all those others

Got their face gates burned off before they even knew it.
The Golden Sage wasn't netting shrimp in Deer Park,
He was secretly anticipating their Mahayana roots.

.....

Pain, karma, extinction, Way. A summary of the Four Noble Truths the Buddha used to explain the causes of suffering and the path of deliverance: Life is suffering (pain); desire is the cause of suffering (karma); there can be a cessation of suffering (extinction); and following the Noble Eightfold Path grants liberation from suffering (Way).

Gems shining . . . bamboo blind. The gems are the Four Noble Truths. Not knowing their priceless worth, ignorant people as well as those of partial attainment such as Shravakas and Solitary Buddhas regard them as undesirable and attempt to eliminate them.

Egrets settling . . . bursting into bloom. "Here is a realm where differences are so slight as to be indistinguishable" (annotation). See also the verse in #61.

The Four Noble Truths . . . not perfect or sudden. T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's classification of the Buddha's teachings into five successive periods (*goji-kyō*) places various sutras in categories, beginning with the *Flower Garland Sutra* which he preached at the beginning right after his enlightenment, and ending with the final period when he preached the *Lotus* and *Nirvana* sutras. The term "sudden" is given to the *Flower Garland Sutra*, the term "perfect" to the *Lotus Sutra*. In any case, Hakuin says that distinctions such as these are meaningless; the true reality of the Four Noble Truths is unpreachable.

Kaundinya, Bhadrīka, and Kulika are three of the five ascetics who heard the Buddha's first sermon in the Deer Park, at which he expounded the Four Noble Truths. They became his followers and later achieved the stage of Arhat.

The Golden Sage is the Buddha; the *shrimp* are the Arhats who were present in the Deer Park when the Buddha first preached his Dharma. Although apparently these representatives of the Two

Vehicles were the object of the Buddha's teaching, the Bodhisattva's enlightened eye sees that he was preaching the Mahayana Dharma all along. Shibayama Zenkei comments that everything depends on the person using the net. If he has great skill, he will come up not with shrimp but with people of great enlightenment.

- No Wisdom, No Attaining

SETTING UP HOUSE in the boneyard again! So many folks misunderstand these words! A dead man peering goggle-eyed from a coffin. Shout yourself hoarse at Prince Chang painted there on the paper, you won't get a peep out of him!

A black fire, burning with a dark gemlike brilliance,
Drains vast heaven and earth of all their native color.
Mountains and rivers don't appear in the mirror of mind,
A hundred million worlds are agonizing, all for nothing.

.....

A dead man peering . . . from a coffin. A state that is neither life nor death in which one remains attached to "empty" emptiness, unable to deepen one's own attainment or work for others' salvation. "Misunderstand these words and you're a dead man" (annotation).

Shout yourself hoarse at Prince Chang . . . on the paper alludes to a story in the preface of the *Blue Cliff Record*. A prince told his subjects that he would continue to protect them even after his death. All they had to do if they were ever in peril was to go before his portrait and invoke his name, and he would come to their aid. When an enemy army threatened the country, people did as he had instructed, but to no avail. The county soon fell to the invaders.

"If you think this is satori, you will be like Prince Chang on the paper, of no use whatever" (annotation). "You must grasp it yourself" (Shibayama Zenkei).

A black fire . . . brilliance. A black fire, being virtually indiscernible, comes upon you unawares, destroying you and everything else in its path. See "Black Fire," #169.

• As He Has Nothing to Attain, He Is a Bodhisattva

PUT THAT DOWN! The thief pleads innocence with the stolen goods in his hands. Responding freely to sentient beings according to circumstances wherever he may be, but he never leaves the Bodhisattva seat. Unless you are clear about three and eight and nine, you'll have a lot to think about as you confront the world.

Bodhisattva, an enlightened being, a Great Being,
In Chinese, he's "the sentient being of great heart."
Entering the three ways, he takes on our suffering,
Joyfully appearing unbidden throughout the world.
Vowing not to accept the fruit of partial awakening,
He deepens his attainment in working to save others.
Even should the great void completely cease to exist,
His struggle to save sentient beings would never end.

.....

The thief pleads innocence . . . his hands. Hakuin says to let go of non-attainment too.

Unless you are clear about three and eight and nine. Similar numerical phrases in the Zen records have been given plausible meanings by adding up the numbers, but Hakuin's sense is probably better reflected in an explanation given in a dictionary of Zen colloquial phrases for "unclear about four and seven and one": "Even the Buddhas don't know." See also #51.

The three ways are the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, and animals.

Even should the great void . . . would never end. These words, often quoted by Hakuin and others, appear originally in a vow composed by a Zen master named P'a-shan jan that is included in *Admonitions for Buddhists*.

• Because He Depends Upon the Wisdom *Paramita*

WHAT A CHOKE-PEAR! He's gagging on it! If you see anything at all to depend on, spit it out at once! I can bear the northern wastes of Yuchou, but the mildness of Chiang-nan is sheer agony.

Tell us you found greed and anger among Arhats, but
Stop babbling about a Bodhisattva relying on wisdom.
If you chance upon one relying on even a single thing
Know that he's not unhindered, but shackled in chains.
Bodhisattva and Wisdom are essentially not different,
Pearls rolling on a tray — sudden, ready, uninhibited.
He's neither worldly nor saintly, not foolish or wise.
A crying shame, when you draw a snake, to add legs.

.....

I can bear the northern wastes . . . is sheer agony. Wisdom and Bodhisattva are one and the same. The first phrase refers to the previous segment of the *Heart Sutra*, “As he has nothing to attain, he is a Bodhisattva”; the second phrase refers to the current segment, “Because he depends upon the wisdom *paramita*.”

A crying shame . . . to add legs is from an old Chinese story about a wealthy man who gave a goblet of wine to his attendants, to be awarded to the first one who could draw a snake. The first who drew a snake failed to win the prize because he added legs to it. The “legs” are dependence upon wisdom.

• His Mind Is Unhindered; Being Unhindered, He Knows No Fear, and Is Far Beyond All Topsy-Turvy Thought

NOTHING OUT OF the ordinary here. Supernatural powers and marvelous activity — just drawing water and carrying firewood. Raising my head, I see the sun setting over my old home in the west.

It isn't mind or nature; it isn't Nirvana either.
It's not the Buddha, the patriarchs, or Wisdom.
The ten worlds are a red-hot iron mallet head
That shatters empty space into eternal serenity.
Just parting his lips, great lion-roars come forth,
Scaring the life from the foxes, hares, and badgers.
Wizard-like, taking the form of what's before him,
Moving freely in response to the situation at hand.
On hearing about Mother Li's ailing left shoulder,

He burns some moxa on Granny Chang's right leg.
Delusive thoughts, fears, sorrows, and all the rest,
Like a drop of water flung into a bottomless gorge.
When dispatched to Ch'i, Ch'ih was wrapped in fine furs,
When Li succumbed, his coffin was plain and
unsheathed.
The priest in the hermitage is roused from his midday
nap:
"Boys broke through the fence to steal the bamboo
shoots!"

.....

Drawing water and carrying firewood is a well-known phrase from a
verse by Layman P'ang.

Raising my head, I see . . . home in the west. "When you reach your
goal and look around, you find that things are no different from
before" (annotation).

Each of the four-line stanzas that make up this verse is keyed to one
of the four clauses in the sutra passage.

The ten worlds are the Dharma universe in its entirety, including the
six realms of illusion (hell, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting demons,
human beings, and devas) and the four realms of enlightenment
(Shravaka, Solitary Buddha, Bodhisattva, and Buddha).

On hearing about Mother Li's ailing left shoulder. An old Taoist story
tells of Mother Li, a rich woman with a painful growth on her left
shoulder, being taken by Granny Chang to a Taoist healer. Knowing
his patient disliked moxocautery, the healer cured her by burning
moxa on Granny Chang's right leg.

*When dispatched to Ch'i, Ch'ih . . . his coffin was plain and
unsheathed.* Both these stories are cited from the Confucian
Analects, perhaps in the context of transcending "topsy-turvy
thought." "These are the great *dharani* of Sendai's [Hakuin's] cave"
(annotation)

When Confucius's disciple Ch'ih was dispatched on a mission,
master Jan requested an allowance of grain to support Ch'ih's

mother. Confucius told him to give her a certain amount, but Jan actually gave her much more. When Confucius learned of it, he said, "When Ch'ih left on his mission, he drove sleek horses and was wrapped in fine furs. There is a saying, 'A Superior Man helps out the needy; he does not make the rich richer still.'"

After Yen Hui died, his father begged Confucius for his carriage so he could sell it to buy an outer casing for his son's coffin. Confucius refused, telling him that when his own son Li died, his coffin had no outer casing, and he had not given up his carriage to buy one for Li because it was not proper that he walk on foot.

- And Reaches Final Nirvana

THIS IS THE hole pilgrims all fall into. They fill it up year after year. He's gone off again to flit with the ghosts. It's worse than stinking socks! The upright men of our tribe are not like this. With us, the father conceals for the sake of the son, the son for the sake of the father.

The mind of birth and death shared by all beings
Is in and of itself the Buddhas' supreme Nirvana.
A wooden hen warms an egg perching on a coffin.
A clay mare sniffing the breeze returns to the barn.

.....

The upright men of our tribe . . . for the sake of the father. Confucius, being told of a man in a neighboring country called Upright K'ung because he bore witness against his father when the latter made off with a sheep, said, "In my country, uprightness is somewhat different. The father shields the son, the son shields the father" (*Analects*). Teaching students about "reaching final Nirvana" can only harm them.

- Because All Buddhas of Past, Present, and Future Depend Upon the Wisdom *Paramita*

HOLDING A GOOD man down only cheapens him. The bare skin and bones are fine as they are. They have a natural elegance and grace.

There's no need to lard them with powder and rouge. There are no cold spots in a seething cauldron.

Wisdom brings forth the Buddhas of the three worlds,
The Buddhas of the three worlds all enact this wisdom.
Inexhaustible reciprocity of host and guest — *Onsoro!*
Cranes screech in an old nest banged about by the wind.

.....

“As a Buddha’s wisdom is all-encompassing, there should be nothing left over for him to depend upon” (annotation).

Inexhaustible reciprocity of host and guest. The interrelation between all Buddhas and the wisdom *paramita*. Shibayama Zenkei suggests the comparison of Indra’s Net, the infinite variety of interrelation and inclusiveness of all things in the universe; to the Buddha’s enlightened eye, each of those interconnected and mutually dependent things is a manifestation of ultimate truth.

Onsoro! is a *dharani* or spell, transliterated and untranslated, said to contain mystic power. One commentator describes it as “the voice of the Buddhas of past, present, and future preaching and enacting wisdom.” “Wisdom and Buddhas exist in an inexhaustible relationship, with Buddhas the body and Wisdom the function, or with Wisdom the body and Buddhas the function” (annotation).

Cranes screech . . . by the wind. “What ever can this *Onsoro* mean?” (annotation).

- They Attain the Highest Enlightenment

STOP HAMMERING SPIKES into empty space! Steers may give birth to calves, but no Buddha was ever enlightened by relying on *Prajna*-wisdom. Why? Because Wisdom and Enlightenment are from the first not two. Besides, if a Buddha has anything at all left to attain, he is no Buddha. This is like a blazing conflagration. If Buddhas and patriarchs get too close, they get burned to death just like everyone else.

Otters will be catching fish in trees long before

Buddhas are enlightened by relying on something.
And declaring a Buddha has something to attain!
Next he'll blither about the Arhats' marital bliss.

.....

This is like a blazing conflagration. Ashikaga Shizan says this is like Chao-chou's "Mu," a shining sword that kills all who come into contact with it.

The Arhats' marital bliss. Arhats are celibate.

• Know Therefore that the Wisdom *Paramita* Is the Great Mantra
THAT'S HAULING WATER to sell beside a river. Don't drag that beat-up old lacquer bowl out here! Transcribe a word three times and a crow becomes a how, and then ends up a horse. He's trying to palm off shoddy goods on us again, like a shady little shopkeeper. When walking at night, don't tread on anything white — if it's not water, it's usually a stone.

Cherish the great mantra of your own self-nature,
It turns a red-hot iron ball to finest, sweetest nectar.
Heaven, hell, and the world right here on earth —
A snowflake disappearing into a glowing furnace.

.....

Don't drag that beat-up old lacquer bowl out here! At mountain shrines in China, lacquer bowls that had been used for Taoist rites were cast into a rushing torrent. By the time they reached the village in the valley blow, they were badly damaged and utterly useless to the villagers.

Transcribe a word three times. . . . The Chinese characters for "crow," "how," and "horse" are similar in form. When texts were copied and recopied by hand, scribes often mistook one character for another, and the mistake would sometimes change the original meaning completely. After all his explanations of wisdom, Kanjizai

ends up with something altogether different from what he intended. He'd be better off keeping his mouth shut.

When walking at night, don't tread on anything white. In the pitch blackness of night (Emptiness), you move in a realm where "not one thing exists." Anything you might see is sure to be an illusion. Ignore it. It can only harm you.

Cherish the great mantra of your own self-nature. When you grasp the wisdom within you through the experience of *kenshō*, all the entangling passions and the suffering they cause transform into perfect freedom and bliss.

- The Great and Glorious Mantra

DON'T GIVE US "great and glorious" mantras! Break the rough-hewn mountain staff and the great earth's indigenous black stretches out in all directions. Heaven and earth lose all their shapes and colors. Sun and moon swallow up their light. Black ink pouring into a black lacquer tub.

Great and glorious mantra of the Buddha native within
you
Casts a tranquil radiance over the world's hills and
streams.
The vast ocean of hindering karma from infinite ages past
is
Like a bubble floating on a wave, or a spark inside your
eye.

.....

Break the rough-hewn mountain staff. A mountain staff, made from a branch broken off from a mountain tree and used just as it is, serves as a metaphor for the self in its natural state, the Buddha-nature. Hakuin tells students to forget about words such as "great and glorious mantra." Concentrate on the urgent business of realizing the great and glorious mantra of wisdom in yourself.

The vast ocean . . . a spark inside your eye. “If the great and glorious mantra is manifested in the dawn of *kenshō*, then you will see that the vast ocean of your karmic hindrances from the beginningless beginning are no more than bubbles rising on the waves, sparks appearing in your eyes . . . which will disappear without a trace” (annotation).

- The Highest Mantra

WHAT ABOUT DOWN around your feet? Bring me the lowest mantra! Raindrops pattering over fallen autumn leaves, although sobering to the soul, can't compare to the intimacy of glorious sunset clouds over yellowing fields of grain.

The Finest, the Noblest, the First,
Snaring even Shaka and Maitreya.
Although each of us has it at birth,
We must each perish and be reborn.

.....

What about down around your feet? “If on coming to the highest mantra you look up, there's no way you can avoid stepping in a *tengu* demon's shit” (annotation). *Tengu* are winged, long-nosed demons that inhabit the mountains and forests. “Becoming a *tengu*” has connotations of overweening self-assurance.

Raindrops pattering . . . fields of yellowing grain. “This is old Hakuin's highest mantra” (annotation). One modern commentator suggests that the melancholy autumn scene in the first line evokes the impermanence of life, while the second line evokes the joy and splendor of life's fullness, known only by proceeding through impermanence and death into the enlightened realm of ultimate Wisdom, the highest mantra. In Zen writings the word “intimate” usually conveys the idea of oneness rather than closeness.

- The Supreme Mantra

GABBLE GABBLE! ALL this talk makes two stakes appear. What became of the single stake? Where is it? Who said, “There is nothing equal to it anywhere, above or below or in the four directions”? He’s broken it all up, ripped it into tiny bits, pieces are strewn all over. Te-yun, you blunt old gimlet, how many times are you going to descend from the summit of Wonder Peak and get a foolish old sage to help you fill up the well with snow?

Last winter the plum was bitter cold.
Now a dash of rain, a burst of bloom!
Its shadows move in the pale moonlight,
Its subtle scent wafts in the spring breeze.
Yesterday you were a snow-covered tree,
Today your boughs are starred with blossom!
What cold and privation have you weathered,
O venerable queen of the flower realm!

.....

All this talk makes two stakes appear. “What is prior to the uttering of a single word — that is splendid. When you start talking about things like Emptiness and Mu, you make two stakes appear” (annotation).

“There is nothing equal to it . . . in the four directions” is a phrase associated with Zen master Yun-men (see #137).

Te-yun, you blunt old gimlet . . . fill up the well with snow is an allusion to lines in Hsueh-tou’s *Ancestral Heroes Collection*: “Te-yun, you useless old gimlet, how often / Will you leave the summit of Wonder Peak, / Enlist other foolish saints and work together / With them to fill in the well with snow?” See also #145, “Mutual Integration Attained.”

• Which Is Capable of Removing All Suffering

PICKING A LILY bulb apart to find a core. Shaving a square bamboo staff to make it round. Using a Persian carpet for a drumhead. Nine times nine is now and always eighty-one. Nineteen and twenty-nine meet, but neither offers its hand.

When you pass the test of Mind and Emptiness,
Your *skandhas* and elements turn to instant ash,
Heaven and hell become a lot of useless baggage,
Both Buddha and demon realms are blown to bits.
A warbler chortles ecstatic strains of "White Snow."
A black turtle clambers up a lighthouse, sword in belt.
If anyone has a mind to take part in their samadhi,
They must once shed rivers of white-beaded sweat.

.....

A lily bulb has no real center; it is the cloves that make it up.

Shaving a square bamboo staff . . . carpet for a drumhead. Square bamboo is extremely difficult to grow; to shave it round would be to ruin it. "Taking things of great value and turning them into objects of little consequence" (annotation).

A warbler chortles . . . up a lighthouse, sword in belt. "This is the vital, life-giving samadhi of all the Buddhas of the three worlds" (annotation).

"*White Snow*" is glossed as a song performed only with the greatest difficulty. In a story in *Responses to Questions of the King of Ch'u (Tui Ch'u-wang wen)*, attributed to Sung Yu (3rd century B.C.), thousands of people in the Ch'u capital join in to sing a popular song; but "when the noble song 'White Snow' is sung, few people are able to join in. 'White Snow' became a standard example of something whose excellence is appreciated by few" (Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 619).

Kanjizai speaks of attaining Nirvana by removing suffering. Attempting to do that, Hakuin says, would be to throw out the baby with the bathwater, since suffering and Nirvana are inseparable.

- It Is True, It Is Not False

A FALSEHOOD! HE'S lying through his teeth! The arrow has already flown the China coast. You rub elbows with him all day long. How is it that you resemble him?

Master Yen of Ch'i bumped off three valiant men.
Szechuan Chiang subdued a brace of bold generals.
A cockcrow let a man give fierce tigers the slip.
A sheep's head was dangled to peddle dog flesh.
A man pointed to a deer to see who'd submit.
A stepmother's bee dashed a father's fond hopes.
T'ao Chu led the beauty of Yueh to her death.
Chi-hsin surrendered himself to the ruler of Ch'u.
A man slept under a bridge, supping on charcoal.
A girl wept at a well for a clasp she'd thrown in.
A king's corpse got away in a load of ripe fish.
A father's chipped tooth gnawed off a son's ear.
Burning by day a log road along the river cliffs,
Moving at night over the Ch'eng-ts'ang crossing.
When your eyes penetrate these tales to the heart,
A yard of cold steel glints like frost in its sheath.

.....

The first fourteen lines of the verse present episodes from Chinese legend or history in which falsehood or deception, generally prompted by loyalty and devotion, plays a central role. Presumably Hakuin uses them to allude to the baffling, seemingly outrageous methods (*upaya*) Zen teachers employ in pushing students across the threshold into enlightenment.

Master Yen of Ch'i bumped off three valiant men. Master Yen, minister of the state of Ch'i, contrived a plan to dispose of three faithful retainers whose obstinacy and self-righteousness had been the cause of constant unrest. Calling them together, he presented them with two peaches, but they had difficulty accepting them, since taking one would mean denying it to one of the other two. They deferred back and forth until finally, to solve the dilemma, one of them committed suicide. The others, not to be outdone, killed themselves as well.

Szechuan Chiang subdued a brace of bold generals. Led by generals Chung-hui and Teng-ai, the armies of Wei launched a

surprise attack on the kingdom of Shu and, despite wily General Chiang's valiant efforts, subdued the Shu forces. The lord of Shu surrendered, and Chiang was captured as well. Because of Chiang's ability, Chung-hui made him a counselor. When General Teng-ai was ennobled for his service, Chiang, sensing Chung-hui's deep resentment, persuaded him to slander his rival to the lord of Wei. The lord of Wei, believing the charges, had Teng-ai imprisoned. Learning that Chung-hui aspired to become ruler of Shu, Chiang incited him to insurrection. During the ensuing battles between the lord of Wei and Chung-hui's rebel forces, Chiang killed Teng-ai in his prison cell, and later both he and Chung-hui perished in the losing rebel cause. Though unable to defeat Wei as commander of the Shu forces, Chiang thus brought about the deaths of its two most valiant generals.

A cockcrow let a man give fierce tigers the slip. Because of its aggressive policies, Ch'in was feared by its neighbors as "a land of fierce tigers." The Ch'in emperor invited the wise and courageous Meng Ch'ang-chun to serve at his court but later decided he could not trust him. He would have had him executed had not Meng bribed the king's favorite to intercede on his behalf, promising her a precious robe of white fox. Meng had presented the robe to the emperor on his arrival at court, so to give it to the lady he was now obliged to steal it back. Setting out immediately to escape before the theft could be discovered, Meng reached the border in the middle of the night with the king's men in hot pursuit. The barrier would not open until first cockcrow, so one of Meng's followers who was an expert at imitating birdcalls made a sound like a crowing cock. The barrier was raised and Meng escaped to safety.

A man pointed to a deer to see who'd submit. Aware of the ill will some of his officials bore him, the powerful chief eunuch Chao-kao determined to test their loyalty. He presented a deer to the king and told him it was a horse. The king just laughed, but Chao kept insisting it was a horse and asked the officials present their opinions. Some agreed it was a horse, some remained silent, and a few said it was a deer. Chao promoted those who agreed with him and punished the others.

A stepmother's bee dashed a father's fond hopes. A stepmother wanted her husband's favorite son out of the way. Catching a large bee, she pulled out its stinger and placed the bee on the lapel of her robe, aware that her husband was watching from a distance. Seeing the bee, the son tried to brush it away. His father, thinking he was making improper advances toward his stepmother, reprimanded him angrily. The son's protestations of innocence were to no avail, and he was at last driven to suicide.

T'ao Chu led the beauty of Yueh to her death. T'ao Chu (Chu of T'ao) is a sobriquet used by the famous minister Fan-li. When Yueh was defeated by the lord of Wu and the Yueh forces were being put to death, the lord of Yueh begged for clemency. Despite warnings from advisers that the lord of Yueh might later prove dangerous, the lord of Wu spared his life. The lord of Yueh was finally able to convince the lord of Wu of his fealty and allowed to return to his own country, where he faithfully served the Wu interests and sent frequent offerings of tribute. The lord of Wu, his mind now at rest, gave himself up to a life of decadence, and he asked Yueh to send him fifty beautiful maidens for his seraglio. Among them was Hsi-shih, the lady of Yueh, one of the celebrated beauties of Chinese history. The lord of Wu spent all his time with her, neglecting the government, which fell into turmoil. At this point the faithful retainer T'ao Chu convinced the lord of Yueh that the time was ripe to avenge his earlier defeat. The Yueh forces marched and defeated Wu handily. The lord of Yueh took Hsi-shih as his concubine, disregarding the examples T'ao Chu recited to him of beautiful women who had been the ruin of a country. On their way back to Yueh, at a spot called Stone Lake, T'ao Chu put Hsi-shih in a boat, took her to the middle of the lake, and explained that he would have to kill her for the sake of the country. Before he could, however, she flung herself into the water and drowned.

Chi-hsin surrendered himself to the ruler of Ch'u. When the first Han emperor was besieged by the forces of Ch'u and had no hope of escape, a captain in his army named Chi-hsin told the king of Ch'u that his lord had decided to surrender and would proceed to the Ch'u headquarters through the eastern gates of

the city. The soldiers of Ch'u all gathered at the gates to catch sight of the emperor, but Chi-hsin took his master's place in a covered palanquin, allowing the Han emperor to escape from the western gates. When the Ch'u king discovered the ruse, he had Chi-hsin roasted on a burning pyre.

A man slept under a bridge, supping on charcoal. Yu Jang served as a vassal of Fan Chung-hang, but he was not highly esteemed by his master, so when Fan was overthrown by Chih-po, Yu Jang offered Chih-po his services. Chih-po took a liking to him and Yu Jang became a trusted retainer. When Chih-po was killed by Hsiang-tzu, ruler of Chao, Yu Jang tried again and again, without success, to avenge his death. Finally, swallowing charcoal and daubing his body with lacquer to disguise himself as a leper, he took up residence with other outcasts under a bridge, awaiting the day when Hsiang-tzu would pass over it. When Hsiang-tzu finally did come, however, his horse sensed Yu Jang's presence as it approached the bridge and refused to cross. Yu was discovered lying in wait and apprehended. Hsiang-tzu asked him why, having served the murderer of his first master, he was now so strongly bent on revenge. Yu Jang replied that while his first master had treated him like an ordinary man, Chih-po had always treated him with honor, and he had vowed to requite him in kind. He begged Hsiang-tzu for a piece of his clothing so that he could fulfill his vow before he was executed. Upon being given Hsiang-tzu's coat, Yu Jang thrust his sword into it three times, saying, "I can report this to Chih-po when I meet him in the next world." He then fell on his sword and died.

A girl wept at a well for a clasp she'd thrown in. The notorious thief Hou Pai saw a young girl weeping beside a well as he was making off with an armful of valuables, and stopped to ask what was wrong. She told him she had dropped a precious hair clasp into the well and was certain to be punished for losing it when she returned home. Feeling sorry for her, Hou Pai stripped off his clothes and climbed down to retrieve the clasp. But while Hou Pai was down the well, the girl, who was really Hou Hei, a famous thief in her own right, made off with the booty and Hou Pai's clothes as well.

A king's corpse got away in a load of ripe fish. Chao-kao, the tyrannical minister who appeared above in the story about the horse and the deer, was accompanying the king of Ch'in on a hunting excursion far from the capital when the king suddenly died. Wanting to control the selection of the king's successor, Chao-kao kept the death a secret and took the king's body back to the capital in the royal palanquin as if he were alive. Afraid that the smell of the decaying corpse would be noticed on the long journey, Chao-kao had a large quantity of fermented fish placed over the body. His strategy worked, and the new king appointed him chief minister.

A father's chipped tooth gnawed off a son's ear. An eldest son in the west of China struck his father and broke two of his teeth. The father, incensed at this unfilial act, decided to prosecute him. If convicted, the penalty was death. The son sought the advice of a clever acquaintance. After a moment's thought, the acquaintance suddenly bit the son on the ear. He told him that when he was called before the magistrate and asked to explain his action, he should say his father had broken his teeth when he bit his ear in a fit of rage. Using this ploy, the son managed to escape the executioner's block, but on his way home he was struck dead by a bolt of lightning.

Burning by day a log road along the river cliffs, Moving at night over the Ch'eng-ts'ang crossing. These lines refer to an intrigue at the beginning of the Han dynasty. After leading a revolt against the lord of Ch'in, Hsiang-yu emerged as the most powerful force in the country. He proclaimed himself king of Western Ch'u and appointed Liu-pang governor of the Han. Aware that Liu-pang had great ambitions of his own, and feeling uneasy having him near, Hsiang-yu sent him to the land of Shu in the remote western regions and kept his troops ready for battle just in case. Chang-liang, a retainer of Hsiang-yu who was secretly working for Liu-pang, assured Hsiang-yu that Liu-pang no longer presented a threat. He advised him to make doubly sure by having the plank road over which Liu-pang would have to pass were he to attack burned and rendered impassable. Now that his rival was effectively bottled up within the mountainous borders of Shu,

Hsiang-yu finally felt secure. Chang-liang sent word to Liu-pang that the time for attack had come. Using a secret road that crossed the river at a place called Ch'eng-ts'ang, Liu-pang surprised and destroyed Hsiang-yu's armies and went on to establish the Han Empire.

- Therefore I Preach the Wisdom *Paramita* Mantra

WELL WHAT HAVE you been doing up till now? It's like a teetotaler trying to force wine down your throat. You don't get the real taste by swilling it cup after cup. Unable to return for ten full years, you forget the Way you came.

He preached it before, and now he trots it out again!
Snowdrifts accumulating over accumulated snowdrifts.
There is no place anywhere you can hide or escape it,
Who's the wine for? We're already drunk to the gills!

.....

Unable to return for ten full years, you forget the Way you came is a line from the *Poems of Han-shan*. With years of practice, enlightenment deepens until it is free of any trace or odor of enlightenment. "Ten years stands for ten worlds or realms of living beings — the universe. To detach oneself from these realms is to become a Buddha and no longer be affected by the karmic influences of the ten worlds. This is the real meaning of the wisdom *paramita*" (annotation).

- I Preach the Mantra That Goes

HE'S AT IT again! Over and over! What about woodcutters' songs? Fishermen's chanteys? Where do they come in? What about warbling thrushes and twittering swallows? When you enter the waves, don't start culling bubbles from the surf!

These weed-choked fields with seven-word furrows,
Great castles of verbiage wrought in five-word lines
Were not written for the eyes of old veteran priests,

I did them for you monks, cold and hungry in your huts.
For if you can't find the Way and transform your self,
You stay trapped, entangled down a bottomless pit.
And don't try to tell me that my poems are too hard,
Face it, the problem is your own eyeless state.
When you come on a word you don't understand,
Quick, bite it at once, chew it right to the pith!
Once soaked to the bone in a cold sweat of death,
All the koans Zen has are yanked up root and stem.
With toil and trouble, I too once glimpsed the Edge,
Smashed the scale that works with a blind balance.
Once that tool of unknowing is shattered for good,
You'll fill with the fierceness and courage of lions.
Zen is blessed with the power to bring this about,
Why not use it, bore through to Perfect Integrity?
Today people turn away from Zen as if it were dirt,
Who will then carry on the life-thread of Wisdom?
I'm not just an old man with an itch to write verse,
I want to rouse stalwart seekers wherever they are.
The superior know at a glance where the arrow flies,
Others will just prattle about the rhythm and rhyme.

Ssu-ma Kuang of the Sung was a prince among men,
What a shame eyes of such worth remained unopen!
When he came upon difficult, "hard-to-pass" koans,
He said they were riddles made to vex young monks.
For grave crimes a person must always be repentant,
Surely slandering the Dharma isn't a minor offense!
Crowds of such miscreants are at large in the world,
The Zen landscape is desolate almost beyond belief.
If the mind of the Buddha-patriarchs is in your grasp,
How could you possibly remain blind to their words?
To determine how authentic your own attainment is,
The words of the patriarchs serve as bright mirrors.
Today Zen is practiced in a lax, half-baked fashion,
Men follow others' words, and fancies of their own.
If hearsay and book learning can satisfy your needs,
The patriarchal gardens are still a million miles off.

So I beseech you, great men, forget your own welfare,
Make Zen's five-petaled flower blossom once more!

.....

What about woodcutters' songs? Fishermen's chanteys? To the enlightened eye, all things are preaching the wonderful wisdom mantra. In creating distinctions Kanjizai also creates the causes of delusion.

These weed-choked fields with seven-word furrows, Great castles of verbiage wrought in five-word lines. The verses in Hakuin's commentary on the *Heart Sutra* are composed of lines of either seven or five Chinese characters.

The scale that works with a blind balance is a reference to a steelyard on a scale that has no markings or calibrations on the balance arm. Such a scale symbolizes the mind or self, the fundamental source of ignorance that is incapable of accurate measurement yet which the unenlightened make the basis of their discriminations.

Ssu-ma Kuang of the Sung. The famous 11th-century Confucian scholar Ssu-ma Kuang was not anti-Buddhist, but Hakuin often criticizes him for misleading students by misunderstanding or misrepresenting the Zen teaching in his writings.

Zen's five-petaled flower refers to the five schools that appeared during Zen's golden age in the T'ang dynasty.

• Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha

SERVING A SUPERIOR Man is easy; pleasing him an impossible task.
Sunset clouds sail together with a lone wild duck; the autumn waters are a single color with the clear autumn sky. Rainsqualls sweep from the hamlet in the south to the hamlet in the north. A young wife carries a box lunch to her mother-in-law in the fields. A grandchild is fed with morsels from grandfather's mouth.

It is now midwinter, the first year of Enkyō.
My students got together and had these words

Carved on wood (each character cost ten *mon*,
More than two thousand in all!) from a desire
To preserve all these dream-babblings of mine.
I have thus added on this final verse for them,
As a tribute of thanks for their thoughtfulness.

My verses finished, I press palms together and pray:
Empty space may cease but my vow will never end.
Any merit my praising of wisdom brings, I transfer
To others, that they may gain the realm of suchness.
Trusting myself to the Buddhas of the three worlds,
To Zen patriarchs and all sages in the ten directions,
To every deva, naga, and demon guarding the Law,
And all the gods in this Land of the Mulberry Tree,
I pray that all the brethren that reside with me here
Will with steadfast resolve and diamond-hard minds
Move with dispatch to penetrate through the Barrier;
Then keeping the precepts gem ever perfectly bright
In mind, while sweeping clear all demons of delusion,
Will benefit without rest the vast suffering multitudes.

.....

The sutra ends with this mantra or mystic spell, usually rendered, “O Wisdom, gone, gone, gone to the other shore, landed at the other shore!” D.T. Suzuki has described it as the spontaneous affirmation of enlightenment emerging from Kanjizai’s inner being. The 17th-century Sōtō teacher Tenkei Denson says, “An attempt to apply reason or logic here only reduces the mantra to a dead and lifeless utterance.”

Serving a Superior Man is easy; pleasing him an impossible task. Hakuin applies this saying from the Confucian *Analects* to the fully achieved Bodhisattva or Zen teacher. Because he treats people with compassion according to their capacities, he is easy to serve, but because he is also completely impartial, it is impossible to please him unless you are in accord with the Way.

Sunset clouds sail together with a lone wild duck; the autumn waters are a single color with the clear autumn sky. Hakuin quotes lines by the T'ang poet Wang Po describing a landscape where distinctions are difficult to make out. Hakuin uses them to express the essential oneness of identity and difference, which is also the relation of the final esoteric mantra to the exoteric portion in the rest of the sutra.

Rainsqualls sweep . . . morsels from grandfather's mouth. Hakuin uses these lines from a poem by the Sung poet and Zen layman Huang T'ing-chien to express the daily reality of the wisdom *paramita's* marvelous working. "Not even a veteran monk can grasp this without passing through a thicket of briar. This old priest [Hakuin] suffered through thirty years of trials and tribulations to spit out these words. If someone wants to know what they mean, I haven't the slightest idea. He should undergo great exertions and grasp them for himself" (annotation). Sugawara Jiho calls this "the farthest reaches of Zen attainment, Hakuin's own wisdom *paramita* mantra."

The first year of Enkyō was 1744; Hakuin was sixty years old.

This Land of the Mulberry Tree is a poetical name for Japan.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY (*JISHŪ*)

392. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT THE OPENING OF A LECTURE MEETING AT RURIKŌ-JI ON THE *BLUE CLIFF RECORD*

Hakuin lectured at Rurikō-ji in Mino province in 1758; he was seventy-four. The Chronological Biography provides some background: “In spring the master was invited to lecture at Rurikō-ji. . . . He decided to use the meeting to celebrate in advance the one hundredth anniversary of the death of National Master Gudō with a series of lectures on the Blue Cliff Record. . . . Upon arriving at Rurikō-ji the master composed a letter which he had distributed to Zen temples far and wide. He wrote: ‘As we reach the one hundredth anniversary of Master Gudō’s death, I propose to deliver a series of lectures on the Blue Cliff Record. Anyone who feels a debt of Dharma gratitude to the National Master should come to Rurikō-ji to offer incense and make their bows to him.’ . . . [During the meeting] he sent letters to senior priests in Gudō’s teaching line urging them to arrange for Gudō’s Zen records, now in manuscript, to be published. Discussions were held and various opinions were voiced, but in the end they were unable to reach any decision on the matter. The master was incensed by their lack of enthusiasm” (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 223). Letters that Hakuin wrote during the exhausting journey through the mountains of central Honshū to Rurikō-ji, which had put him in a foul humor (expressed in the piece below), provide us with fascinating glimpses of the teaching activity he engaged in over his final decade. The letters are translated in Beating the Cloth Drum, pp. 118–41 and 161–64.

Hakuin regarded the Myōshin-ji priest Gudō Tōshoku (1579–1661), whose Dharma heir Shidō Munan was the teacher of Hakuin’s teacher Shōju Rōjin, as his great-grandfather in the Dharma. In 1616, on route to Rurikō-ji, a temple founded by Gudō, the exasperation Hakuin felt at the failure of his fellow priests to support a printing of Gudō’s records prompted him to compose a work entitled Gudō’s Lingering Radiance, in which he points out the important role Gudō had played in keeping the Myōshin-ji school’s koan Zen alive. It is translated in Book Eleven, Supplement Two (pp. 678–706).

Hakuin refers to Gudō in this piece by the honorific title Daien Hōkan Kokushi, literally “National Master Great and Perfect Precious Mirror,” which Gudō received posthumously from the emperor. Hakuin sometimes shortens this title to National Master Hokan. He also calls him National Master Gudo.

Now, IN THE spring of eighth year of Hōreki [1758], on the year of the one hundredth anniversary of National Master Daien Hōkan’s death, his Dharma descendant Jōsui Jōin, the priest of Rurikō-ji in Mino province, arranged a lecture and practice meeting as a great Dharma offering to repay his gratitude to the master. He decided to ask me to come and deliver lectures on the *Ch’in-tou Sutra*. Gōtan Oshō of Myōraku-ji, a temple not far from Rurikō-ji, came to Shōin-ji together with two other honored priests, urging me to accept this invitation. After giving the matter some thought, taking into account the swift approach of my own day of reckoning, not to mention the journey of a hundred leagues through the mountains, and various other difficulties to boot, I declined the invitation. The priests refused to listen.

Then I remembered my teacher Shōju Rōjin’s close kinship with the National Master, which made me a Dharma descendant as well. I set out for far-off Rurikō-ji in a bad mood, still unsure whether to flee or submit. I finally arrived, after a long, arduous trip filled with untold ordeals, and now sit here before you on the Dharma seat, as mortified as a frog trying to roar like a dragon at the bottom of a well. My body is drenched with sweat, the result of shame and nervous fear. I have cobbled together some lines of rustic verse to embellish

the towering clouds of incense that have gathered here. Don't say that the doddering old priest is covering his usual uncouthness over with a layer of additional uglinesses. Why?

The moon has set in the frosty sky, it is almost midnight,
Whose cold shadow has been thrown on the clear pool?

What proof do I have of this?

Nan-jung repeated a phrase about the white stone three times,
Confucius gave him the daughter of his eldest son for his wife.
At this hour when false teachings of Nirvana infest the country,
Zen's traditions lie buried under centuries of accumulated dust,
Under the Sala tree, Gudō's rigorous style fortunately survives,
Its bitter leaves and poisonous buds scourging students' minds.

National Master Hōkan was the father of Zen master Taiō Ryōken, the son of Zen master Yōzan Keiyō. When he first began sucking Yōzan's lethal milk at Myōshin-ji's Shōtaku-in subtemple, he would sit through the nights in a bamboo thicket behind the temple. At dawn, when he got up, a thick mat of mosquitoes gorged with his blood dropped off and lay on the ground around him like a necklace of red cherries. Later he was summoned to the Imperial Palace to give instruction to Emperor Go-Mizuno-o. Emperor and palace officials gathered each morning to hear him teach. It was a reenactment of the meeting between National Master Daitō and Emperor Hanazono, when the Emperor said, "Is it not marvelous that the Buddha Dharma sits face to face with the Royal Dharma?"

Can you see how a superior Zen student succeeds his mortal enemy, whereas a middling student succeeds his benefactor? Authentic teachers are ready to spew out the most virulent fox slobber, plaguing to the death student who gather to receive their instruction. Gudō constantly had Zen master Ungo furrowing his

brow. When Gudō and Zen master Daigu were once surrounded by a band of cutthroat bandits on horseback, Gudō drove them away by shaking his scrawny fists at them, making even Daigu bow his head in deference.

Gudō was always saying, ‘It’s already too late. In a hundred years they’ll be hanging gongs up in all the Zen temples and the priests will be beating on them, shouting out choruses of Nembutsu at the top of their lungs.’ That is exactly what we are seeing take place at the present day, when Zen priests assure you that doing nothing and remaining in a state of perfect freedom represents the ultimate stage of Zen training. This is the result of their not engaging in authentic Zen practice or achieving *kenshō*. How much more convincing it is to say that Zen students should take as their model the example of a priest such as National Master Gudō with his penetrating discernment.

Gudō restored the training hall at Daisen-ji in Mino province to provide a place where monks could engage in practice to attain Buddhahood. He had them constantly chewing on the rotten teeth and claws of the Dharma cave. Seeing them, the miscreant skunks who preached silent illumination Zen crumbled away, their livers shattered.

Isshi Bunshu of Eigen-ji was one of the men who issued from Gudō’s forge. Isshi was a priest of outstanding capacity who enjoyed the staunch patronage of the imperial court. Unfortunately, he died not long after being installed at Eigen-ji, preceding his teacher Gudō in death.

Who but Gudō could address Myōshin-ji founder Kanzan and declare, “It is fortunate, master Kanzan, that Gudō is here!” We must treasure a great Zen teacher like him, the kind of man who appears only once every five hundred years.

Although I am only a stalk of common grass who has poked his way up into the Zen fields, a weed who infests its gardens, I had the great good fortune to encounter Gudō’s direct descendant Shōju Rōjin in his tiny hermitage at Iiyama, and to swipe his divine amulet from under his nose. I deeply regret seeing the genuine Zen traditions they both espoused lying in the dust, and those who might understand and care about them virtually nonexistent. I constantly

lament the decline of these traditions first brought to Japan by National Master Daiō, and the lack of any genuine priests to teach them.

It is because I especially deplore the absence of young Zen seedlings of the true stripe that I have made the long journey from my temple in Suruga to hold this meeting. But I myself do not have the strength to raise up the fortunes of our school. National Master Gudō left us this secret password: “If you want to reach the untraceable realm of genuine, unassailable peace, you must never be satisfied with a small attainment. The more satoris you attain, the greater you must strive. The more you grasp, the more determined your practice must be. If you do this, you will come to the final difficult barriers, the story of ‘Su-shan’s Memorial Tower’, ‘Wu-tsu’s Buffalo Passes Through the Window’, ‘Ch’ien-feng’s Three Kinds of Infirmary’, and ‘Nan-ch’uan’s Death’. As you pass through those ugly, disagreeable koans, one by one, you should examine yourself to see whether you are still a person of the ordinary kind, or a saint.”

Among all the barriers, however, the one to be particularly deplored is my own final pitch-black barrier. What is the pitch-black barrier?

After the rain the cheeks of the red azaleas stream with tears.

A rising breeze sends ripples through the green barley’s hair.

Kyū!

Making an offering of incense, I say:

For a hundred years, thirty-six thousand days altogether,
Gudō has remained a great and precious Dharma mirror.
Empty space, the body itself lose themselves in its light,
Scaring the living daylights out of Buddhas and demons.

.....

Jōsui Jōin (n.d.) Not much is known about Hakuin’s relationship with this priest, though it was evidently a close one. Two *chinsō* portraits

he painted of Jōsui are extant, one of them, dated age seventy-one, was probably done during this meeting (HZB #130).

Ch'in-tou Sutra is Hakuin's tongue-in-cheek title for the *Blue Cliff Record*, a combination of Chinese characters from the names of its authors, Yuan-wu K'o-ch'in and Hsueh-tou Ch'ung-hsien.

Gōtan Oshō is Gōtan Zentatsu (1692–1779) of Myōraku-ji in Mino, present-day Gifu prefecture.

The moon has set . . . clear pool are lines from a verse by Hsueh-tou in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 40. "Everywhere pitch blackness. No shadows. Nothing to reflect or be reflected" (annotation).

Nan-jung repeated . . . for his wife. "Nan-jung kept repeating the words about the white jade tablet. Confucius arranged for him to marry the daughter of his elder brother" (*The Analects of Confucius*, p. 72). The words, from the *Book of Odes*, are: "Flaws in a white jade tablet / Can still be polished away. / But a flaw in these words — / Nothing can mend it!" In another Confucian text, Confucius is made to commend Nan-jung for repeating these words three times daily. Hakuin is presumably cautioning monks to be very circumspect in the use of words. "Didn't Confucius heap praise on Nan-jang for being so prudent in his use of words, and arrange for his brother's daughter to be given in marriage to him?" (annotation).

Under the Sala tree, Gudō's rigorous style . . . scourging students' minds. One of Hakuin's sobriquets was *Shara juge sendai rōnō*, "the old reprobate monk seated under the Sala Tree" Here Hakuin declares that he alone now transmits Gudō's teaching style and keeps alive the true traditions of koan Zen.

Yōzan Keiyō (1559–1626) taught at the Shōtaku-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji. Founded by Tōyō Eichō (1429–1504), Shōtaku-in is one of four important subtemples within the Myōshin-ji monastery that administer the four Myōshin-ji sub-lineages throughout Japan.

He would sit through the nights . . . At dawn, when he got up . . . a necklace of red cherries. "No sooner had the master [Gudō] first visited Yōzan, than Yōzan said, 'What do you think about the blows Niao-chiu struck?' Gudō hit Yōzan and then sat on his zazen cushion. Yōzan kicked him over and reviled him, 'If that's the way

you see things, you can't be called a follower of the Tōyō line.' Gudō got up and left the room. He became increasingly frightened. . . . But his fierce resolve grew ever stronger. One evening he went out and sat in the bamboo thicket behind the temple, boring into his koan all through the night until, at dawn, he penetrated completely through it, arriving at an exceptionally deep attainment and completely free and unfettered activity. He grasped it so completely that there was nothing left to grasp. As it was summer, when he got up and shook out his robe, the countless mosquitoes filled with his blood that were clinging to his body fell to the ground around him. Seeing them, he began to shake and the hair stood up all over his body. He hurried to Yōzan's chambers and explained what he had experienced. Yōzan was extremely pleased" (*Gudō Nempu; Gudō's Chronological Biography*). A fuller account of this story is found in *Wild Ivy*, pp. 74–6.

Later he was summoned . . . gathered each morning to hear him teach. "Emperor Go-Mizuno-o [also Go-Mino-o; 1596–1680] was deeply devoted to the Buddha Way, and he always held the Zen school in great esteem. He invited master Gudō to the palace. They talked about the Way in great detail. The Emperor was extremely pleased. After Gudō left, the Emperor said to one of the courtiers in attendance, 'A priest with his extraordinary presence and pure, genuine manner of speaking is a giant asset for the Zen school.' In the thirteenth year of Kan'ei [1636], the Emperor invited Gudō to the Sentō Palace in Kyoto. He had a Dharma meeting conducted, adhering strictly to Buddhist regulations, and asked Gudō to preach from the high seat" (*Daien Hōkan Kokushi Den; Biography of National Master Daien Hōkan*).

It was a reenactment . . . face to face with the Royal Dharma. "Emperor Hanazono [reigned 1308–17], a devout Buddhist, heard of Daitō's reputation and invited him to the palace. . . . Daitō, properly attired in his Buddhist robe, appeared before the Emperor and took a seat facing him. 'Is it not marvelous that the Buddha Dharma should face the Royal Dharma on the same level?' said the Emperor. Daitō replied, 'Is it not marvelous that the Royal Dharma should face the Buddha Dharma on the same level?' The Emperor moved his head, pleased with the reply" (*Shūmon Shōtō-roku*, ch. 11). D.T. Suzuki

describes Daitō's meeting with Emperor Hanaono in *The Essence of Buddhism*, pp. 16–18 (Hōzō-kan, Kyoto, 1948).

Gudō and Zen master Daigu were once surrounded . . . bow his head in deference. This apparently happened at around the time of the great battle of Sekigahara in Mino province. “Gudō and Daigu Sōchiku put on their traveling packs and went to visit their home villages in Mino. In passing through Kano village on their way back, they ran into some bandits that had been blocking the main roads with their swords and lances and assaulting travelers. Seeing them, Daigu was ready to retrace his steps, but Gudō said, ‘We’ve come this far, why go back now? Come on, follow me.’ Glaring angrily and holding his fists up, he confronted the bandits and began running straight toward them issuing loud shouts. Taken by surprise, the bandits scattered and fled. . . . Gudō looked at Daigu, and began clapping his hands and roaring with laughter. Daigu, who had followed Gudō’s leadership from the time he was a young monk, now decided to join him on his pilgrimage around the country. Daigu later told people about the events” (*Gudō Kokushi Anroku, Spiritual Biography of National Master Gudō*, quoted from Yoshizawa’s draft of *Poison Blossoms*).

Gudō was always saying, ‘It’s already too late . . . the top of their lungs.’ Gudō was a critic of Nembutsu Zen and a leading opponent of the Ōbaku school, which included Nembutsu among its practices when it was introduced from China in the mid-17th century, however this particular quotation is not found in Gudō’s surviving records.

Isshi Bunshu (1608–46). Isshi was originally a student of the Daitoku-ji priest Takuan Sōhō, but when it became clear that Takuan had decided to have no Dharma heirs, Isshi, evidently with the encouragement and help of Emperor Go-Mizuno-o, who strongly supported him, received the transmission from Gudō and was installed as head priest of Eigen-ji, a large *honzan* temple in the mountains of Ōmi province east of Lake Biwa.

“It is fortunate, master Kanzan, that Gudō is here!” According to Gudō’s Zen records, Gudō made a similar utterance on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of Myōshin-ji founder Kanzan Egen’s death: “Regrettably, most of the twenty-four lines of Zen

introduced to Japan have disappeared. Fortunately, Kanzan has a descendant to carry on his teaching line” (*Hōkan-roku, Records of Precious Mirror*, ch. 4).

National Master Gudō left us this secret password: “If you want . . . or a saint.” This quotation is not found in Gudō’s records. Hakuin elsewhere attributes the words to his own teacher Shōju Rōjin.

After the rain . . . the green barley’s hair. “This is all master Gudō’s true face” (annotation).

Kyū! The word *kyū* literally means “scoop” or “draw up.” “This is Hakuin’s *ichiji-kan* [‘one-word barrier’]. You have to grasp it in one fell scoop” (annotation). The term “one-word barrier” is associated with master Yun-men, who was noted for giving single-word exclamations in response to students’ questions.

Gudō has remained a great and precious Dharma mirror. An allusion to Gudō’s posthumous name *Hōkan*, “Precious Mirror.”

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS (ZATSUBUN)

393. READING JINJA-KŌ BENGI (RESOLVING DOUBTS ABOUT A STUDY OF OUR SHINTŌ SHRINES)

This long piece, dating from Hakuin's forty-eighth year, was provoked by the anti-Buddhist writings of the prominent Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), in particular Razan's Honchō Jinja-kō (A Study of Our Shintō Shrines), published in six volumes between 1638 and 1645. As the title of this piece indicates, Hakuin was not reading A Study of Our Shintō Shrines itself, but passages from it that were included in Jinja-kō Bengi, Resolving Doubts About Jinja-kō, a work published in 1686 by the Shingon priest Jakuhon (1631–1701) of Mount Kōya criticizing Razan's work from a Buddhist perspective. Hakuin makes no more than passing reference to the Bengi or its author, whom he refers to here by the sobriquet Unsekidō, devoting his remarks almost exclusively to Razan's animadversions against Buddhism.

A trusted advisor to Tokugawa Ieyasu and one of the most influential scholars of the Tokugawa period, Razan, also known as Hayashi Dōshun, was founder of the important Hayashi clan of Confucian scholars that played a leading role in establishing Neo-Confucianism as the orthodox creed of Tokugawa governance. Consisting largely of a survey of Shintō shrines and legends, A Study of Our Shintō Shrines may be seen as part of Razan's overall program of curtailing Buddhist influence in the country by using Shintō as an ally, much as his great Chinese mentor Chu Hsi had used Taoism in a campaign to suppress Buddhist influence in Sung China.

Attacking such an important figure, especially in such intemperate language, might have landed Hakuin in hot water with government authorities. Several years earlier, government censors had already placed one of his books, Snake Strawberries, on its list of proscribed works for violating the taboo of mentioning the name of Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa Shōgun, in print.

It was no doubt from such concerns that the well-known Confucian teacher Yanada Zeigan (1672–1757; see #283), after reading Poison Blossoms in manuscript, recommended to Hakuin that he consider deleting this diatribe from his records. His unsolicited advice drew a furious reaction from Hakuin, who immediately told his student Daishū, who was in charge of editing Poison Blossoms, that he was no longer interested in using the preface he had asked Zeigan to write for the collection, since it was now obvious that Zeigan is “a man with no understanding of Zen” (see Introduction, p. 11). A series of letters Hakuin wrote to Daishū at the time (see Beating the Cloth Drum, pp. 122–25) makes clear his outrage at Zeigan’s suggestion, but also reveals the steps he took after reflecting on the matter. These included hedging his bets — “just to be on the safe side” — by telling Daishū to move the piece to the end of collection, where it could be lopped off, should that become necessary, without disturbing the rest of the text. In the end, however, he decided to shift the piece from the main part of the text to the one-volume Supplement. The reason for this is unstated, but is no doubt related to the fact that the Supplement was funded, and published, separately from the rest of the collection.

ONE AUTUMN NIGHT in the eighteenth year of the Kyōhō era [1733], I had taken time off from my zazen and was having a good nap propped up in my chair. My slumber was disturbed by Attendant Boku. He was holding a small book. “You have always told me that Hayashi Razan was an outstanding scholar and wise retainer, a man with a fine literary style who had revived Confucian learning in Japan,” he said. “But I am not so sure about that. On my way here yesterday I stopped at Kōgen-ji. There was a book there he had written. I brought it back with me to disturb your slumber.” I looked and saw that the title was *Jinja-kō Bengi*. It contained Hayashi

Razan's *Jinja-kō* and comments [*Bengi*] added by Unseki-dō of Kii province.

I had long heard of Razan's illustrious reputation, and I was aware that he had written this work. After reading the first three or four pages, Razan's outstanding talent and Unseki's erudition both became clear. This promised to be a wonderful occasion for me, so I adjusted my robe, sat up straight, rubbed the sleep from my eyes, and began to read it out loud.

Both men advanced lofty arguments. It seemed as though I were sitting together with them and listening to them speak. After reading it through, however, I found myself both surprised and puzzled, saddened and fearful at the same time. My notion that Hayashi was an outstanding Confucian scholar with a fine literary style was not without reason.

Although insignificant in size, our country does not yield to others in the long line of emperors she possesses, nor in the great worth of her people. Not to mention her rich variety of Buddhist teachers. The names of virtuous Tendai prelates, eminent Shingon priests, profound teachers of the Pure Land and Zen traditions and of the Precepts school as well stud our nation's history like the stars in the firmament, like the stones on a *go* board.

Why have such a large number of wise and virtuous people appeared? They were vastly superior to their counterparts in China. Was it not because our country is the pure and undefiled land of the *kami*? Was it not because it is a place where Buddhahood is perfectly realized? I had long wondered why such men had emerged only within the Buddhist tradition. Surely people of similar caliber must also exist among the Confucians. I had supposed Hayashi Razan to be one of their most outstanding teachers.

Tonight, as I read Razan's book, any reasons I had for praising him abruptly vanished. By the time I was finished, I was very unhappy with it indeed. How could I have imagined it would be so shameless and contemptible, so virulent? I was amazed. I only regretted that in the past I had so easily and mistakenly approved of this book without looking into the quality of its arguments or aptness of its methods. I had moreover made the same mistake that Hayashi

did when, unable to plumb the secrets of Buddhism's sublime Way, he recklessly condemned it without deeply examining its teachings.

Long ago, outstanding men such as Confucius's disciples Yuan Hsien and Yan Hui cast aside all thought of fame or profit, left the dust of worldly life behind them, and happily spent their lives in broken-down shacks in the hinterlands in order to realize the Way of virtue. Today those who call themselves scholars read a couple of dozen books, listen to several months of lectures, and then suddenly, consumed by flames of jealousy and envy, take it into their heads that their most urgent business is to attack Buddhism. In them, the "correct mind and sincere purpose" that Confucians talk about plays second fiddle to enmity. Elderly scholars who preach the cardinal virtues of morality, charity, and justice are pressed by the need to provide for their wives and families to pursue the paths of power and influence. Essential notions such as Confucius's "the Great Way I teach is the same throughout" or Mencius's "vast and unyielding *ch'i* [that unites moral rightness and the Way]" end up being no more than artifacts lying forgotten on the back shelves. No wonder a person who has truly attained the Way has not appeared from among them. It is unreasonable to expect hawks or kites to produce a cry like a phoenix, or to look for leopard spots on the back of a pig.

There is no way you can equate Confucians like them with monks and nuns who turn from fame and wealth, cut all ties to the world, make their minds tranquil through meditation, drink from valley streams, and sleep in rude dwellings as they seek the marvelous and unsurpassed Way with rigorous practice and singleminded devotion. Human beings are all born with a wonderfully clear, mirror-like wisdom, a gemlike mind that is perfectly empty. Whether it shines forth or becomes dark and murky depends solely on the diligence with which it is polished. Why is it that instead of being ashamed that they lack the strength to muster the necessary resolve, they envy the success the Buddha Dharma enjoys and feel enmity towards those with lofty aspirations?

In the interest of wise governance, when rulers and sage ministers of the past learned of words or deeds they felt they could profit from, even if they came from women or young children, from

cowherds or servants, woodcutters or fishermen, they would accept them and put them to use in the affairs of state. They only feared they would hear of them too late, or would not profit from them enough. Not to mention the marvelous teachings left behind by Shakamuni, the compassionate father of the three worlds. How many kings, emperors, and lesser rulers as well have benefited from his teaching? How can anyone lightly dismiss that? [As Chu Hsi said:] “A superior man should seek to remain blameless while living among those who deserve blame.” Why do these people do the opposite and try to find fault among those who are blameless? Attempting to achieve dominance in the country by disparaging blameless people is not the conduct of the superior man. Not to mention that what they are attacking are the teachings of the World-Honored One, a sage of unsurpassed wisdom who is venerated in all countries throughout the world. With sheep-like discernment and fox-like cunning, they may recklessly disparage him, but they cannot succeed. It is like a shrimp or sardine envying the great ocean, a mayfly resenting the sky overhead. They are just wasting their effort.

Razan, you and your colleagues are quick to deny the fundamental Buddhist principle of karma in the three worlds, calling it a delusion having no basis in reality. Ah! Even if you denied it until the oceans dried up, you would be unable to do away with the principle of cause and effect. It is an inexorable natural law. Your inability to grasp this can only mean that you have fallen into some kind of fox bewitchment. What did Buddhism ever do to you to make you so resentful?

The patriarchs in all the Buddhist sects and temples have been possessed of talent rarely encountered in the world. Their mirror-like wisdom shines forth like the sun, their observance of the discipline has a gemlike purity that glows as chastely as the moon. The heavenly gods have given them their protection, the earth gods have treated them with reverence. The legacy of their customs and meritorious deeds is clearly set forth in the biographies and other records that have been passed down. Yet people like you want to tar such noble spirits with same brush as the *tengu* demons! When I read that in your book, tears ran down my cheeks. And if my Dharma progeny far in the future read those words, they too will surely grit

their teeth with resentment. Are these the thoughts of a “man of virtue”? Are these the designs of a “superior man”?

Dōshun [Hayashi Razan], you took some delirious words uttered by a yamabushi [mountain ascetic] named Gyōshin, a fantastic tale by another yamabushi named Unkei, and made them the main thrust of your anti-Buddhist rant. How could someone regarded as a great Confucian teacher behave in such a despicable and underhanded way? Just who were those yamabushi? Even supposing they were not demented or talking in their sleep, to cite villainous characters like them to substantiate your accusations is meaningless. Not to say fraudulent and make-believe. Not to say ravings in a dream world.¹⁵³

You publish notions like this that have no basis in fact — what most people would call dreams, visions, or fantasies. You make a special point of professing such delusions in hopes of destroying the reputations of good and virtuous Buddhist priests. Are those the aspirations of a man of great stature? Your recklessness is scandalous, your dreams utterly disgraceful. Only a madman could discover value in these wild ravings, find anything to admire in such absurd hallucinations. He would indeed be living in a dream.

You Confucians always make a point of asserting that there is no afterlife, but here, in order to support your allegations, you tell a tale about someone turning into a *tengu* after he dies. The confusion of your logic, as Priest Jakuhon’s investigations have pointed out, can only provoke our laughter.

Ah, it is in his words and deeds that a superior man shows great prudence. It is in governing his speech that a Buddhist sage is particularly careful. Long ago there lived a demon with a golden body and a head like a pig. Millions of foul-smelling maggots poured from his mouth, causing him indescribable suffering. The Buddha said, “He is undergoing this terrible retribution because when he was monk, upholding the pure precepts, he was unable to control his speech.”¹⁵⁴

For vilifying an elderly monk, a senior priest fell into hell for endless kalpas and was then born into a family of the ignoble *candala* caste. For reviling a monk, a farmer was transformed on the spot into a venomous evil dragon. For uttering an offensive remark, an old woman was struck dead by a bolt of lightning. The

intemperate speech of the nun Wei-miao, the pernicious words of the monk Shan-hsing, the retribution suffered by Hui-t'iao and Sung-yu might also be cited¹⁵⁵ — I don't have space to mention them all. I have heard it said that it is unenlightened men and women possessed of a certain amount of intelligence who are especially prone to create the kind of evil karma that sends you into the lowest realms of hell.

You Confucians are fond of stating loudly that when a person dies, the *kon* part of the soul flies off and the *haku* part disperses, leaving not even a particle of dust behind. If you are correct, then that is that. If, on the other hand, the court of Hell with its stern, unsmiling judges and lictors does indeed exist, then when you die you will be presented with a full accounting of your evil deeds, omitting none, and you will have no time to cover up your deceitful speech. When that happens, you will fear the many tortures awaiting you in the Screaming Hells. There is no doubt that the loud assertions and facile declarations you make today will send you straight into those Screaming Hells. On that account, I must feel the greatest pity for you.

In the past the Confucian Chang Wu-chin, envious of Buddhism's large and splendid monasteries, questioned whether Chinese should place such value on a foreign religion. He made up his mind to reduce their influence by writing an anti-Buddhist tract. Words of caution from his wise wife made him have second thoughts.¹⁵⁶ Happening to read the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, all the envy and resentment in his heart suddenly vanished, and he wrote the splendid treatise *Hu-fa lun* [*Treatise in Defense of the Dharma*]. Isn't that a wonderful story, one that should be told again and again through the years? Chang later rose to become prime minister, lived to be over eighty, and worked to protect and preserve the Dharma to the end of his days. He is a fine example of "the superior man willing to rectify his mistakes." He is entirely different from those anti-Buddhist crusaders who are destined to become laughingstocks to later generations.

A genuine spiritual nature is innate in every person. How can anyone fail to grasp the working of cause and effect that is obviously taking place before his very eyes? He can through his own actions acquire the four Buddha wisdoms. How can he fail to understand the

principles of cause and effect clearly at work within the three worlds? Buddhism is an unrivalled teaching. There is no doubt that it aids in governing the country, in meting out proper punishments, and — in destroying the cycle of suffering — extends even into the darkness of the next world. Lowly hunters and trappers, woodcutters and fuel gatherers can understand this. Why are you unable to believe it? But no, owing to a single envious thought and in order to gain a mere temporary advantage, you doggedly insist on launching attacks on Buddhism.

This morbid habit of assailing the Buddhist teachings began long ago with Han Yu [768–824]. It was nurtured and kept alive by Chu Hsi [1130–1200], and its lingering toxins have trickled down to Hayashi Razan and his ilk. The causes of the malady are extremely obscure and difficult to recognize. Even the greatest physician can easily overlook them. Works such as K'ung-ku's *Shang-chih p'ien*, Fo-jih's *Fu-chiao pien*, Shang-ying's *Hu-fa lun*, and T'ien-le's *Chin-yu p'ien* have gone into minute detail, with masterly skill, in attempting to diagnose them. Nonetheless, I do not think they have succeeded in grasping the root cause of the ailment. I know where these deep-seated roots are found. They are not in vital areas, ones that are impossible to treat. I will now try to examine them without overlooking even the smallest, most minute clues and symptoms.

Ever since the sun of Buddhism began to illuminate our land with its rays, the heavenly gods Indra and Brahma embraced and worshipped it; the nagas protected it; kings and nobles worshipped it; samurai and ordinary people were devoted to it. Owing to this, Buddhist students receive alms from the lay community and are able to undergo Buddhist training freely and without reserve. With minds free of mundane thoughts and worries, provided with the four essentials, they can devote themselves wholeheartedly and with unflagging zeal to the three learnings.¹⁵⁷ As a result of this they achieve a rich harvest within, while light from their observance of the precepts and their good works shines forth without. Splendid Buddhist temples have been erected, rules and regulations established governing the Buddhist community's behavior. Statesmen and government officials cannot treat them as vassals. Not even their fathers and mothers can address them as children. As

their practice continues, they become able to provide great help and guidance to others, and the merits they attain extend even to the gods and demons. Having received in their person the seal of the Dharma King, they are truly the jewels of the human world. This is what it means to be a Buddhist.

Observe those who call themselves Confucians. Inuring themselves to the rigors of cold weather, they are oblivious of the summer heat, and they spend the whole year teaching and preaching assiduously. Yet despite their best efforts, not ten of them are able to secure teaching positions. Even if one of them succeeds in obtaining a stipend as someone's retainer, it never exceeds two hundred *koku* of rice. Didn't a scholar as celebrated as Han Yu write: "It is warm this winter; why do my children weep from the cold? There was a bountiful harvest; why does my wife lament the scarcity of food?" It is even truer for all those penurious scholars of lesser standing.

Troubles of this kind kindle secret feelings of envy in their hearts, and they abruptly set about honing their verbal weapons to slander and revile Buddhists, thinking, "All of us, gods, lords, and retainers alike must work together and find a way to rid the country of this foreign creed. We must topple the Buddhist images, burn their scriptures, destroy their temples, and appropriate their lands so we can expand our own schools around the country and make our teachings prosper. If we succeed in establishing Confucianism as the only teaching in the land, our achievement will rival that of the Great Yu and his assistants Yi and Ch'i in subjugating the rivers and swamps. In the actual world in which men live, the Confucian teaching is the one that should be cherished and made to flourish. How regrettable that a foreign teaching has been allowed to achieve such success."

It is like the pig that feels enmity toward a hill of gold and spends all its time rooting away at it. The pig succeeds only in polishing the gold and giving it a more splendid luster. Hence the unhappiness and anger of these perpetually frowning Confucians only increases, and it continues, suppressed and smoldering, until they grow old and die.

In Han Yu's case I think the fever from this sickness was rather weak, and only affected his limbs. In time it would probably have cleared up of itself. In Chu Hsi, however, the fever was an internal one, so that he seemed perfectly well and displayed few outward symptoms. In Hayashi Razan, the malady took hold internally and externally as well, so that each word he utters — rantings about the three worlds, about no afterlife, about Buddhist priests — it all comes out perverted and confused. His is a truly pitiful ailment. How can it be cured? The cure is high rank, prosperity, authority, and a successful career — and they must be present in equal measures. But a mediocre person of indolent habits finds these extremely difficult to acquire. Not to mention that such benefits are heaven-sent, and the gods and demons are not at all generous in imparting them. But these men think that in order to enjoy heaven's backing all they need is a good moral sense and a sympathy for others, and do not have to accumulate virtue in themselves. As a result, they proceed to persecute good people and revile what is lofty and virtuous. How could they be so mistaken?

The true Buddha-body pervades the entire Dharma universe. It does not perish in the world-ending kalpa fire and does not disappear when the great Vairambha wind disperses the universe. It is bright and clear within all phenomena and in the minds of all sentient beings. No matter how much it is praised or exalted, it does not increase. No matter how much it is reviled, it does not decrease. How much less could it be affected by the envy or spite of a run-of-the-mill Confucian. What is sad is that men like these, in whom the eye of wisdom is neither lofty nor bright, whose knowledge is neither great nor far-reaching, who just cling doggedly to their own mean and petty views, choose to constantly whip up the raging flames of the hell of interminable pain by teaching things that harm simple and honest people.

In the past, great figures like Prince Shōtoku, Hōdō Shinsen, Sugawara Michizane, and En no Gyōja¹⁵⁸ made themselves conversant with both this world and the next — something totally beyond the ken of ignorant, unenlightened people — and worshipped both *kami* and the Buddhas unceasingly. It is clear from records that are found in ancient writings that the Japanese *kami*

were not at all averse to the Buddhist teachings. Just look at the stories of Zōga at the Ise Shrine, Gedatsu at the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine, Myōe at the Kasuga Shrine, Taichō at the Hakusan Shrine, Gyōgi at the Shirahige Shrine, Kanshun at the Hiyoshi Shrine, Jōkan at the Yoshino Shrine, or Shōren at the Atsuta Shrine.¹⁵⁹ Why didn't Hayashi quote those stories? Why did he consider only the deluded ravings of Gyōshin and Unkei and cite them in his writings? Is that the extent of such an outstanding scholar's discernment? Is that the measure of a wise man's knowledge? If he is willing to believe such farcical accounts, why doesn't he give credence to Shōen's account of the miracle wrought by the deity of Kasuga as well? Or, since he prefers to place his trust in dream stories, why doesn't he accept the divine revelations the priest Shōshin received from the deity Jūzen-ji at the Hiyoshi Shrine, or those the great deity of Sekizan imparted to the monk of Miidera when that temple was burned down?¹⁶⁰

Over eighty thousand *kami* are enshrined throughout the sixty provinces of our country, all of them possessing sublime virtues and manifesting themselves with marvelous power. In the thousand years since Buddhism was first introduced, have not Buddhist images in numbers well in excess of eighty thousand been enshrined throughout the country? Are not millions of fascicles of Buddhist scripture in existence as well? The Shintō *kami* are manifestations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are their original forms. The relation between the two is essentially nondual, like water and waves. If the Japanese *kami* had considered Buddhism harmful to the country and without benefit to its people, they would hardly have tolerated even one Buddhist image or one book of its scriptures. This is the land of the *kami*. We are subjects of the *kami*. Had they opposed Buddhism, they would never have sat idly by and allowed it to spread.

Saying the *kami* were unaware at the beginning that Buddhism had no value would be to call them ignorant. Saying they despised Buddhism but were unable to restrain its spread would likewise show contempt for them. Or would you suggest that because the *kami* were unable to prevent Buddhism from spreading, they waited a

thousand years until now so they could recruit you Confucians to do the job for them? How utterly ridiculous!

Ah, the mind of a person who would gain satisfaction from beating down others is no different from that of a treacherous minister who sets his sights on his prince's throne. Such a man will never be satisfied until he has it all. "If a family gets a hundred chariots, it will soon harbor secret ambitions to acquire a state with a thousand."¹⁶¹

For Shintōists now to ally themselves with Confucians and attempt to stamp out Buddhism would be like supporting usurper Wang Mang in his plot to overthrow the Han or like coddling Ssu-ma I.¹⁶² If Confucians and Shintōists could set their anti-Buddhist habits aside for the time being and investigate their own ideals of morality, humanity, and justice until they grasped the divine principle that lies at the heart of both teachings, they would both find their virtue increasing by the day, and they would pass on their teachings to their followers and their good fortune to their descendants. How splendid that would be. Why must they be so vindictive, like a spiteful mother-in-law thinking up ways to vent her spleen on her daughter-in-law? How could they act in such a mean and shameful manner?

A Shintō scholar named Tatsuno Hirochika has discussed the similarities and differences between Confucianism and Buddhism in some detail in his *Shinkoku Kaigi-hen*.¹⁶³ His assessment is fair and just, so it is unnecessary for me to revisit the issues here. It should be clear from what has been said that Buddhist priests themselves must take measures to protect and preserve their teachings. It is their mission to take the true teachings on their shoulders and defend the Dharma fortress. If they merely pride themselves on the success enjoyed by the teachings and rely on the benefits of government patronage, then proceed to write worthless screeds and amuse themselves in the composition of clumsy verses, they are no different from the profligate son of a wealthy family who lives a life of lavish extravagance, abandoning himself to the pleasures of the flesh, oblivious of the money he wastes, failing even to learn proper etiquette. Can such men regard themselves as children of the compassionate Buddha, people worthy to receive donations from the lay community?

Autumn is deepening in the halls of Zen, bitter frost forms in its groves. Priests attach to worldly divertissements like an autumn cicada clinging to a leaf. They maintain the donations and other emoluments they receive like a mother hen guarding her nest eggs. No wonder the Confucians regard us as their mortal enemies, despise us as though we were clods of dirt. And it is not only the Confucians who feel this way. If an uprising should take place in the Dharma citadel and the Buddhas were threatened with defeat, what power do we have to defend them? What strategies do we possess to support and maintain them? We have now reached a time when we must be deeply concerned and truly vigilant. Zen teachers have recently appeared around the country who are inspired by feelings of compassion for their students to use expedient means to encourage them and spur them on in their practice. Among these students are some true patricians of the hidden depths, monks who make it seem that springtime may be returning to the Zen gardens. I fervently hope that each of them will seize this auspicious moment and continue their struggle with renewed vigor. But I also worry that the radiance they have produced may be only a short but brilliant flash of light given out by the Dharma lamp before it gutters out altogether.

The Buddha Way is actualized when a true person appears. In attaining the Way, he becomes a precious treasure. Marvelous blades like the fabled Lung-ch'uan or Taia swords with their frosty glint can reflect a person's very vitals. Their cold flame seems to glow from their precious sheaths. But unless someone appears who is capable of using them, they are unable to cut even an earthworm in half and fail to achieve their true potential of severing steel.

When Buddhism was first transmitted to China, Taoist adepts such as Fei Shu-ya and Ch'u Shan-hsin attempted to repel it using secret arts, but the Buddhist monks Kashyapa-Matanga and Chu Fa-lan, armed with the Buddhas' hidden power and manifesting eighteen miraculous powers of their own, thwarted them. It was like the elephant king gazing down at a herd of sheep; all the Taoists could do was to meekly submit. Fei Shu-ya and Ch'u Shan-hsin ended up taking the tonsure and being received into the sangha. ¹⁶⁴

At the time of the T'ang emperor T'ai-tsung [600–649], a Taoist named Shih-hua schemed to demean and discredit Buddhists by

fashioning a ladder made of sword blades for spiritual adepts to climb. The monk Ch'ung-hui frustrated this attempt by ascending the ladder with ease, and was awarded a purple robe from the emperor.¹⁶⁵

During the reign of the T'ang emperor Hsien-tsung, the official Han Yu, hoping to curb Buddhism's influence on the emperor, offered a memorial to the throne protesting the worship of a Buddha-relic. The emperor was furious and had him exiled to the frontier province of Chao-chou. There he became friends with Zen master Ta-tien, who conquered him with laughter and cheerful conversation.¹⁶⁶

During the T'ai-ping era of the Northern Wei dynasty [440–445], the scholar Ts'ui Hao, a favorite of Emperor T'ai Wu, advised him to destroy Buddhist temples and execute its priests. When the executioner's blade miraculously failed to injure the monk Tan-shih, he was thrown into the tigers' den, but the animals cowered back in fear. Astounded by these events, T'ai Wu repented of his actions and converted to Buddhism. Ts'ui-hao was soon after deposed by the five clans, and in the fourteenth year of Shao-pei [450], the emperor was assassinated.¹⁶⁷

During the Chia-yu era of the Northern Sung [1056–63], when Ou-yang Hsiu, Li T'ai-pai, Chief Minister Han-ch'i, and others were promulgating anti-Buddhist tracts, Zen master Ch'i-sung wrote *A Treatise to Assist the Teachings*, preaching the unity of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Even the Confucians were impressed by this work and obliged to accept it.¹⁶⁸

During the Ch'un-hsi era of the Southern Sung [1174–89], Chu Hsi engaged in a campaign against Buddhism, but the ideas and arguments he used were all taken from Buddhist scripture. In the Cheng-t'ung era [1436–1549] of the Ming dynasty, K'ung-ku Ching-lung preached the unity of the three traditions in the *Shang-chih p'ien*, an outstanding work that corrected Chu Hsi's errors and left him no place wherever to hide.

The Zen patriarchs were all inspired by the great wheel of their Bodhisattva vow to undertake the most rigorous practice, putting their very lives at risk as they sought to penetrate the deep source of the Buddha's truth. Their minds had the capacity to hold entire

oceans, the wisdom in their faces shone like the sun or moon. With their lofty virtue and the purity that comes from constantly upholding the precepts, they protected and preserved the Dharma for the sake of their Dharma heirs. They are models to be held up for ten thousand generations. Is there anyone like them today? Confucians, Taoists, and Shintōists may pool their efforts and try to force Buddhists into submission, but they will be no more successful than a sparrow fluttering up at a hawk, or a starving dog baring its teeth at a lion.

What is most frightening, however, is the decline of Buddhism itself. Why has it happened? Try to find a monk who is truly engaged in Zen practice. You won't be able to come up with a single one. Most of them are caught up in literary pursuits. They take great pleasure in just ambling along and humming worthless verses. They're no different from stray dogs chasing after a clod of dirt.

Some of them succeed in hoodwinking laymen and laywomen into giving them donations by twittering off half-baked teachings like this: "There's nothing special about satori. Each person is furnished from the first with an immaculately pure self-nature. It's not as if you can't eat rice if you aren't enlightened. It's not as if you can't relieve your bowels without satori. Satori is perfectly complete and freely functioning from the very first. A person who hasn't experienced satori doesn't mistake a crow for a heron. He doesn't refer to fire as water. He goes on living his life, eating his rice and drinking his tea without any trouble whatever. That is the way a true and authentic Zen monk conducts himself." They couldn't be more mistaken. They're like a man trying to peel a melon with a long spear. It is so featherbrained and downright silly that you can hardly bear to listen.

Others offer teachings like this: "The delusions of birth and death are profound, the karmic hindrances that arise from them severe. Do as many daily sutra recitations as you can. Perform endless prostrations before Buddhist images. Repeat these and other practices over and over and over until you grow old and death brings deliverance." Idle nonsense! If that were the extent of the Zen teaching, why would Bodhidharma have taken the trouble of traveling to China to transmit his teaching of *kenshō*? He might just as well have scribbled down a few lines in a letter and told them, "Do

the Nembutsu.” *Kenshō* is like a poisonous lacquer drum, like the vast conflagrations in Hell.¹⁶⁹ It is far beyond the reach of the weak-willed or half-hearted.

Still others say: “The Buddha Dharma is something that proceeds from shallow to deep, from what is close to what is distant.” They assemble some koans and assign them to students, saying, “When you finish this, I’ll give you another one to solve. When you’re through with that one, there’s this one,” guiding students to illusory realizations and false understandings. It becomes like puzzle solving. What hindrances they create for them! They should be classed down there with the Maras, the evil demons! It is perverse notions like theirs that have corrupted the Buddha’s Dharma and destroyed the ancestral teachings. One cannot direct criticism at Hayashi Razan alone. My worry, what keeps constantly freezing my liver, is the state of present-day Zen itself.

To those students engaged in negotiating the hidden depths, I respectfully say: Do not stray into the citadel of evil demons I have just described to you. Just take a genuine koan and bore into it. “A monk asked Chao-chou, ‘Does a dog have the Buddha-nature, or not?’ Chao-chou said, ‘Mu.’” This is a precious Dharma juggernaut that crushes the demon citadel beneath its wheels, an invincible sword that cuts down discrimination and delusions of every kind. Chao-chou just said “Mu.” Bore steadily into it, whether you are in a quiet place or a noisy one, whether you are moving or standing or sitting or lying down. Bore into it from the sides, from the front and the back, when breathing in and breathing out, sleeping and waking, steadily becoming one with “Mu,” and then continue to bore in.

At the beginning, various delusory thoughts and mental projections will rise up one after another to lead you astray. It will seem as though you are on a field of battle, amid a great confusion of struggle and flight. Or as though you are standing in the crowded pit of a raucous kabuki performance. Your mind will be much more unsettled than it normally is, jumping and japing around like a monkey, or suddenly darting off like a startled horse. But if you do not strike the drum of retreat and carry steadily on, those delusory thoughts and perceptions will eventually come to an end. It will seem to you as though you have fallen into an enormous demon cave

soaring up a thousand miles, or have entered an enclosure with walls of steel countless layers thick. Unable to go forward, unable to retreat, with nothing but an impenetrable blackness on all sides, there will no place at all for you to put either hand or foot. If at that time you continue to forge ahead without fear, all of a sudden the world in all ten directions will become like a great sheet of ice, like an enormous crystal of blue glass. All your principles and words will be exhausted, all your mental operations will cease. Now, being free of arising thoughts or emotions, the more satoris you experience, the deeper your understanding becomes. This is the time you must apply yourself more diligently than ever to your koan. When all at once you become one with the mind that has been boring into the koan, the sheet of ice and everything else will abruptly vanish, and you will experience the indescribable joy of dying and being reborn.

When you reach this point, not even the Buddhas and patriarchs themselves can touch you. You find that just by leisurely turning your head, koans you had not encountered before — “Tsui-yen’s Eyebrows” or “Ch’ien-feng’s Three Kinds of Infirmary” — are now perfectly in your grasp. And when you take this attainment with you to a true Zen master and have him examine it, he will grasp your hand and break into a smile. Then all the hogwash Kokurin [Hakuin] has been dishing out to you so eagerly in these pages will become just another in his series of embarrassing performances.

394. RECORD OF A ROND STEEN

Hakuin’s manuscript of this long inscription, which he wrote during a visit to Jizō-in in his seventy-fourth year, is reproduced in HZB #682. In this holograph text the words are preceded by an ensō (Zen circle), representing the gemstone that is the subject of this piece. The gemstone is referred to here by the Dutch words rond steen, and the Japanese ransūten. According to the Chronological Biography, Hakuin was at Jizō-in in Tōtōmi province lecturing on

Hsu-t'ang po-tse sung-ku (Hsu-t'ang's Verse Comments on One Hundred Koans) in 1758.

The story about taking the stone to have it appraised by the Dutchman is Hakuin's sole reference in Poison Blossoms either to the west or to westerners, though he would not have been unfamiliar with the latter, having been raised in a home that faced the Tōkaidō road, along which Dutch merchants from Dejima in Nagasaki passed on periodic trips to Edo to deliver gifts to the Shōgun. See Ishikawa Mitsunobu, "Ransūten — Hakuin goroku no oranda-go" (Rond Steen, A Dutch Word in Hakuin's Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn) Zen bunka #161.

IN THE WINTER of eighth year of Hōreki [1758] I was staying at Jizō-in at Takatsuka in Tōtōmi province to deliver lectures on the *Record of Hsi-keng*. The meeting was held at the request of priests and student monks, and made possible through a generous donation by temple patron Onoda Gorōbebi Hisashige.

A curious gemstone had recently been found at the Kagaku-in in nearby Nishi Kamoe. It was shaped like a duck's egg and weighed several *kin*. Everyone who saw and handled it was fascinated and could not put it down. Hearing that a Dutch merchant happened to be stopping at the Hamamatsu post station, someone took the stone there and showed it to him.

"This is a very rare stone," said the Dutchman, amazed. "In my country we call it a *rond steen*. Given the proper polish, it will turn into a beautiful jewel." With that, people who lived around Kagaku-in began to regard the stone as a great treasure. Kōzen Oshō, the head priest of Kagaku-in, brought the stone to Jizō-in where I was staying so I could see it. As I marveled over it, he said, "Would you please say something about this stone in one of your talks?" So, in the course of my Dharma lectures, to a hall filled with student monks and other participants who had gathered from the four quarters, I said the following.

Long, long ago when the Venerable Prajnatara visited the land of Kōshi in India, the king presented him with a valuable jewel. To test the king's three sons, Prajnatara posed the question, "This is a clear and perfect gem. Is there anything to equal it?" The third son of the

king, who was only eight years old — he would later become the great teacher Bodhidharma — said, “This is a splendid jewel, but it is not splendid enough to be called a treasure. It is the Dharma treasure that is to be prized above all else. Master Prajnatarā, since you have acquired the Way, please show us that treasure.” Prajnatarā, to praise the young boy’s wisdom and discernment, gave him the name Bodhidharma.

I have no doubt in view of this, and the fact that the gemstone appeared at Kagaku-in in Nishi Kamoe, that the priest of Kagaku-in will find some Way to turn it into a treasure.

Jewels are found in many shapes and forms. Among them, the greatest are the jewels of Chao and Sui, both of which attained their great radiance by being gradually ground and polished. Even if you went and searched endless riverbanks for unusual stones, you would never find any to match their exceptional beauty. But the jewel of the Dharma is intrinsic in people everywhere, all of whom are endowed with the right seeds. If they practice steadily, seeking to discern their original self, before three days are out they should certainly see the self’s divine radiance shining forth. The radiance of the self-nature will at the same time illuminate all existence, and all living beings will emit a divine light that is beyond compare.

The great radiance of this *rond steen*, without any polishing at all, flashes out and illuminates the entire trichilial cosmos. Because of that, it can be said to have the same value as the great universe, without distinguishing between Buddhas and sentient beings, between heaven and hell.

It is regrettable that people are ignorant of this, and because of that pass their one and only human life vainly looking for the Buddha or the Dharma in places apart from themselves, and end up falling into a rebirth amid the suffering of the six paths.

One of the ancients spoke of this when he said, “Anyone whose practice focuses on seeking something outside himself is an exceedingly foolish fellow.”

To the people who have crowded into this hall, I respectfully say: “Gird up your minds and from this moment forth focus your practice singlemindedly on penetrating your self. Within three days you will

without fail discover the great and priceless jewel. The *rond steen* is proof of this.”

.....

Onoda Gorōbeei Hisashige. Unlike most of the minor figures who make scattered appearances in *Poison Blossoms*, quite a bit is known about Onoda Hisashige, thanks to his role in inducing Hakuin to write *A Story of Four Filial Sisters of Takatsuka* (*Takatsuka shinyō kōki*, HHZ5), part of the omnibus work he titled *Goose Grass* (*Yaemugura*).

The practice meeting Hakuin conducted at Jizō-in began in the autumn of 1758 and continued through the winter and into the next year, one hundred days in all. Hōtan Bonju (n.d.), the head priest at Jizō-in who arranged the meeting, was one of his former students, and Onoda Hisashige, a wealthy patron of Jizō-in, supplied the necessary funds. In *Four Filial Sisters*, Hakuin gives the following sketch of Onoda’s life: “Mr. Onoda Hisashige’s ancestors must have accumulated a large amount of karmic virtue, for the family’s fortunes have not diminished through ten generations, and during that time they have been esteemed by people in this area as an old and distinguished family. In this family Hisashige stands out as a man devoted to performing kind and virtuous acts. . . . After Hisashige’s eldest son died in 1742, Hisashige’s daughter married a young man who was adopted into the Onoda family. In 1754, after ten years of marriage and the birth of four daughters, the son-in-law died as well, followed the next year by his wife, leaving the four daughters as orphans. In hopes of advancing their parents’ fortunes in the next life, the daughters copied out over a period of three years the entire text of the *Lotus Sutra* in *kana* script” (HHZ5).

When Hakuin was at Jizō-in for the lecture meeting in 1758, Onoda invited him to his home. He showed him the *Lotus Sutra* that his granddaughters, now aged fourteen, twelve, eight, and six, had transcribed. At Onoda’s request, Hakuin inscribed a colophon to the sutra, and the next year he wrote the work entitled *A Story of Four Filial Sisters of Takatsuka*, “so people would know about the young

girls' wonderful filial devotion and the benefits to be gained from venerating the *Lotus Sutra*."

Weighed several kin. One *kin* is about 21 ounces.

Hearing that a Dutch merchant . . . showed it to him. The Dutch East India Company, confined to Deshima Island in Nagasaki, was allowed to make an annual ninety-day trip to Edo to pay their respects and offer presents to the Shōgun.

Long, long ago when the Venerable Prajnatara. . . . The story is told in *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 2.

I have no doubt in view of this . . . to turn it into a treasure. The stone, shaped like duck-egg, was found at Kagaku-in, a temple in Nishi-Kamoe, literally "Western Duck Inlet."

Jewels are found . . . the jewels of Chao and Sui. The story of the jadestone of Chao is given in #385, footnote, p. 580. The fabulous night-shining gem of Sui, which illuminated the darkness, is described in the encyclopedic anthology *T'ai-p'ing Kuang-chi* (*Extensive Records of the T'ai-p'ing Era*), ch. 494.

One of the ancients spoke of this. . . . It was Nan-yueh Lan-ts'an, *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 30.

395. RECORD OF CHISHI-KUTSU

This piece was written in 1758, Hakuin's seventy-fourth year. Chishi-kutsu means, literally, "Dwelling That Knows Peaceful Repose."

IN THE SPRING of the eighth year of Hōreki [1758] I received a request from Mr. Tō to inscribe a plaque for a teahouse named Chishi-kutsu. Someone said, "Would you tell me what those words mean?" This is my reply.

The words *Chishi* are found in Chu Hsi's commentary on *The Great Learning*: "Only after knowing peaceful repose can one begin to deliberate"; they are a comment on the opening words of *Great*

Learning: “The way of learning to be great consists in clarifying bright virtue, loving the people, and abiding in the highest good.”

The two words, “highest good,” express the noble and marvelous truth which runs through all the three teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. If you carefully investigate these words in your Zen practice, you will surely arrive at a point where you stand shoulder to shoulder with the sages of old.

Recently, a Confucian in Edo said in a comment on these words that “‘Highest good’ means choosing the best in all your daily activities—walking, standing, sitting, lying down—and then putting that into practice under all circumstances, laughing and conversing with people, and the like. That is what *The Great Learning* means by ‘highest good.’” That is so completely mistaken that reading it both worried and saddened me. Not only does it express a crass, commonplace understanding that swindles all who encounter it, the author is apparently interested only in getting his ideas printed and disseminated as widely as possible. It isn’t only Zen that is in decline; Confucianism is as well. Have matters reached such an extreme point? In the end, what can one say but, “You must not add on a single thing to man’s true nature.”

.....

Mr. Tō. Abbreviated to only the first character, the owner of the name cannot be identified.

Chu Hsi’s commentary on The Great Learning. The Great Learning By Chapter and Sentence (Ta-hsueh chang-chu) by the Neo-Confucian teacher Chu Hsi, originally published in 1189.

INSCRIPTIONS FOR PAINTINGS (SAM)

396. CLAM KANNON

Hakuin painted many examples of Clam Kannon, which shows the Bodhisattva emerging from the shell of a clam, though none with this particular inscription is known.

Conchs, clams, and other shellfish of their ilk
Are said to sleep soundly for a thousand years.
If they doze through the appearance of a Buddha,
There's always the venerable old sage of Potalaka.

.....

Conchs, clams, and other shellfish . . . for a thousand years. In admonishing his disciple Aniruddha for constantly succumbing to the sleep demon during his sermons, the Buddha pointed out that conchs, clams, and other shellfish, which doze off into naps lasting a thousand years, lose any chance to encounter a Buddha, who appears only rarely in the human world (*Heroic March Sutra*, ch. 5).

Potalaka is the island in the southern seas where Kannon is said to dwell.

Kannon is said to manifest herself in an infinite number of forms in response to the needs of sentient beings. The Clam Kannon originated in China, where stories about it appear in the Zen records of the Sung dynasty. The version found in the *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 4, is as follows:

The T'ang emperor Wen Tsung was extremely fond of clams, and everyone in the kingdom was aware of the fact. Government officials stationed near the seashore competed to provide clams for the emperor's table. One day in the fifth

year of T'ai-hu [831], a chef in the imperial kitchens came upon a clam that he was unable to open, despite his best efforts. Thinking it somewhat unusual, he mentioned it to the emperor. When the emperor had the clam placed on the altar and offered incense and prayers to it, the clam suddenly opened and the Bodhisattva Kannon appeared from within. None of the emperor's ministers were able to tell him what this meant, so he wrapped the clam in brocade, placed it in a precious sandalwood box, and presented it to the Hsing-shan temple, instructing the monks to perform ceremonies for it. An eminent Zen priest, summoned to explain, told the emperor that Bodhisattvas did not appear without reason, and this one had no doubt appeared in hopes of deepening the emperor's faith in the Buddha Dharma. To explain himself, the Zen master quoted some lines from the *Kannon Sutra* that tell how the Bodhisattva saves people by manifesting himself and preaching the Dharma. The emperor replied that while the Bodhisattva had indeed appeared, he had still not heard him preach the Dharma. The priest asked the emperor whether he thought what he had seen was usual or unusual, and whether or not he believed what he had seen. The emperor said that it was definitely unusual and he deeply believed in what he had seen. "Then you have heard his Dharma preaching," replied the priest. With that, the emperor experienced a sudden realization and grasped the meaning of the incident. He ordered images of the Bodhisattva to be enshrined in temples throughout the empire.

Although this account was known in Japan from Kamakura times, and Clam Kannon appears in a work on Buddhist iconography published in the Genroku period (1688–1704), Hakuin seems to have been the first to use it as a theme in Zen painting.

397. JIZŌ BODHISATTVA

Jizō is one of the principal Bodhisattvas in the Mahayana pantheon. His name is a Sino-Japanese rendering of the Sanskrit Ksitigarbha, meaning “earth store.” Jizō is also referred to as the “Vow King” (Gannō), from his universal vow as a Bodhisattva to eliminate the suffering of all beings in the six paths. Here Hakuin equates Jizō with the Buddha-nature inherent in all beings, which possesses every possible virtue and power, and like the earth itself is the source of all things.

He is inherent in everyone’s original being,
Possessed of inexhaustible virtue and merit.
Because all things are born from the earth,
People call him the Earth Store Vow King.

398-1. DARUMA

Eyes bugged out like cowbells,
Who on earth can this guy be?
He’s the First Patriarch of Zen,
The great master Bodhidharma.

.....

Eyes . . . cowbells. According to Hsu-t’ang, this is an attribute found in true Zen monks: “Monks in our school have arrows for eyebrows and cowbells [*dōrei*, a round bronze *suzu*-type bell] for eyes. They know a thing even before it is taken up; they understand it even before it is spoken” (*Record of Hsu-t’ang*).

398-2. DARUMA

From similar paintings with this same inscription we can tentatively date this piece to Hakuin's late thirties or early forties (HZB #56).

What a feckless, worthless old crumbum he is,
Wearing just one boot he will stumble for sure.
He set out on the long return journey to India,
I wonder if he had any travel money with him?

.....

What a . . . crumbum he is. “The sun rising every day is the true Daruma. A Daruma who goes around carrying a boot in his hand is worse than useless, he’s a downright menace!” (Yoshizawa).

Wearing just one boot . . . return journey to India is in allusion to the “Single Boot” (*Sekiri*) Daruma, a form that appears commonly in Zen art and poetry in which he is portrayed carrying a boot (or shoe). Sometimes a painting will show only the boot itself, which in Japanese Zen painting has become a trope for Bodhidharma’s Zen. According to an old legend, three years after his death Bodhidharma was reported seen in the highlands of the Pamir range strolling leisurely westward towards his home in India carrying a single boot or shoe in his hand. When news of the sighting reached China and the funerary tower in which Daruma’s body had been interred was opened and searched, nothing was found inside except a single boot (see #77 in Book One and #250 in Book Eight; also *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 207–10).

I wonder if . . . money with him. *Hanmon-sen ari-ya*, literally “Did he have a few coins [of traveling money] on him?” appears as a capping phrase in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 20, where the question, “What is the meaning of the First Patriarch’s Coming from the West?” is answered with, “It isn’t worth half a cent,” that is, all Daruma’s coming and going is needless activity.

399. HALF-BODY DARUMA

A Half-Body Daruma shows him from the waist up. A painting of this type, bearing this inscription and dated 1729, Hakuin's forty-fifth year, is reproduced in HZB #54.

His body is all disclosed, every single bit,
Do not mistake it as portraying only half.
Half body or whole, there's no difference,
It's six of one or half a dozen of the other.

400. RUSH-LEAF DARUMA

The Rush-Leaf or Rōyō Daruma, showing Bodhidharma crossing the Yangtze River perched on a rush leaf, is based on a legend (Blue Cliff Record, Case 1) that after he left Emperor Wu's palace he crossed the Yangtze River in this manner so his whereabouts could not be traced (the account in the Tsu-t'ing shih-yuan, ch. 8, has him crossing the river at night), and proceeded to the Kingdom of Wei.

Surfing around on reeds like that,
Who does he think he's kidding?
Why don't we have a cup of tea?
"Strange events, rebels, and gods."

.....

Why don't we have a cup of tea? The original says simply "Have a cup of tea," the well-known phrase associated with the T'ang master Chao-chou. "Chao-chou asked a newly arrived monk, 'Have you been here before?' When the monk replied in the affirmative, Chao-chou said, 'Go and have a cup of tea.' Later when he asked another monk the same question and the monk replied in the negative, he said, 'Have a cup of tea.' A third monk asked why he had responded to two totally different answers in the same way. Chao-chou called out the monk's name, and when he responded, 'Yes, master,' Chao-

chou said, ‘Have a cup of tea’” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4).

“This line snatches away and nullifies the activities — strange occurrences, feats of strength, rebellion, and spiritual beings — described in the next line” (Yoshizawa).

“*Strange events, rebels, and gods.*” “Subjects the master [Confucius] did not discuss were strange events, rebels, and gods” (*Analects* VII, 20).

401. HOTEI

Behaving like a small child,
Japing about like a monkey.
Watch out, Zen patriarchs!
Beware of this bubblehead!

402. HOTEI POINTING AT THE MOON

Hotei (Chinese, Pu-tai), known in the West as the “laughing Buddha,” was a priest who lived in China sometime in the 10th century. Leaving his temple, he wandered as a beggar for the rest of his life, subsisting on donations he received from the common people. He could predict future events with uncanny accuracy. After his death he came to be regarded as an incarnation of Maitreya, the future Buddha who dwells in the Tushita Heaven, acting as Maitreya’s surrogate in the human world until the time, eons in the future, when Maitreya appears in the world to teach. In the Zen school Hotei came to be regarded as an exemplar of the Zen way of life, and is depicted in painting and sculpture as a pot-bellied little monk carrying a large bag filled with good fortune. “Hotei Pointing at the Moon” is a popular variation on the Hotei theme.

Seen rightly heaven and earth *are* this single finger,
Not a single thing in creation possesses two pillars.
Do not say Hotei is pointing his finger at the moon,
His fingertip is itself that dazzlingly brilliant moon.
Our world lies far distant from the Tushita Heaven,
His laughter moves on scraps of windblown cloud.

.....

Not a single thing . . . two pillars. Shortly before Confucius died, he said, “Last night I dreamed I was sitting in a room between two great pillars, surrounded by offerings such as are set out for a person when he is lying in his coffin” (*Book of Rites*, II.1.20). The term “two pillars” came to signify the place where funeral rites are held, and by extension the place of death. Hakuin’s use of the term “two pillars” in the second line is unclear; perhaps he alludes to the timeless, death-transcending life attained in enlightenment, the oneness with all things in the previous line.

Our world . . . Tushita Heaven. In Buddhist cosmology Jambudvīpa (Jap. Embudai) is the continent inhabited by human beings. The Tushita (Jap. Tosotsu) Heaven, the fourth of six heavens in the realm of desire, where Bodhisattvas are born prior to being reborn into the human world, is the dwelling place of the future Buddha Maitreya. Hotei, as an incarnation of Maitreya, will return when he dies from the human world to the remote Tushita Heaven. The enormous distance separating the two realms seems to parallel the difference between the unenlightened and enlightened states implied in the previous lines, a difference which Hotei nullifies with his enlightened laughter.

403. TSAI-SUNG TAO-CHE

Tsai-sung Tao-che (Japanese, Saishō Dōsha) is the name by which the Fifth Chinese Zen Patriarch Wu-tsu Hung-jen was known in his

previous existence. The story of his rebirth is told in a number of versions. Hakuin was evidently basing his remarks on the following version, found in the Lin-kuan lu (Records from the Groves of Zen), ch. 1: "There is an ancient tradition that when the Fourth Patriarch was residing on Mount P'o-t'ou, a nameless old priest was living on the mountain who did nothing but plant pine saplings. People called him Tsai-sung Tao-che, 'Pine-planting Man of the Way.' On once encountering the Fourth Patriarch, he asked if he might ask about the Way. The patriarch said, 'You are already quite old. No matter what you asked me, you would not be able to transmit anything you learned to others. After you die, however, if you are reborn into the human world, I will teach you then.' The old priest left and wandered to the edge of a river, where he saw a young girl washing clothes. He went up to her and said, 'When I am reborn into the human world, would it be possible for you to give birth to me?' 'I have a father and mother. I would have to ask them first,' she said. By the time the girl returned home, she was pregnant. Her parents, shocked and dismayed, drove her from the family home. Having nowhere else to go, she spent her days in the village weaving, and slept at night in a public dormitory. The child was born, but believing that it was doomed to misfortune, she threw it in the river. The next morning, she was astonished to find that the baby had been carried upriver, against the current, and was unharmed, so she took it and raised it. Growing up, the child begged for his food like his mother, and villagers called him 'the child with no name.' The Fourth Patriarch, chancing upon the child at the roadside on Mount Huang-mei, asked him, 'What is your name?' 'I have a name, but it's not an ordinary name,' the boy replied. 'What name is it?' asked the patriarch. 'Buddha-nature,' he replied. 'You mean you have no name?' asked the patriarch. 'I mean I have no name because my name is emptiness,' explained the boy. The patriarch went to the boy's mother and persuaded her to allow her son to enter the priesthood. He was seven years old at the time."

When he returned to become the head priest on Mount Wu-tsu,

He raised a fresh breeze that was felt hundreds of miles around.
He troubled a perfect stranger, a young woman he had just met,
But the ciphers he created retain their vital working even today.

.....

But the ciphers . . . even today. Both the Fifth Patriarch Hung-jen and Wu-tsu Fa-yen lived on a mountain named Tung-shan (“Eastern Mountain” in Ch’i-chou, modern Hupeh), which Hakuin often uses as a reference for the “secret ciphers” or koans that characterize the teaching style of Fa-yen’s school (see #374 and #379). “Wu-tsu Fa-yen often said to his assembly, ‘I shake out a phrase to the east, I shake out a phrase to the west. It’s like eating winter melons when the snow is piled up deep. I call this the genuine transmission of master Yang-ch’i, the secret ciphers of master Tung-shan’” (*Record of Hsu-t’ang*, ch. 1).

404. ZEN MASTER JŌEN SHŌKAKU

Jōen Shōkaku Zenji is the posthumous title of Baishin Sōtetsu (n.d.), founder of Jishō-ji in Nakatsu on the island of Kyushū. Jishō-ji was the home temple of Daishū Zenjo, the editor of Poison Blossoms; he later returned and served as its abbot. Hakuin inscribed these words above a chinsō portrait of Baishin, still preserved at Jishō-ji, bearing a date of spring 1757, Hakuin’s seventy-third year (HZB #131). Hakuin’s inscription emphasizes Baishin’s ties to the Myōshin-ji school.

HIS MAGNANIMOUS SPIRIT was as vast as the ocean, his lofty solemnity stood out like a towering peak. He re-opened the yawning pit of pitch-black fire that master Wu-tsu had set up on the summit of Diamond Peak. In the tradition of Nampo Jōmyō, he poured forth a

constant surge of poison waves at master Keisen's crossing. He snatched away a worthless family treasure at Kian Genmitsu's temple. He cowed Tenshō-ji founder Shōin Oshō so completely that his guts began to fester.

Sozan, a priest at Jishō-ji, wrote a letter asking me to compose an inscription for a *chinsō* portrait of the temple founder. Umeda Denjiemon, chief retainer of the Daimyō of Nakatsu, delivered the letter and portrait to my humble hermitage. When I unrolled the portrait scroll, I saw a true and original face staring at me with stern solemnity. Who was it? It was the great teacher Jōen Shōkaku, Zen master Baishin Sōtetsu, the founder of Jishō-ji.

.....

He re-opened the yawning pit . . . Diamond Peak. Kongō-hō, "Diamond Peak," was Jishō-ji's "mountain name." "The pitch-black fire that master Wu-tsu had set up" alludes to the teaching style of Wu-tsu Fa-yen and his followers, who included such eminent priests as Yuan-wu and Ta-hui. Hakuin praises Baishin's Zen as the authentic Zen of the Myōshin-ji line.

Nampo Jōmyō (1235–1309; better known as Daiō Kokushi) was the Japanese priest who introduced the teachings of the Yang-ch'i line of Chinese Rinzai Zen to Japan. The teaching line founded by Nampo, his student Daitō Kokushi, founder of Daitoku-ji, and Daitō's student Kanzan Kokushi, founder of Myōshin-ji — the so-called Ō-Tō-Kan lineage — became in time virtually synonymous with the Myōshin-ji lineage to which Hakuin belonged.

Master Keisen's crossing alludes to Keisen Sōryū (1426–1500), founder of Ryōsen-in, one of the four main subtemples in the Myōshin-ji monastery complex.

Kian Genmitsu (d. 1501), a Myōshin-ji priest filiated to Keisen Sōryū's teaching line, was Baishin Sōtetsu's teacher.

Shōin Oshō is Shōin Sōgaku, Baishin's Dharma heir.

Sozan is Sozan Sosō (d. 1766), the eleventh abbot of Jishō-ji, who has appeared before as Senior Priest Sō (#374). After studying with Hakuin at Shōin-ji for three years, Sozan returned and taught at

Jishō-ji. He was the teacher of Daishū Zenjo and the priest for whom Hakuin later painted the large picture of the Daimyō Procession Passing Beneath Mount Fuji (*The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 24–5; *Poison Blossoms* #344).

Umeda Denjiemon (1707–88). A retainer of Okudaira Masanari, the Daimyō of Nakatsu, Umeda played a central role in the financial reforms that the Tokugawa *bakufu* undertook during the Hōreki period (1751–64).

405. ZEN MASTER TAKUSUI

The Zen priest Takusui Chōmo is a shadowy figure who no doubt would have been forgotten were it not for the Dharma Words of Priest Takusui, a work in kana script that appeared in 1740, not long before this inscription was written. According to an annotation in Poison Blossoms, “Takusui was from Echigo province. On entering the priesthood he had a liking from the first for Bassui Tokushō’s brand of Zen. He continued his practice living among the forests and hills, keeping his distance from the world until he reached old age. . . . When over one hundred years old, he traveled to Enzan in Kai province in hopes of reviving the traditions of master Bassui. When that plan did not work out, he left and lived in a hermitage in Edo.”

Hakuin wrote the inscription in Chinese verse (translated into prose here) on a portrait of Takusui at the request of Yamanashi Harushige (1707–62), a man Hakuin evidently regarded as one of his most accomplished lay students. The basic facts surrounding Yamanashi’s request, no doubt more or less accurate, are told in a local history entitled Annals of Ihara (Ihara Gunshi): “Yamanashi acquired the painting of Takusui while he was stopping at a temple called Jigen-an on a trip through Musashi province. He joyfully took it to Suruga and showed it to master Hakuin, who praised Yamanashi’s strong spiritual resolve and inscribed a colophon over the painting . . . that he dated the third year of Hōreki [1753, when Hakuin was

sixty-nine]. The painting is still preserved in the Yamanashi home as a family treasure.” There is a record of the painting being shown in an exhibition of Hakuin’s works held in Shizuoka in 1944. It is said to have been destroyed in an air raid soon afterwards.

The son of a wealthy family of saké brewers, Yamanashi became head of the business at the age of thirty-seven. He began his study of Zen under Hakuin four years later, following the death of his brother. The most detailed account of Yamanashi is found in Akiyama Kanji’s Shamon Hakuin (Buddhist Monk Hakuin), “Hakuin Oshō and Ryōtetsu Kōji.”

The incredible story of the satori Yamanashi attained in his first attempt at zazen appears in various forms in Hakuin’s records and has become one of the staples of Hakuin Zen. The most widely known versions of the story are found in Hakuin’s Chronological Biography (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 213–15), in a long letter Hakuin wrote to an unidentified layman (Beating the Cloth Drum, pp. 61–77), and in Stories from a Thicket of Thorn and Briar, a 19th-century collection of anecdotes about Hakuin’s followers. These versions all differ in significant ways from the briefer account Hakuin gives here.

MR. YAMANASHI HARUSHIGE, who lives in Ihara, Suruga province, doesn’t read or recite sutras, much less engage in Zen practice. But for the past six years he has been performing hidden charity, taking care of the sick and elderly and doing what he can to relieve their suffering.

As he was visiting a friend’s residence one day, he heard someone reading out a passage from a book: “If a man desires to master the Buddha Way, he must above all achieve *kenshō*. *Kenshō* is attained by the uninterrupted application of concentrated effort. If you practice with undivided effort, *kenshō* will surely come. For sentient beings with great courage, Buddhahood comes in an instant of thought. For sentient beings who are lax and indolent, Nirvana will not come even after endless kalpas.”

The words filled Yamanashi with joy. He plucked up his courage, saying, “If this is what the practice of the Way entails, I see no reason why I can’t rouse myself up and have a go at it.” Returning to

his home, he shut himself up in a room, clenched his teeth, and began to sit in an utterly motionless state. He battled constantly against intruding thoughts, adamantly refusing to submit to them. His entire body was drenched in nervous sweat. That night, before the fifth watch [3–5 a.m.], he gave up his life and perished into the great death. When dawn came and he gradually returned to his senses, he got up and immediately set out for my temple. When he arrived and knocked at my gate, I ushered him in and tested him with several koan stories. He passed through them all without the least hesitation.

Reading through the old Zen histories, it is rare indeed to find a story such as this one. The Japanese book Yamanashi heard being recited was the *Dharma Words of Priest Takusui*. Deeply conscious of the debt he owed master Takusui, Yamanashi traveled to Jigen-an in Edo, where he obtained a *chinsō* portrait of the master. Mounting the painting himself, he brought it to me and asked me to write some words on it. I felt so happy for him that I could not refuse. I ended up summarizing his story and inscribing it over the painting.

Yamanashi often asked me for a Dharma name, but for a long time I did not give much thought to his request. Now I have decided to give him the Dharma name Ryōtetsu [“Completely Penetrated”] and the lay sobriquet Jiun [“Compassionate Cloud”]. I hope it will inspire him to a relentless determination that will enable him to undertake the great Bodhisattva practice and perfect the seed of Buddha-wisdom together with all other beings throughout the Dharma universe.

.....

In the version of the story in the *Chronological Biography*, Hakuin portrays Yamanashi as a pleasure-seeking voluptuary who had a sudden change of heart and achieved an overnight satori. In this, in what is presumably his latest version, Yamanashi’s profligacy is unmentioned, and he is described as someone who had given charitable contributions to the needy even before he encountered Takusui’s teaching and resolved to try zazen practice.

Piecing events together, we arrive at the following chronology. Yamanashi visits a waterfall near his home and experiences the

transience of human life in the fifth month of 1748. On the twenty-first of the same month he hears Takusui's book being recited and, on an unspecified day in the same month, visits Hakuin to have his satori confirmed. Five years later, in 1753, Yamanashi procures the portrait of Takusui at Jigen-an in Edo, and on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month visits Hakuin (perhaps at a temple in Kai province where he was lecturing) to request a colophon for the portrait.

406. SEN SHUSO OF SAIOKU-JI

“Saioku-ji was a temple belonging to Seiken-ji. Sen Shuso [Senior Priest Sen] was a colleague several years older than Hakuin. He was a proponent of spending life as a beggar engaged in Zen practice” (annotation). Saioku-ji was located northwest of the Mariko post station on the Tōkaidō road, seven stops west of Hara. Senior Priest Sen evidently served as head priest of Saioku-ji.

His superior Zen activity was sharp as a dagger,
His outward appearance was formidably austere.
He sat doggedly inside a snail-shell hut in Ojima,
Enduring his teacher Tsūgen's venomous attacks.
We must revere his resolute, self-negating habits,
Not seen among the stalwarts in *Zenkan-sakushin*.
What a pity no one in his lifetime could appreciate
Bone-crushing poverty that put the sages to shame.

.....

Ojima is a village near Matsushima in northern Honshu, a short distance from Sendai near the site of the Zuigan-ji.

Tsūgen is Tsūgen Hōtatsu (1635–1704), a priest of Zuigan-ji in Matsushima who was Sen Shuso's teacher.

Zenkan-sakushin (Chin. *Ch'an-kuan t'se-chin*; full title, *Spurring Students Through the Zen Barriers*) is a work that influenced young

Hakuin at a crucial point in his training. Compiled by the Ming priest Yun-ch'i Chu-hung, it contains excerpts from Zen records and Buddhist sutras designed to emphasize the great perseverance necessary to achieve satori.

407. DAIKOKU

Daikoku (Daikoku-ten; "Great Black Deity"), god of wealth and happiness, has been described above, #245-1. See also The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 180–84.

Reflecting over the happiness and permanence of human
life,
You find merely dreams and phantoms, nothing at all is
true.
Even if you could create the fabulous wealth of Chin or
Chu,
It would disappear like the peach flowers in the spring
breeze.
Nothing wrong with studying the immortal sages' secret
arts,
But how many such men do you find alive at the present
day?
Even famous magicians like Chang Kuo and Fei Ch'ang-
fang
Eventually breathed their last, turned to dust beneath the
trees.
Devas reside in their heavens experiencing unending
pleasure,
But when signs of decay appear they will also weep in
sorrow.
Once a fellow falls into one of the three evil ways of
existence,

He stays in it for good, like the guardian silver in a storehouse.

But there exists within this a matter of unrivaled consequence

Enabling you to gain incomparable prosperity and lengthy life.

I am now going to disclose to you exactly what that matter is,

You should write it on your sleeves so you will never forget it:

If you sit erect, thoughts subdued, your mind will be at peace,

You will attain untold fortune and timeless life just as you are.

Not to mention going beyond that, seeing the nature of things,

Grasping your Buddha-nature in one single instant of thought,

Which frees you from your endless round of births and deaths,

Ferrying you at once to the Crucial Crossing and yonder shore.

At this moment a sage immortal is not even worth your notice,

Because the treasure you have now attained is beyond all price.

You will thus enjoy uncountable blessings in your present life,

Besides avoiding the eternal torments sinners face in the next.

Such a person becomes the primogenitor of heaven and earth,

As well as the parent who gives life to the ten thousand things.

The *Dai* (Great) in *Daikoku* is a boundlessness without limits,

Koku (Black) is the vital source that leads to your true nature.

.....

Chang Kuo (T'ang dynasty) and *Fei Ch'ang-fang* (Han dynasty) were magicians credited with supernatural feats, both regarded to have become *hsien*, immortal sages.

Devas reside in their heavens . . . will also weep in sorrow. Devas, godlike beings that occupy the top rung on the ladder of rebirth in the six realms, experience unremitting pleasure and possess great power, wealth, and longevity, but in time even they grow old and manifest the five signs of decay (*tennin no gosui*) — dirty clothing, the withering of flowers in their hair, unpleasant odors, sweaty armpits, and uneasiness of mind. When they die, devas are reborn into a lower, less fortunate realm of existence.

He stays in it for good, like the guardian silver in a storehouse is based on lines in the *Poems of Han-shan*: “Once they die they fall into hell, / Remaining there forever, like guardian silver” (*Kanzan-shi* #91). Hakuin explains “guardian silver” in his commentary on Han-shan’s poems: “In foreign lands people put silver at the foundation of a storehouse to protect the building from harm. This explanation seems to me to be correct, though I have not found any authority for it” (*Kanzan-shi Sendai-kimon*). Placing silver or other precious items in a storehouse was thought to keep evil influences away. As the silver could then never be used, it stayed forever inside the storehouse.

Untold fortune and timeless life are the virtues embodied by Daikoku.

408. FUKUROKUJU

The popular deity Fukurokuju, with his bald, elongated skull, is said to personify the three universal desires for happiness (fuku), wealth or prosperity (roku), and long life (ju). He was regarded in Taoism as

an incarnation of Nangyoku Rōjin, the old man of the Southern Star (Canopus), who controls human longevity and was believed to appear when the world was at peace. In Japan he is counted among the seven gods of good fortune (shichi fukujin).

A handsome fellow of surpassing excellence from down south,
Open-hearted and completely genuine in bearing and character.
Heaven and earth bow to him in deep respect as their ancestor,
Empty space salutes him as father with profoundest veneration.
He can increase your fortune and longevity beyond all measure,
But do not seek him in samsara, or you'll miss the Crucial Ford.
Once you confront this chap and stand before him nose to nose,
You will hide your face in shame, realizing the error you made.

409. EN NO OZUNU

En no Ozunu, also known as En no Gyōja and En no Shōkaku, was a mountain ascetic said to have lived on Mount Katsuragi in Yamato province during the second half of the 7th century. He was later regarded as the founder of the Shugendō tradition of mountain asceticism that sought oneness with nature. A painting Hakuin did of him with this inscription is reproduced in Takeuchi (Hakuin #123).

He wears elevated clogs on his feet,
A Buddhist surplice on his shoulders.
He is deeply versed in Buddha's Law,

He consorts with the Shintō *kami* too.
With ghosts and demons in his sway,
Ferocious tigers at his beck and call,
He rambles on through worlds untold,
The home provinces and seven regions.
On his shoulder a twelve-ringed staff,
In his hand a scroll of Buddhist sutra,
He's neither a sage nor ordinary man,
Not a Buddhist, not a Shintōist either,
He's En no Ozunu of Mount Katsuragi.

.....

He wears elevated clogs . . . on his shoulders. Hakuin's painting depicts him with all these attributes, including a twelve-ringed staff and a sutra scroll.

He consorts . . . kami too. "He was always chatting and laughing with Zaō Gongen of Yoshino" (annotation).

The home provinces and seven regions. In ancient Japan the home provinces (*goki*), those closest to the capital Kyoto, were Yamashiro, Yamato, Kawachi, Settsu, and Izumi. The seven regions making up the ancient kingdom of Japan were Tōkaidō, Tōzan-dō, Hōkūriku-dō, San'in-dō, Sanyō-dō, Nankai-dō, and Saikai-dō.

410. TEIKA

The poet Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), regarded as one of the greatest poets in the waka genre, exerted an enormous influence on later classical Japanese poetry. An annotation tells us that the painting of Teika on which this verse was inscribed showed the poet on horseback, dressed in hunting garb, and wearing an eboshi, the formal black-lacquered headwear used by court nobles.

Enormously respected by courtier and common person alike,
Fame handed down by word of mouth over a thousand years.
Even young boys today, on hearing “brushing off my sleeves,”
Can quote the ending, “this snow-shrouded evening at Sano.”

.....

“Brushing off my sleeves . . . this snow-shrouded evening at Sano”
are lines from a well-known verse in the *Shin Kokinwaka-shū* (*New Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*), a collection Teika helped to compile:

Halting my mount
I brush the snow from my sleeves,
No shelter anywhere,
This snow-shrouded evening at the Sano Crossing.

411. THE FOUR SLEEPERS

The Four Sleepers, made up of the Zen poets Han-shan and Shih-te, Zen master Feng-kan, and Feng-kan’s tiger, are frequently depicted in Chinese and Japanese art (see #239). No literary source has been found for The Four Sleepers.

The four sleepers, sleeping a single sleep,
With snores like crashing rolling thunder.
If you clearly hear those snorts they make,
You are Han-shan returned from the dead.

.....

If you . . . snorts they make. “This is the dark star of the Sound of One Hand koan” (annotation).

412. OLD CHANG KUO

Chang Kuo Lao (Lao means “old”) is numbered among the eight Taoist immortals. “Chang Kuo always rode a white mule that took him thousands of miles in a single day. When he stopped to rest, he would fold the mule up until it was the thickness of a sheet of paper and put it into a small box. When ready to travel again, Chang would spit water on the mule, which would immediately return to its original form, and he would then resume his travels” (T’ai-p’ing kuang-chi, Extensive Records of the T’ai-p’ing Era, ch. 30). One of Chang Kuo’s many magic tricks was to make a pony appear from a drinking gourd. The saying “like a horse appearing from a gourd,” describing something happening so totally unexpectedly as to be beyond belief, became proverbial.

He perfected his elixir furnace, transcended the mundane world,
He had black-spotted ponies prancing out of his drinking gourd.
This marvelous painting is by an artist said to hail from Fushimi.
His vigorous brush shows us a spirit touching Chang Kuo’s own.

.....

He perfected his elixir furnace. The cinnabar elixir, refined in a special furnace, was said to confer immortal life. For Hakuin, this was the working of “inner alchemy,” concentrating the body’s *ki*-energy in the lower abdomen through intensive Zen practice to achieve enlightenment. The technique is most fully enunciated in *Idle*

Talk on a Night Boat: “Draw your *ki*-energy down and store it in the *tanden* — the ocean of *ki* located below the navel. Hold it here over the months and years, preserve it singlemindedly, sustain it unwaveringly. One morning, you will suddenly overturn the elixir furnace [the *tanden*]. When that happens, everywhere within and without the universe will become a single immense piece of pure cinnabar elixir. You will realize for the first time that you yourself are a genuine sage, as birthless as heaven and earth, as undying as empty space. At that moment the true and authentic elixir furnace is perfected [and you will attain satori]” (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 103).

This marvelous painting . . . from Fushimi. The city of Fushimi lies south of Kyoto.

413. MATSUO BASHŌ

The haiku poet Matsuo Bashō (1644–94), born forty-one years before Hakuin, died when Hakuin was ten years old. Regarded as the greatest haiku poet of the Edo period, Bashō studied Zen under the Sōtō teacher Butchō Ka’nan (1642–1716) at the Kompon-ji in Hitachi province.

A past master of *renga* linked-verse,
The reigning genius of haiku poetry.
He heard a frog go plop into a pond,
Both mind and body dropped away.

.....

A past master of renga linked-verse. An important literary form in pre-modern Japan, *renga* or linked poetry is a collaborative literary form consisting of at least two verses, the first of which is the *hokku*, which became the basis of the modern haiku. Two of its most famous practitioners were Sōgi and Bashō.

He heard a frog go plop into a pond refers to Bashō's famous haiku, "Furu-ike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto". In the mid-19th century work *Bashō-ō furu-ike shinden (A True Account of Bashō's Old Pond)*, the haiku poet Kochikuan Shunko gives this version of the circumstances surrounding the verse:

One day, at the time when Zen master Butchō was taking over as head priest of Chōkei-ji in the Fukugawa district of Edo, he and a man named Rokuso Goemon went to visit Bashō at the Bashō-an hermitage. Goemon entered the hermitage first and addressed a question to Bashō: "Where is the Buddha Dharma among the plants and trees in a quiet garden?" Bashō replied, "Large leaves are large, small leaves small." Then Butchō entered the hermitage. "Where have you been keeping yourself recently?" he asked. "After a rain the green moss is cleansed," Bashō replied. Butchō then asked, "What about the Buddha Dharma before the moss appears, before the spring rains fall?" Just at that moment a frog jumped into the pond. At the sound of the frog entering the water, Bashō uttered the verse:

The old pond,
A frog jumps in,
The sound of water.

"Excellent, excellent," said Butchō, and immediately gave Bashō the *nyoi* [scepter of office] he was holding. Butchō then took up his brush and wrote, "The inherent self-nature is formless. What am I? If you don't know this yet, I have a single utterance for all of you: 'One mind is the Dharma universe, the Dharma universe is one mind. Look! Look!'" and gave it to Bashō.

414. LION

There lives a large animal in India,
Folks call him the King of Beasts.
If you achieve sheer purity of faith,
You'll be King of the Triple World.

.....

You'll be King of the Triple World refers to the triple or threefold world (*sangai*) where beings transmigrate within the six paths, from hell through the deva realms.

415. TWO MICE DOING SUMO

Hakuin painted several works on this theme. In two examples of mouse sumo reproduced in HZB (#556 and #557), a mouse also acts as referee — a white mouse in one painting, a black mouse in the other — and the deity Daikoku, the god of wealth, is a spectator, represented in abbreviated form by his rice bale, his mallet of good fortune (uchide no kozuchi), and his straw raincoat. For their significance and for reproductions of the paintings, which have inscriptions similar to this one, see The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 181–84.

From the descriptions in the verse below, and from annotations attached to the piece, we know that the painting on which Hakuin wrote the present inscription portrayed the sumo match in a slightly different form: “two mice are engaged in sumo, with Daikoku in the center of the picture acting as referee.” In Japan, mice (or rats) came to be regarded as Daikoku’s messenger animal, a relationship which is traced to a story of mice saving the god Ōkuninushi (the name may also be read “Daikoku”) from being burned alive by the violent deity Susano-o.

We learn from another annotation that “When Hakuin was lecturing in Bizen province, Ikeda Tsugumasa (Iyo-no-kami), the Daimyō of Okayama Castle, brought out this painting and asked him

to inscribe a colophon for it.” Ōta Junsensai, identified by Hakuin as the painter of the picture, was a retainer of Lord Ikeda. Hakuin’s inscription can be dated to 1751, his sixty-seventh year, when he was lecturing at Shōrin-ji in Okayama, Bizen province (Precious Mirror Cave, p. 217). It is hard to say whether Hakuin’s own mouse sumo paintings were inspired by Ōta’s work, but judging from the calligraphy of the colophons he inscribed on them, an earlier date seems more likely.

Two mice dwell in all of your minds,
One of them black, one of them white.
They are always engaged in sumo,
The outcome always touch and go.
If the black one comes out on top,
Good fortune transforms into bad,
And not for the present life alone —
You fall into the evil ways forever.
If the white one comes out on top,
Bad fortune transforms into good,
And not for the present life alone —
Favorable rebirth is also achieved.
Shame, honor, success and failure,
It all starts off with these two mice.
Even a deity with Daikoku’s power
Is unable to topple the black mouse.
His magic mallet as good as useless,
Lies altogether forgotten at his side.
So he grabs a fan and raises it high,
Rooting for the white mouse to win.
Once you subdue the black rebel,
You *become* a god of good fortune.
How sad that in this decadent age
The black mice have such strength,
Madly striving for the upper hand,
Bellies stoked by craving and fear.
What does the white mouse denote?
A benevolent, compassionate mind.

What does the black one represent?
The mind of greed (or evil land tax)
Gnawing away at the Bodhi sprouts,
Devouring seeds of *prajna* wisdom.

Who painted this strange picture?
The artist is named Ōta Junsensai.

.....

So he grabs a fan. In sumo, the referee holds open a ceremonial war fan like those that were used by military commanders, who would raise and lower the fan in various ways to issue commands to soldiers on the battlefield.

You become a god of good fortune. The god of good fortune is Fukurokuju, one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. He is said to bestow longevity and good fortune, which in Hakuin's Zen teaching means the timeless life of enlightenment and the good fortune that enlightenment brings (see #408).

416. ANTS WALKING AROUND A MILL

The painting is reproduced in The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin, p. 35.

Plodding ants on the rim of an iron mill
Moving idly on and on, never stopping,
Like sentient beings revolving endlessly
Through the six paths of transmigration,
Being born here, then dying over there,
Becoming a hungry ghost or an animal.
If you want to escape this endless suffering
You must hear the sound of the single hand.

417. PRAISING MYSELF

Hakuin inscribed this well-known verse over most of his self-portraits.

At a place of a thousand Buddhas, hated by a thousand
Buddhas,
Among a troop of myriad demons, hated by the troop of
demons.
He unnerves today's deviant gangs of silent illumination
Zennists,
He exterminates the bonzes who blindly deny cause and
effect.
This broken-down old shavepate is so unseemly and
uncouth,
He adds on one more ugliness and makes himself even
uglier.

RELIGIOUS VERSES (*GEJU*)

418. INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Bury your self-nature alive, deep in a cavern of thorn,
Stab your inner spirit to death inside a thicket of briar.
Greens and yellow mushrooms and big white radishes,
Oven fire glowing — yet still you cry for golden leaves.

.....

Oven fire glowing . . . golden leaves alludes to a well-known metaphor: giving a young child some yellow leaves and telling him they are gold to coax him to stop crying. Hakuin uses it to describe a master descending from the ultimate principle and employing expedient means (*upaya*) to make his teaching more accessible to a student.

419. A PAPER PHOENIX

See #365 in Book Nine for another verse inscribed on a paper kite in the form of a phoenix.

It hangs in the spring breezes, worked by a single thread,
A mighty phoenix dancing freely through pale blue sky.
You must discover who is maneuvering it with such skill.
As sunset deepens the birds seek their nests in the woods.

.....

You must discover . . . with such skill. “Everything depends on the person working the strings. Lin-chi said that a puppet is able to move freely because there is someone behind the scenes pulling the strings” (annotation). “It’s that great skill which allows us to walk with the legs we have and hold things with the hands we have” (annotation).

As sunset deepens . . . woods is from a passage in *Tso’s Narrative (Tso-chuan)* that became a proverbial phrase: “A bird chooses its tree, but how does a tree choose its bird?” “A smart bird chooses a tree to nest in, a faithful retainer chooses a lord to serve” (annotation).

420. TO A PRIEST PREOCCUPIED WITH LITERARY PURSUITS

Annotations inform us that this priest belonged to the Sōtō school, and that Hakuin was responding to a verse the priest had written with one of his own, using the same rhymes.

The hundred thousand Buddhas all regard mind as their teacher,
Cultivate the body-mind like the shadow constantly at their side.
You may write like Han Yu and earn the whole world’s applause,
Yet when the Day of Reckoning arrives, what will you do then?

.....

Yet when the Day of Reckoning . . . then? “The true worth of a person’s mind appears at just such a time” (annotation).

421. UNTITLED [COMMEMORATING TŌSHI'S DEATH]

Hakuin wrote this piece to be read at memorial services for a member of the Uematsu clan of Hara. "These were services held to commemorate the one hundredth day since his death" (annotation). Ceremonies were traditionally held on the 7th, 49th, and 100th days after a person's death. Hakuin refers to the deceased as Tōshi, short for Tōshirō. Hakuin was fifty-two years old at the time.

TŌSHI WAS A fine young gentleman about to blossom into maturity. But in the summer of the first year of Gembun [1736], he died unexpectedly. The citizens of Hara village, both old and young, were greatly saddened by his death. Ryōsai Dōsha composed a verse tribute to him, and I wrote one too, following his rhymes.

After his death, his friends recalled warmly this fine young man.

Scenes of woeful lamentation were seen even in distant villages.

A grief-stricken brother sponsored rites for the repose of his soul.

I want his returning spirit to enter my Dharma hall without delay

And see how earnestly we are performing services on his behalf,

Absorbed in chanting sutras and *dharani*, forgetting passing time.

I want his spirit to come and receive the merit from all these acts.

No need for haste, let us tuck up our robes and continue chanting.

.....

But in the summer . . . he died unexpectedly. “A sudden, unexpected death” (annotation).

Ryōsai Dōsha (*Dōsha* means “man of the Way”). Ryōsai Genmyō (1706–86) was one of Hakuin’s earliest students, known for his Chinese verse. Annotations say that he was living at the time in the Kannon-dō, the small hall which later became the site of the Kannon-ji (see #221, pp. 399–400).

A grief-stricken brother. “Uematsu Shirōemon” (annotation).

No need for haste . . . and continue chanting. “A charm uttered to make sure the deceased does not come back [as a ghost]” (annotation). Hakuin alludes to a verse in the *Book of Odes*: “Toward the east it is still dark, / He bustles into jacket and skirt. / He bustles into them and hustles into them; / To the palace they have summoned him” (Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs*, p. 37). Translations of the second line of this verse vary greatly. I have interpreted it in accordance with Waley’s translation to mean the person is putting on his clothes with great haste, which I suppose to be Hakuin’s reading of the line.

422. IMPROMPTU

The annotations tell us that this verse was inspired by a typhoon that struck the Izu and Suruga area as the monks of Shōin-ji were re-thatching the temple roofs. They also identify the “venerable priest” in the final line as Jōgaku Oshō. The wording in the original suggests that Jōgaku was a high-ranking priest, perhaps from the capital at Kyoto.

Over a thousand homes in northern Izu damaged or
destroyed,
Our ramshackle little temple in Suruga was turned on its
head.

Why have we set to work so earnestly to restore our buildings?

We heard a venerable priest will be visiting our remote shores.

423. UNTITLED [DAIGAN RŌSHI]

In 1713, during his youthful pilgrimage in western Japan pursuing his post-satori practice, Hakuin stopped over at the Sōtō temple Inryō-ji in Izumi province. He remained there until the third month of the following year, befriending an elderly priest named Jukaku Dōnin with whom he found he shared much in common (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 185–86). Portraying Jukaku as a priest of superior capacity in his autobiography Wild Ivy (p. 50), Haikun describes a private weeklong session of intensive practice the two men engaged in together. In his own telling, Hakuin made a good impression on the Inryō-ji priests, since they asked him to stay on and become their next abbot. Although nothing whatever is known about Daigan Rōshi, he apparently had a close association with Inryō-ji and may have been one of its priests at the time of Hakuin's visit. It is even possible he is Jukaku Dōnin himself..

DAIGAN RŌSHI WAS an excellent priest, a straight and unbowed branch of the Zen forest, a splendid panicle of rice from its Dharma fields. Years ago when I was staying at Inryō-ji in Izumi province, I was privileged to benefit from his unstinting compassion. In the spring after I arrived at the temple, Daigan — who was living deep inside the grove surrounding the nearby Kasuga Shrine — came over to Inryō-ji and offered to take me to his hermitage. I went with him and ended up staying for ten days. I discovered a realm redolent of the noble beauty of past ages and completely untouched by the world's dust, with springs and rocks shrouded in a profundity of untold depths. Although I had long before renounced literary pursuits, I was moved by the beauty of the surroundings to write a verse:

A virtuous priest brought me into these fine woodland thickets,
Angling off along narrow trails from the edge of the large *torii*.
Moving aimlessly through a realm untouched by worldly dust,
I gaped in wonder at snow-topped giants rising up into the fog.
Wild monkeys scampered among temple gardens veiled in mist,
Crying birds rose up from hedges heavy-laden with recent rain.
Welcomed by the noise of water rushing in the flooded streams,
Celebrated by the pine trees mantled in brilliant emerald green,
I made my way down a moss-covered path no one had yet trod;
Straightening up my robe, I climbed into the hall of the temple.
The spring sun's rays filtered through with a magical radiance,
Myriad blossoms vied in competition unknown to human gaze.
Izumi is a province especially favored with pure clear springs,
A cup of tea from a gimp-legged pot refreshed me to the core.
The Rōshi's room was tiny, not much more than a beehive cell,
But as he entered it transformed into the cave of the Lion King.
He said before he even came here he dreamed about this room;
Divination revealed it was sacred to the Bodhisattva Manjusri.

Leopards in Nan-shan hide from the rain to preserve their fur,
Daigan came to this retreat to dim his light and hide his virtue.
Lanterns in seven smaller shrines twinkle like the Seven Stars,
Waterweed floats upon a pair of ponds glittering like mirrors.
At the window, candles for sutra-chanting flutter in the wind,
Inside the moon filters onto cushions steeped in quiet thought.
Sitting with a stick of incense, brushed by a fresh pine breeze,
Putting on sandals for an idle stroll, I frighten foxes and hares.
The lineage Buddha started has proliferated like a melon vine,
Branching out through India, spreading into China from there.
In our own land the *kami* appeared, gathering in great crowds,
Preeminent among them was the great *kami* of Kasuga Shrine.
From deep inside the forest, the sudden boom of a temple bell,
Monks in their tiny makeshift temple engaged in Zen training.
It's in a spot like this that students should strive for awakening,
Here their teacher Daigan Rōshi has entered that timeless life.

.....

Daigan . . . deep inside the grove . . . take me to his hermitage.
According to the records of the Kasuga Shrine there was once a

Jingū-ji, or shrine temple, named Sōfuku-ji within its precincts. Originally built on a large scale, it was totally destroyed by fire during the wars of the late 16th century, though some of the buildings were later rebuilt at various times in the Edo period.

Leopards in Nan-shan hide from the rain to preserve their fur.
Compare with two lines from #319: “In Nan-shan leopards hide in rains like this / For fear their fur will lose its glossy sheen” (p. 517).

Seven Stars (shichi-sei) refers to the stars of the Big Dipper.

424. MATCHING RHYMES OF A VERSE BY MYŌ JŌZA, WITH PREFACE

Myō Jōza cannot be identified. One annotation says he was a student of Hakuin’s friend Unzan Sotai, another that he was Ryōsai Genmyō, one of Hakuin’s early students.

I AM CONFIRMED in my laziness. I don’t read a single word. Just snooze the days away. Then a splendid verse, lofty in tone, filled with bold and forceful sentiments, arrived. Rubbing the sleep from my eyes, I chanted it to myself. I had no doubt that it was the work of that fine poet Myō Jōza. Without thinking, I added a verse of my own:

Having rid himself of all the seeds linking him to the
Buddhas,

He can spit out lethal words bristling with sharp pungent
force.

But sometimes he just stands silent, chin resting upon his
staff,

Gazing out from the half-open window on the surrounding
hills.

He moves about in a sort of daze, as though an utter
simpleton,

No serenity or loftiness, just acting as though he's not all there.

You might also compare his uselessness to that of a winter fan,

Receiving both praise and censure with absolute indifference.

.....

Having rid himself . . . Buddhas means Myō had gone beyond even Buddhahood or Dharma.

Receiving both praise and censure . . . indifference. “Reviled, he doesn’t anger; praised, he isn’t pleased” (annotation).

425. POEM OF THANKS FOR A RUG AND TOBACCO

A splendid rug, suddenly delivered to my little temple,
Covered with green dragons asleep in deep blue pools.
I won't forget the tobacco, just right for the quiet here,
Filling my *kiseru*, I puff auspicious five-colored clouds.

.....

Tobacco smoking is said to have been introduced to Japan by Portuguese sailors in the 16th century. It had spread throughout the country well before Hakuin's day, thanks in part to the use of the metal *kiseru*, or long-handled smoking pipe. Monks on pilgrimage are said to have used tobacco seeds to pay for their food and lodging.

Hakuin's fondness for his *kiseru* is well documented in his life records (see *The Religious Art of Zen Master Hakuin*, Chapter 2). Perhaps the most interesting episode involving Hakuin and tobacco is one that describes his attendant Tōrei, a stickler for upholding the

precepts, entering Hakuin's chambers and finding him trying to conceal his pipe, still smoking, behind his back. Out of feelings of filial devotion, and to avoid embarrassing his teacher, Tōrei, without showing the least bit of displeasure, sat down, took Hakuin's *kiseru*, primed it with tobacco, and handed it back to him. Hakuin happily proceeded to receive his student in a "relaxed and happy manner" (*Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Tōrei*, age 32).

426. POEM OF THANKS FOR A SOBA FEAST

We learn from several verses on the subject in Poison Blossoms that Hakuin was a great lover of soba (buckwheat) noodles. It was apparently during Hakuin's lifetime that soba started being sold in special shops in Edo, but even before that, at least as early as the 16th century, they were being made and eaten at home. Soba is an autumn crop, and noodles and dumplings made from soba flour milled from newly harvested kernels and eaten with a dipping sauce or in a hot broth are considered a special delicacy.

The first of the verses, dating probably from Hakuin's forties or fifties, describes the making of the noodles by the same procedure used today. The soba flour is carefully combined with water and kneaded into a heavy dough, then flattened with a long rolling pin into a thin sheet. During this process the entire sheet of dough is furled onto the rolling pin, pounded sharply on the cutting board, and then unrolled. This is repeated over and over until the dough has reached the desired thinness. It is then folded over into numerous layers and cut with a special knife into long noodle-like strings. The words "furled, unfurled, flattened till round and mirror smooth" describe the flat sheet of soba dough unrolled on the cutting board.

Soba flour, soft and white, sifted through a silken skein,
Transformed into fine soba noodles for an invited guest.

Furled on the pin, pounded with sharp, thundering claps,
Furled, unfurled, flattened till round and mirror smooth.
It is folded in layers, carefully cut into long thin threads:
Boiled, then set in silver bowls, pure as new fallen snow.
I ate them with bitter grated daikon, a boon companion,
Now sit stuffed and bloated, enjoying the autumn breeze.

427. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY

Hakuin's writings do not often refer to the Buddhist precepts (vinaya). Observing precepts is one of the sangaku or three ways of Buddhist study, the others being meditation and the wisdom contained in the sutras. Hakuin's early interest in the precepts is documented in the records dealing with his years of pilgrimage, most prominently in the Chronological Biography for 1708 (age 24), the year he spent studying with his teacher Shōju Rōjin in Shinano province. "The fifth month. The master told Shōju of his desire to go to Ekōzen-ji in Matsumoto, Shinano province, to receive the full precepts. Shōju explained and imparted to him the secrets of the formless mind precepts. The master received them with tears of gratitude" (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 171–2). In the Zen school the formless mind precepts (musō shinchi kai) are said to exemplify the eternally unchanging Buddha-mind prior to any explicit forms or formulations whatever. Baldly stated this means that a person cannot uphold the individual Buddhist precepts as they are set forth in the scriptures until he sees into his own true nature (attains kenshō); once kenshō is attained, he will uphold them all as a matter of course.

Hakuin's remarks on the precepts in these versified Instructions to the Assembly are probably his lengthiest comment on them. References in the poem itself allow us to date it tentatively to his mid-fifties.

From the time I first heard about the formless mind precepts,

I thirsted for them like a two-year old yearning for its mother.

How lucky it was, in summer of the fifth year of the Hōei era,

I chanced to meet Priest Shōju Rōjin, who became my teacher.

One day, I offered a pinch of incense, made three prostrations,

And told him about my religious quest, leaving nothing unsaid.

The old teacher imparted his instruction with deep compassion:

“The words ‘formless mind-ground’ are ones you must treasure,

Because the only power the precepts offer is found in the mind.

It is in and of itself the primary object of the Buddha-patriarchs,

It embraces all ten worlds without leaving a single trace behind,

It begins and ends the four seasons without ever changing itself,

Its perfection is that of empty space, without any back or front,

Its radiance resembles the sun, illuminating the cloudless skies.

When the mud cow bolts Granny Chang jumps in the window.

When the wooden horse neighs Mother Li runs into the pillar.”

Either four prohibitions or ten, they’re yanked up by their roots,

Three hundred precepts or five, all are there in the mind.

Your conduct and demeanor will then remain flawless as jade,

Your mind always shining as brightly and clearly as a mirror.

Anyone who wants to gain such a genuine state of samadhi,

Must always maintain this clarity and brightness in his mind.

A candle burns brightest when its wick is carefully trimmed,

So does mind's clarity increase as it gets closer to the source.

Sustaining this in zazen and in the daily come-and-go as well

Makes you a superior and faultless upholder of the precepts.

The best way to sustain it is to keep right thought in the mind,

Keeping to what the *Nirvana Sutra* calls "infant-like behavior."

You might command all the many secrets of the three worlds,

But lacking mindfulness, you'll cling like a disembodied spirit.

When I began my practice my mind was like a woodland deer,

Unruly in spite of my best efforts, trying to revert to the wild.

I've worked my butt off for thirty years honing and polishing it,

I'm ashamed to say that I still have not grasped it completely.

People may ask "what could trouble a veteran priest like you?"

My head grizzled with silver, endless stalks of whitened hair.

It's said a person rich in virtue is troubled throughout his life,

Afflicted to the marrow — not a condition one can easily cure.

Let us place our trust in the endless eons lying in the future,

Vow together with all beings to protect the Dharma fortress.

.....

Because the only power the precepts offer. Hakuin uses the word *kaitai*, a term interpreted as “power of the precepts,” signifying the strength acquired on receiving and upholding the Buddhist precepts to do good and cease from doing evil.

It begins and ends . . . changing itself. “Confucius said, ‘I would prefer not speaking.’ Tse-kung said, ‘If you, our teacher, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to record?’ The master said, ‘Does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced, but does Heaven say anything?’” (*Analects*, XVII.19).

Its perfection is that of empty space refers to lines from Seng-ts’an’s (d. 606) *Faith in Mind (Hsinhsin-ming)*: “Perfection like great space, / Nothing lacking, nothing in excess.”

Either four prohibitions or ten. There are four serious crimes for a monk: killing, stealing, carnality, and lying. Expanded to ten crimes, the list is: killing, stealing, adultery, lying, selling wine, discussing another’s faults, praising oneself while criticizing others, meanness, anger at censure, and disparaging the three treasures.

The best way . . . right thought in the mind. Keeping one’s thoughts constantly focused on achieving the Way.

Keeping to what the Nirvana Sutra calls “infant-like behavior.” The (Mahayana) *Nirvana Sutra* sets forth sixteen practices engaged in by the Bodhisattva Kannon, one of which is termed “infant-like practice” (*yōni-gyō*), in which the student is said to become like an infant before it has begun to talk. See *Beating the Cloth Drum*, p. 90, for Hakuin’s discussion of the practice as it is set forth in *The Silent Child Sutra*, which he equates with the *Nirvana Sutra*’s *yōni-gyō*;

also *Mencius*: “A superior man is one who retains the heart of a newborn baby.”

But lacking mindfulness, you'll cling like a disembodied spirit. There was a popular belief that ghosts and other disembodied spirits clung to trees and plants from which they haunted and played tricks on people. In Zen literature, “clinging like a disembodied spirit” is used deprecatingly for attachment, whether to words or a partial attainment.

My head grizzled with silver, endless stalks of whitened hair. “Although I want to bring all my students to full realization, the years I have left don't allow that” (annotation).

It's said a person rich in virtue is troubled throughout his life. “A superior man has life-long troubles, but he never has any unexpected vexations” (*Mencius* IV.7; Lau, p. 134). “Yuan-t'ung said to Ta-chueh, ‘The ancient sages kept their minds from generating thoughts, forestalling the rise of deluding passions. By preparing their minds in this way, they experienced no serious troubles. It is like Mencius said, a wise man has a life-long anxiety but never experiences serious trouble’” (*Precious Lessons of the Zen School*, ch. 1).

428. UNTITLED [SENDING OFF JUN AND Kō]

Hakuin wrote this piece in 1741, at the age of fifty-seven. Attendant Jun is Enkei Sojun (1715–67) and Kō is Daikyū Ebō (1715–74), both of whom appear elsewhere in Poison Blossoms. After leaving Hakuin, Enkei returned to Izumo province, where he taught at Tenrin-ji in Matsue for the rest of his life. Daikyū finally returned to reside at Hōfuku-ji in Bizen province; he also taught at Tōfuku-ji in Kyoto. This verse is not included in the first edition of the Supplement to Poison Blossoms; it was added in later printings.

ATTENDANTS JUN AND Kō have served at my side for a long time. But in autumn of the first year of Kampō [1741], Jun will return to Izumo province and Kō will set out on a pilgrimage northward to the Shimotsuke and Kōzuke area. Feeling suddenly lonely and forsaken, I wrote this verse to send them off:

You both leave on lengthy trips, one headed west, one east.

Heaven, will you take two faithful attendants away from me?

They were at my side as I trod the rugged snowy trails to Kai,

Back home they helped at the lecture meetings on Han-shan.

Two shrewd counselors enabled Liu Pang to achieve his goals,

But Chao and Li spoiled the First Emperor's soaring ambition.

What am I to do when you leave, a bird deprived of its wings?

I used to soar and dip with the swiftness of a peregrine falcon,

Here on out I will be like a tortoise dragging its tail in the mud.

.....

They were at my side . . . lecture meetings on Han-shan. For 1741, Hakuin's fifty-seventh year, the *Chronological Biography* has: "In spring . . . the master gave talks on the *Blue Cliff Record* at Keirin-ji in Kai province; they were attended by over two hundred people" (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 206). The difficulties Hakuin and his party encountered crossing the Kagosaka Pass east of Mount Fuji in the winter of 1741 are described in the long verse of #337, pp. 538–41). Lectures on the *Poems of Han-shan* that Hakuin mentions having taken place after his return to Shōin-ji are not recorded elsewhere.

Liu Pang. After surviving great difficulties thanks to the wise counsels of his ministers Chang Liang and Ch'en P'ing, Liu Pang

founded the Han dynasty.

Chao and Li. The eunuch Chao Kao served the First Chin Emperor as secretary of state; Li Ssu as his prime minister. After the emperor died, his son Hu Hai conspired with Chao and Li to kill Crown Prince Fu Su and seize the throne. Chao Kao, who had long coveted the throne for himself, later forced Hu Hai to cut his own throat, thus bringing the Chin dynasty to an end.

COLOPHON TO THE SUPPLEMENT

Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn was published thanks to a donation made by Layman Kida Genshō. This *Supplement to Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn* [*Keisō-dokuzui shū*], compiled by Hakuin's attendant Daishū Zenjo, is made up of pieces the master wrote after the first compilation was made, and from those that had been overlooked. I procured the manuscript of this work and took it in secret to a bookseller to have it printed.

I offer this *Supplement* to the memory of my late wife, in hopes that both it and the original work will be widely read.

Shibata Gikyō of Hara village, Suruga Province

.....

Kida Genshō's role in the publishing of *Poison Blossoms* and the one-volume *Supplement* is explained in the Introduction, pp. 8–12.

Shibata Gikyō Gonzaemon's contribution as he explains it here is essentially the same as the account in the *Chronological Biography*: "The ninth year of Hōreki [1759, age 75]: In the third month Shibata Gikyō, a student of the master, obtained a manuscript containing some unpublished writings that the master had been collecting in hopes they might be added to the published edition of his Zen records, *Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn*. Shibata had the manuscript printed as a one-volume supplement to the work" (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 225).

BOOK ELEVEN: SUPPLEMENT TWO

Gudō's Lingering Radiance (*Hōkan
Ishō*)

429. GUDŌ'S LINGERING RADIANCE

Hakuin's intention to include this work in his Zen records is clearly stated on the cover of the printed edition of Gudō's Linging Radiance, where the words "Supplement to Poison Blossoms from a Thicket of Thorn" appear next to the title. As things turned out, it was published as a single independent volume. A donation Hakuin had been promised to cover the cost of publishing the entire Poison Blossoms collection had become doubtful, so when laymen who were attending a meeting he was conducting in Takayama, Hida province, offered to supply the necessary funds to publish the newly completed supplement, Hakuin promptly accepted and sent it off to the printer in Kyoto with instructions that it be printed as a single volume entitled Gudō's Linging Radiance (Hōkan Ishō). It went through the printing process in a very short time, appearing only a few months after the manuscript had been received (for particulars, see the Introduction, p. 12).

The title Hōkan Ishō, "Precious Mirror's Linging Radiance," uses the name Precious Mirror (Hōkan), from the National Master title Daien Hōkan which Emperor Go-sai awarded Gudō Tōshoku (1579–1661) the year after his death. A leading figure in Rinzai Zen of the first half of the 17th century, Gudō numbered among his many Dharma heirs such well-known priests as Suzuki Shōsan, Shidō Munan, and Isshi Bunshu. From Hakuin's perspective, the most important of these was Shidō Munan, the teacher of Shōju Rōjin. Hakuin traced his Dharma lineage through Shōju, Munan, and Gudō, to the Kamakura priests Daiō, Daitō, and Kanzan, who founded the Japanese line of Rinzai Zen to which he belonged, and from them even further back to Daiō's Chinese teacher Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu.

In Gudō's Linging Radiance, Hakuin praises Gudō for keeping alive the authentic tradition of koan Zen when it had fallen to a low ebb amid the various new approaches to Zen study that had

appeared in the 17th century in response to new realities that emerged during the first century of Tokugawa rule. Among these new teachings was Bankei Yōtaku's Unborn Zen, as well as various forms of Nembutsu Zen, promulgated first by Ungo Kiyō and later by émigré Chinese Ōbaku priests. Hakuin vigorously attacks all of these teachings for undermining students' spiritual determination and subverting what he viewed as the true traditions of koan Zen exemplified by Gudō, Daitō, and Hsu-t'ang.

Hakuin's reasons for writing Gudō's Lingered Radiance are explained in the Chronological Biography:

In spring [of 1758] the master was invited to lecture at Rurikō-ji in Mino province [where Gudō had formerly served as head priest]. He decided to use the meeting to celebrate in advance the one hundredth anniversary of the death of National Master Gudō with a series of lectures on the Blue Cliff Record. The monks living at Shōin-ji showed scant interest in the idea, but that made him all the more determined to proceed. . . . eventually they came around and lent their support as well. . . . Upon arriving at Rurikō-ji the master composed a letter which he had distributed to Zen temples far and wide. He wrote: "As we reach the one hundredth anniversary of master Gudō's death, I propose to deliver a series of lectures on the Blue Cliff Record. Anyone who feels a debt of Dharma gratitude to the National Master should come to Rurikō-ji to offer incense and make their bows to him."

He also sent letters to senior priests in Gudō's teaching line urging them to arrange for Gudō's Zen records, now in manuscript, to be published. Discussions were held and various opinions were voiced, but in the end they were unable to reach any decision on the matter. The master was incensed by their lack of enthusiasm.

At the end of the Rurikō-ji meeting, he received invitations from other temples in Mino province. After visiting each of them, he headed for Sōyū-ji in Takayama,

Hida province, for talks on the Blue Cliff Record. On route to Sōyū-ji his exasperation at the failure of his fellow priests to support the printing of Gudō's records prompted him to compose a work entitled Gudō's Lingered Radiance. When he arrived at Sōyū-ji he wrote out a fair copy of the text and showed it to the monks (Precious Mirror Cave, pp. 223–4).

THE GREAT ZEN master Daien Hōkan [Gudō] produced thousands of Dharma heirs and established over a score of temples. He was a priest of incomparable virtue. Several fascicles of Zen records containing his words and deeds have been compiled. Manuscripts of these words are preserved today at Shinshō-ji in Mino province and Chūzan-ji in Ise province. Filled with steep and lofty words and phrases no other Zen records past or present can match, they constitute a great treasure and Dharma asset for all schools of Buddhism.

One priest, fearing that the master's records might be lost, has been moping about with furrowed brow, lamenting: "Is not this record a wonderful glowing torch on a midnight path? Is it not as welcome as a compass on a foggy sea? If we continue to neglect it, leaving it buried away among piles of old paper, before long it will disappear into the bellies of the silverfish and not a single word will be transmitted to future generations. Can anyone who regards himself as a descendant of the National Teacher bear to sit idly by and watch that happen? It must be printed to be sure it will be preserved for future generations of students."

A gathering of elder priests in master Gudō's lineage vigorously debated the proposal. One ignorant fellow — he was allied to the shameful "withered sitting" school of Zen — pulled a difficult face and speaking in an unctuous manner, said: "No, wait a minute. It would not be easy to carry out such a proposal. We must not allow the fearless, uplifting words of the National Master to fall carelessly into vulgar, worldly hands. Even if we did imprudently allow them to be published, very few would be able to appreciate the hidden pleasures they contain. No one would buy or read a single page of such a book. It is much better for his records to remain hidden away

and preserved in a safe place.” With that the discussion came to an abrupt end. This unprecedented project was abandoned.

To whose house, and what lineage, does a rascal such as you belong? You can only be one of those benighted reprobates the Buddha said was beyond saving. Do you not fear the retribution you will receive for the terrible sin you have committed? Your actions are sure to anger the gods Brahma and Indra and all the guardian protectors of Buddhas and patriarchs in the ten directions. They will surely expunge your name from the rolls of the priesthood. Those words from your mouth are a karmic act that will be engraved on the Lord of Hell’s iron slate as a sin greater than causing blood to flow from a Buddha’s body. You will sink forever into the depths of the Tongue-pulling Hell with no respite from its horrible sufferings for tens of thousands of kalpas. Even if a million Buddhas were to appear in the world, they would be unable to grant absolution for a sin of such magnitude. You are destined to sink into cauldrons overflowing with poisonous flames and molten lead, to be beaten with the merciless iron whips of the cow-headed lictors.

Your everyday life has been motivated by foolish hopes, thoughts of fame and worldly fortune, and you have looked on with narrowed eyes at the good deeds performed by others. Even if you happened to see a Buddhist sutra or a Zen record, you would have no more clue to its meaning than a fisherman gazing at a battle-axe or a kitten at a piece of brocade. Why do you suppose that priests are numbered among the Three Treasures [Buddha, Dharma, and Priesthood]? It is because they are supposed to disperse and transmit the Dharma treasure in the latter day, to employ the power of sutra recitation and words and letters to lead people to liberation. The Dharma that the Buddha expounded is a priceless treasure, but it was not possible for him to transmit it entirely on his own. It has been kept alive to the present day thanks to the precious treasure of the priesthood.

How can we number the gangs of skin-headed miscreants that infest the land today, these people who cannot read the sutras or write about the Dharma, among the Three Treasures? To them, profit and wealth are the life-source itself. They spend their lives without giving a thought to the Buddha’s teaching. When they see the son of

a rich family, they fawn over him as though he were more important than the Buddhas or Zen patriarchs. All the gods of heaven and earth, and the many other deities that protect the Dharma, even including those enshrined in the smallest, most remote hamlets, must regard these miserable creatures with the deepest loathing.

Long ago, after Shakamuni entered Nirvana, his disciples Mahakashapa, Shariputra, Maudgalyayana, Ananda, and five hundred great Arhats gathered for a conference in the Pippali cave. They began assembling the palm leaves on which Buddha's teachings of sudden and gradual attainment and the greater and lesser vehicles were inscribed, until they finally had one hundred thousand leaves filled with his preaching. Why weren't they concerned about letting them "fall carelessly into the clutches of the worldly and vulgar?" Why weren't they afraid that no one would purchase them? Thanks to their efforts, the Dharma has enjoyed unending prosperity, helping both men and devas to attain enlightenment. Later, Nagarjuna wrote his *Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom*, Asanga his *Thirty Stanzas*, Bodhidharma the *Collection of the Six Gates*, the Third Patriarch Seng-ts'an *Verses on Belief in Mind*, Huang-po composed the *Essentials of Mind Transmission*, and Zen master Po-chang compiled his *Pure Regulations*. Collections of Yun-men's and Lin-chi's recorded sayings were made, both Fen-yang and Hsueh-tou composed verses on one hundred koans, and Yuan-wu added his detailed comments to the latter. In Japan, recorded sayings were compiled for National Masters Daiō and Daitō; also for Daikyū Sōkyū. In each of these works, the teacher has set forth the hidden keys to the upward striving of his house. Why did no one worry about allowing these teachings to fall into vulgar, worldly hands? They have become great and precious lamps that illuminate the world's darkness. We must bow reverently to the disciples of master Yun-men, who wrote down their teacher's precious instructions on their paper robes.¹⁷⁰ In preserving such teachings so they could later be printed, they have transmitted Dharma gifts of priceless and timeless significance.

What a great pity it is in this latter day when the Dharma is in a state of degeneration to find these phony "silent illumination" bonzes

ying with one another for prominence by constantly filling their followers' heads with nonsense like the following:

“Pledge that you will never look at words or letters — they will most surely bury your spirits under. You must never make the mistake of opening the records of the Zen patriarchs — they will inflict irreparable damage to your self-nature. Just remain as you are in a state of absolute nondoing (*buji*), in Zen's ultimate state of no-thought, no-mind. When even a flicker of thought attaches to this primal state, it creates karma that will send you directly into the three evil paths of existence. If you are hungry, eat something. If you feel out of sorts, lie down and sleep it off. Move with the natural course of things, freely and joyfully. Don't exert any effort. There's no Buddha for you to seek, there's no Dharma for you to preach. It is this secret that allows you to lead an artless and completely natural way of life.”

Shiftless, headstrong rascals hear this shameless drivel and go waltzing about, wagging their tails with joy. They proceed to seek out warm and comfortable temples where they will have plenty to eat, where they can indulge in long sessions of blissful sleep. They can't read Buddhist texts. They are unable to write. It would be hard to find ignorance and dull-wittedness of this order in a horse or a cow. On the day their parents allowed them to leave home and enter the Buddhist priesthood, how could they have dreamed their sons would turn into such bald-headed morons?

Using the method of teaching by expedient means he had devised, the Buddha said in a preaching at the Deer Park that the state of no thought, no striving, no practice, and no realization was supreme and ultimate enlightenment. Those who believe that these expedient teachings are the Buddha's essential message are Shravakas and others belonging to the Two Vehicles, people who cannot remotely approach even the Arhats' meager attainment.

In fact, the Buddha's essential message is found in these words: “I would rather you were reborn as a mangy old fox than for you to become a follower of the Two Vehicles.” If by placing your trust in this false teaching you sink below the level of a suppurating fox, what possible help can you be to others? Seeking the truth of Nirvana by taking a long pole and trying to sweep away suffering and its causes is like trying to flail the clouds and mist from the sky. You

will keep sweeping until you grow old and die. Your suffering will continue for three lives, sixty long kalpas, and since throughout those rebirths you will be unable to gain the strength that comes from *kenshō*, you will be destined to move through a series of purposeless, empty lives and equally purposeless, empty deaths.

Some of today's silent illumination Zennists may have experienced a limited *kenshō* such as the Pratyeka-buddhas achieve. But they then attach mulishly to the truth they have grasped and are unable to proceed beyond it. They cling to an empty emptiness, and they deny the principle of cause and effect and future existence. Angulimalya scorned the Buddha's disciple Shariputra, saying, "You have no more wisdom than an earthworm buried in the mud. It gazes up but is unable to see a single thing."¹⁷¹

A fully attained Bodhisattva is not like that. He undergoes untold difficulties and suffering as he bores completely through the profoundest source of the great Way, and even then he refuses to remain in the final abode of highest enlightenment. Instead he begins poring through the sutras and commentaries, scriptures of both the Lesser and Greater Vehicles, accumulating an immeasurable store of unparalleled Dharma assets. Vigorously spurring forward the wheel of the four great vows, he works to extend salvation to all sentient beings, endeavoring constantly to practice the great Dharma giving, his efforts never faltering over timeless kalpas — "even should the great void itself end, his universal vow would never be exhausted."

Recently, one of the blind, false priests who advocate "withered sitting," silent illumination Zen brought a group of monks all the way from Harima province and took up temporary residence in an old temple in western Mino province.¹⁷² After ringing the temple bell and gathering people to the temple, the priest gave them a muddled teaching that denied the principle of cause and effect, not a single word of it worth hearing. "Heaven and hell do not exist. Birth and death and Nirvana are illusions. After you die, the *kon* spirit returns to the heavens and the *haku* spirit returns to the Yellow Springs."¹⁷³ What could remain once your body is cremated? For whom are those offerings of tea, incense, and flowers made?"

His teaching deeply confused upstanding members of the lay community. Glaring angrily, their teeth tightly clenched, they said, "For years we believed the teachings given us by Buddhist priests. We held annual memorial services to worship the Buddhas. But it was all completely mistaken." They immediately began destroying the altar rooms in their houses, casting out all the wooden and clay Buddhist images enshrined in them. They turned the gravesites of their parents into farmland. In both market and field they sang songs that poured scorn on Buddhist priests.

In order to learn for himself what this man was preaching, a priest of Gudō's Zen lineage attended one of his lecture meetings. When he was afterward introduced to the man, the priest spoke frankly. "It is said that unless you have something beneficial to say, you should hold your tongue. Nonetheless, I feel compelled to ask why you refute what other priests have always taught about the spirits of the dead?"

"I have never seen a dead person's spirit. That is my basis for refuting those teachings," he replied.

"Have you been to China or India and seen them for yourself? If you believe only what you see, India and China should not exist either. Don't you realize that everyone who does not experience *kenshō*, whether he is a priest or a layman, becomes a ghost or spirit when he dies?"

The priest's head sunk on his chest, his face assuming a pallid, claylike hue.

"Why do you continue to deceive your lay followers with such false teachings? I am going to return here tomorrow and ask you about a certain matter. If you are unable to answer, a terrifying fate lies in store for you."

Although the lecture meeting was still only several days old, the priest stole away that night and fled to Ōgaki in Mino province. He took a room in a layman's house and was soon spreading his irresponsible notions once again. Citizens of western Mino who lived within five leagues of Ōgaki all fell under the spell of the nonsense the blind priest fed them. Rumor has it that they stopped holding memorial services for their parents and ceased observing the traditional Urabon festival for the spirits of the dead.

The Buddhist Dharma must not be preached in a heedless, ill-considered manner. You must undertake such a task only with the utmost care and prudence. Anyone who preaches an impure Dharma is destined to fall into hell. Hearing a Zen priest speak just two words — “Does not fall” — a man once fell for five hundred lives into the body of a fox.¹⁷⁴ For leading his followers astray, this priest has committed a sin that is certain to land him in the deepest part of the Hell of Interminable Suffering.

Among the villages surrounding Kyoto and Edo one sometimes encounters those phony roadside preachers known as *dangi* priests,¹⁷⁵ windbags who sit raised above their audience on thick cushions delivering bantering monologues that are coarse and vulgar from beginning to end. Their primary aim is to get people to give them donations. They push a dipper in people’s faces, urging them to drop some money into it, or pass a basket around for the same purpose. They will on occasion even leave their teaching perch and descend into the audience, imploring loudly for help. “Money, please! I want your money!” It’s just like the beggars you see down around the Uji Bridge. People with any sense narrow their eyes when they see them, and quickly get up and leave.

Not only the landed gentry but wealthy townsmen as well tell you that preaching to spread the Buddhist teaching is designed for the ears of ignorant old men and women, not for people of refined discernment. Careful reflection shows how true this is. With a deep sigh and furrowed brow, I am obliged to report that the great majority of those called priests today are no better than these roadside beggars. Respect and reverence for Buddha’s Dharma is steadily undermined, the sangha’s reputation decreases by the hour. How deplorable to witness the decline of the Dharma in this latter day.

Although what these fellows teach is not worth a proper refutation, how could a person who has even the tiniest desire to protect the Dharma shrink from that small effort? Though these shameless priests possess mouths — they’d have to in order to take in food¹⁷⁶ — they should starve to death before opening them to expound a bogus teaching. For having committed the sin of slandering the true Dharma, they are truly to be pitied. For their

transgression and for disgracing the priesthood, they are headed for a retribution of endless torment.

Some years ago, during the Shōhō era [1644–48], if I remember correctly, there lived in eastern Mino province an ignorant priest who persisted in totally deluding lay followers with a teaching that denied the working of karma. It was much the same as the nonsense preached by the priest from Harima province I just mentioned. His lay followers threw out the Buddhist images in their shrine rooms and destroyed their ancestors' graves. Not long after, the god of pestilence visited the homes of people who had converted to the perverse views of this priest. Enlisting the help of a shrine maiden, they prayed for assistance at the local shrine. The deity of the shrine, delivering an oracle through the maiden, revealed that the false teachings they were following had brought on the epidemic.

Enraged, burning with resentment, young and old alike assembled and hatched a plan to waylay the sham priest in the night and beat the life out of him. The priest, beside himself with fear, stole out of his temple under cover of darkness with seven or eight of his followers and fled eastward in the direction of Edo. But before they had reached the Ōda crossing they were suddenly enveloped in thick, muscular black clouds as dark as ink. Rain fell down on them as if poured from upended buckets. Lightning flashes accompanied by deafening claps of thunder split the earth around them. Terrified, the priests collapsed to the ground. They recovered and prostrated themselves, only to once again fall to the ground unconscious.

When the thunder had ceased and the skies had cleared, astonished villagers from the nearby hamlets gathered around the priests. Pitying them, they gave them water and medicine. The priests gradually regained their senses, but once they were able to get up and move about, they were surprised to find their teacher was nowhere to be seen. He had totally vanished. They ran this way and that, calling out his name. Who could have imagined it? His head, arms, legs, and other parts of his body were found scattered in seven different places along the river bank! A Buddhist priest must be extremely careful not to expound teachings that deny cause and effect.

Another elder priest belonging to this karma-denying, Dharma-destroying fraternity appeared in western Mino province during the Genroku era [1688–1704]. The fellow obviously had no experience of *kenshō* whatever, and yet he still tirelessly spread his noxious teachings among the lay community. But as we learned from the story of the Harima priest, if there is anything at all that you want to avoid, it is to accumulate evil karma by expounding a false teaching.

This priest fell afoul of some baseless accusations that were directed at him out of the blue. When the accusations were traced to their source, some truly abhorrent facts came to light. It seems a layman attached to his temple was especially skilled in the underhanded methods of deceitful argument. Fired by a grudge he harbored against the priest, the layman worked up a fabric of groundless allegations and together with his confederates drafted a written complaint. They affixed their seals to it and presented it on at least ten occasions to officials at the castle. As many of the officials were receptive to bribes, the layman finally succeeded in having an obscure and unfair judgment issued. The priest was sentenced to death and executed.

Not long after that one of the officials who had delivered the judgment suddenly fell to the ground raving like a lunatic. He was in great agony and seemed to be suffocating. At this point the spirit of the priest appeared to the official. “I was innocent,” he said. “But you and your confederates had me put to death in a most villainous manner. Your crime extends beyond the limits of the universe. When you die, you will fall into the Hell of Interminable Suffering.” The official died three days later, with eyes bulging out and teeth gnashing together.

The priest’s spirit now visited the official’s confederates one by one, haunting them with his accusations until they were all petrified with fear. Hardly a day passed without a funeral being held for one of them. Those who survived fled in broad daylight with their hair hanging loose around their necks and shoulders. They could be seen dodging and darting at great speed this way and that, like wild hares. Some died raging with anger, cursing and reviling, shrieking and spitting blood. Others fell to arguing about boundary disputes or water rights for their fields, hurling abuse at one another. Finally, they

took up their mattocks and sickles and wielded them in open conflict. The fierce fighting left rows of bodies lining the village streets. With farmlands and villages filled with murderous cries, you would have thought you had fallen into one of the Shrieking Hells. And all of this was caused by the priest's vengeful spirit entering people's vitals. He would have them cursing angrily, or shrieking bitterly, or gnashing their teeth in a wrathful frenzy.

The priest had a young disciple in his early thirties. Unable to just sit back and witness these terrible acts of violence, he put on his surplice, made three deep bows, and offered a stick of incense. Weeping mournfully, and with great trepidation, he fearfully addressed his teacher's funeral tablet [*ihaī*] on the altar:

"My teacher was a fine Buddhist priest, a person deeply committed to the Way. How could such a man have become involved in this terrible business? What transgression was it that caused him to foment these horrendous events?"

A spirit appeared and answered. "I am indeed sad to hear you ask such questions. If you yourself should break through into *kenshō*, you must never remain satisfied with that small attainment. If you did, you would be committing a sin of such magnitude as to fill the vast heavens. In the past I myself engaged in arduous training. I was focused solely on investigating the hidden depths. I believed that I had acquired the power that comes from *kenshō*. But because I left my teacher too soon, I lapsed into believing the nihilistic teaching that existence ends with death.¹⁷⁷ I regret that I did not push forward the wheel of the four great vows and work to save others. How precious are the four universal vows! With their ocean-like vastness, they can free people from attachment to an empty, one-sided emptiness. Never place your trust in false doctrines preached by false teachers."

By the time the spirit had finished speaking, sorrowful tears were flowing like blood down his cheeks. The disciple, also in tears, made a deep bow and left. He now realized for the first time that preaching the Dharma is a truly fearful undertaking, and that now he must above all dedicate his efforts to seeking the Bodhi-mind.

In the Shōtoku era [1711–15] there was a priest in Edo who called himself Zenkai. He is said to have been a nephew of Butchō Rōjin.¹⁷⁸ He began his Zen practice at the age of twenty-three and experienced a *kenshō*. Unfortunately, he did not encounter a real teacher and never learned about post-satori practice. Remaining attached to the understanding he had attained, he continued to practice “withered tree” sitting. But he lamented how difficult he still found it to control the workings of his mind. He decided to enter the mountains of Kumano on the Kii peninsula, cut himself off from the outside world, and devote himself to an austere training regimen. On his way, he passed through Awano in Mino province, thinking to stop for a while with several priests of his acquaintance who were residing there. When Zenkai’s friends met him and saw the strength he had attained in his pursuit of the Way, they were more than glad to take him in, but they were dismayed when they heard of his plan to proceed into the forests of Kumano. When they urged him to find a quiet hermitage in Mino, Zenkai agreed, and gave up his idea of going to Kumano.

It is a thousand pities that because a student fails to encounter a genuine teacher at the beginning of his training and remains ignorant of the practice that continues after satori, he will delight in cutting himself off from the world and immersing himself in a pure existence of this kind. Engaging in such profitless silent meditation, he focuses intently on ridding his mind of thoughts and attaining a state of no-mind, constantly sweeping away thoughts and doing everything he can to keep his mind empty and pure.

Zenkai resided in the hermitage he built in Mino for forty years. With growing age, his resolve began to falter. His heart grew weary. He found that the more he tried to sweep thoughts from his mind, the more confused his mind became. He had lived to a considerable age as a Buddhist priest, but now as death drew nearer, he became focused on his fear of the sufferings that lay ahead in the next world. He began quietly to recite the Nembutsu. In time he came to regard this as a rather roundabout way of reaching awakening, so he started repeating his own name instead, “Zenkai, Zenkai,” over and over.

Where had the original attainment he had experienced as a young monk gone? His nights were now plagued by bad dreams, his days tormented by troubling thoughts. He visited various Buddhist teachers seeking their advice on how to break through this impasse. They told him he was suffering from “Zen sickness” and could offer him no help. He took to moping about, and doing zazen with tears in his eyes.

One priest, feeling pity for him, said, “Why don’t you go to Suruga province and see master Kokurin [Hakuin]? I am sure he will be able to help you.”

With considerable difficulty owing to his great age, Zenkai made the long trip to my temple in Suruga and earnestly requested an interview. The monk who received him came to my chambers with a smile on his face. “A grubby old priest with a broken-down old pilgrim’s case on his back just showed up,” he reported. “His hair is tangled like a mugwort ball, he has a filthy face, and his robe and sedge hat are in tatters. He requested an interview with you in the gruff accents of the Bandō region. Will you see him?”

I said, “Tell him I’m sick. Give him something to eat and send him on his way.”

Then I heard a voice shouting loudly from outside the gate, “I’m an old man. I’m over eighty years old. I undertook a very long journey to come here. Are you going to pretend you’re sick and just send me away! Where is your compassion?”

I had little choice but to grant his request. He came into my chambers. “I have suffered for years from Zen sickness,” he blustered. “Please, master, in your great compassion, do something for me. Help me!”

“Tell me about your Zen sickness — what is it like?” I asked.

“I’m troubled by thoughts in the daytime. At night I have bad dreams,” he replied.

“Do you know what is having those troubling thoughts?” I asked.

“Stop, please. I can’t bear to think about emptiness,” he said.

“What’s wrong with contemplating emptiness?” I asked.

“If a person attaches to emptiness, he will surely fall into hell.”

“Come a little closer. I’m going to free you from your suffering.”

“I’m certainly glad to hear that,” he said, and drew towards me.

“Do you know how many hells exist for someone attached to emptiness?” I asked him.

“No, I don’t know that,” he replied.

“There are eighty-six. I want you to go down into hell right now and distribute yourself among all eighty-six.”

Wordless, the priest stared at me, pie-eyed.

“Go on! Get down there into them!”

“Priests are supposed to save you from hell. What kind of teacher would try to send a student there?” he cried.

“You say you’re from Kantō, but it seems you’ve never heard what Suzuki Shōsan said: ‘The direct, rough-hewn spirit of Kantō is very close to Zen.’¹⁷⁹ If you were really a Kantō priest, you should be able to jump into hell without a second thought.”

“Could you?” he said.

“Get down there and explore the hells, one by one! There’s not a single one I haven’t fallen into!”

He abruptly prostrated himself before me. His eyes had filled with tears. “What a great and wonderful teacher you are, master Hakuin,” he said. “Your compassion has liberated me, allowed me to break completely free from my delusions. I feel as though I have suddenly awakened from a terrible dream. There is no way I can describe the joy I now feel!” He prostrated himself twenty or thirty times, crying and laughing all the while. He then left, returned to the guests’ quarters, latched the door shut, and went to sleep.

The next morning Zenkai approached me with a broad smile on his face. I asked him whether he had any bad dreams during the night. “I haven’t enjoyed a sound sleep for over forty years. But last night I slept like a log,” he said. “It’s the difference between a mediocre physician, who just doles out the same medicine to all his patients, and a great one, who prescribes a purgative at just the right time. If you had not applied that purgative just when you did, how could you have saved me from that terrible sickness?”¹⁸⁰

When he finished speaking, Zenkai performed I don’t know how many prostrations before me. I myself was overcome with joy. I spelled out to him, in slow and deliberate terms, the importance of the practice that comes after satori. I also gave him a piece of paper inscribed with the four universal vows. He came to me a few days

later, made his parting bows and with a mixed feeling of joy and sorrow went on his way.

From Shōin-ji Zenkai traveled to Edo where he took up residence in a hermitage. He formed the habit of facing toward the west [the direction of Hakuin's temple], making his bows, and mournfully weeping out [words like the following]: How fortunate I was to encounter a venerable priest who pushed me down into the great hells. I trampled the karmic roots that had tied me to birth and death into the dust. I kicked over the mill that had been churning out those evil passions. And I have attained the wonderful joy and peace of great deliverance. Yet if I become satisfied with this, I'll turn out no better than Mokuami.¹⁸¹ How wonderful that old priest's great mercy and compassion was, teaching me about post-satori training and the four universal vows. How wonderful is the wheel of the four vows, which smashes the perverse notion that death is the end of all things. Its virtue surpasses all the secrets of the three worlds.

Throughout the past there have been those who sank into the morass of this empty emptiness after attaining enlightenment because they trusted in their own arbitrary views. Fond of citing phrases such as "a man with no matters in his mind is truly noble," preaching notions like those espoused by Taoist hermits in the tradition of Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu, they declared that true happiness is found in the total detachment of empty emptiness. They squandered their precious time on earth leading a shameless life in accord with their own self-centered lights, and as a result they piled up incalculable stores of pernicious karma, unaware that they were destined to fall into the evil paths forever.

One of these priests, Shōgetsu by name, a man who greatly revered Shakamuni Buddha, died and was reborn as a fine horse. It had this priest's name emblazoned on its lower left flank. Then he was reborn into hell as an ox-demon pulling a cart of fire. Another priest died and was born as a large turtle that paddled in the Nagara River. Yet another priest turned into a plague demon who visited death and suffering on countless men and women. Another was ripped apart by lightning for preaching that all things end with death.

All of them suffered these unfortunate fates because they were ignorant of post-satori training. If I had not received the teaching of

an enlightened master, I would have ended up exactly as they did. I would have fallen into the evil destinations when I died and suffered indescribable torments. I must honor and value above all else the debt, so impossible to repay, that I owe my teacher.

I have recently been greatly puzzled as to why none of the fine Buddhist teachers of the past has spoken of the practice that comes after satori. I searched through the *Records of the Lamp*, *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, *Extensive Records of the Lamp*, *Sequel to the Records of the Lamp*, the *Blue Cliff Record*, *Record of Hsu-t'ang*, and *Records of the Essential Mirror*. I combed the records of other Zen masters as well. But I never found any mention of this very important matter. How wonderful it is that my teacher Kokurin has devoted his life to making this great truth known, to teaching people that post-satori practice invariably gives rise to the Bodhi-mind and enables people to avoid the awful fate that otherwise awaits them in the evil paths. He is indeed an Udumbara flower blossoming in the degenerate latter day of the Dharma, the kind of priest who appears only once every five hundred years! How fortunate someone as unworthy as me was able to encounter him. If I had not, I never would have avoided the terrible calamity of falling into the evil paths. No matter what I do, no matter how hard I try, I will never be able to repay even one tenth of the debt I owe him.

There have been numberless people throughout the past who, despite having attained satori, fell into the view that death is the end of all existence because they relied on their own confused notions. Some of them have preached that “a person who does nothing is the true man of nobility,” some have claimed, “we are Buddhas just as we are,” pointing out that a wooden bowl left in its original state and receiving no lacquer will never chip or lose its color. Notions like these are the dregs of thoroughly fatuous assumptions. You could coat them with sticky rice and throw them out under the trees, but not even the crows would show the least interest in them.

These people have simply confounded the fundamental source of their illusions for their original face, their true self, when it is in fact the eighth or storehouse consciousness. This is the reason the great teacher Ch'ang-sha said, “Practicers fail to grasp the truth because they continue to seek it in the workings of their minds. Those

workings have been the source of samsaric rebirth from the beginning of time, yet still they refer to it foolishly as ‘the original person.’”¹⁸²

Anyone who believes these heretical views is a fool of the first order, a person who brings suffering and destruction on himself. Many people think this nondiscriminating consciousness is the true mind, that genuine Buddhist practice consists of assiduously sweeping away deluded thoughts. But even if they swept thoughts away nonstop for three billion kalpas, they would never attain the Buddha Way, and their chances would be even worse if they also held the perverse views of “do-nothing” Zen and empty, one-sided emptiness. Such people are sure to fall into one of the three evil destinations of rebirth — hell, hungry ghosts, or animals — when they die. The prevalence of these views is a dire omen of the Buddha Dharma’s demise.

These errors are due entirely to the lack of the Bodhi-mind. You should concentrate all your efforts on preaching the Dharma. Apart from this, there is no Bodhi-mind. The supreme Bodhi-mind is a jewel beyond all price. Anyone who calls himself a Buddhist priest must be aware of this peerless, truly inestimable path.

Long ago the World-Honored One expounded this verse teaching:¹⁸³

Were all the rarest treasures throughout the three worlds
Distributed as alms, the merit obtained from such an act
Would be far exceeded by preaching one Dharma
phrase.

Were all essential things in the three worlds given as
alms,
Its merit would be far surpassed by any Dharma
utterance.

Were gems numerous as Ganges sand to be offered as
alms

At services conducted for all Tathagatas in the ten
directions,

Its merit would be far excelled by a single Dharma
teaching.

Why does no one expound such a preaching in this period of the latter day? I have heard from Kokurin that this verse well describes National Master Gudō's style of Zen. Imagine how joyful master Gudō must be, dwelling within the great samadhi, at having acquired such a Dharma son, a Dharma son who excels his Dharma father! It is for this reason that even when I sleep I never allow my feet to face west [the direction of Hakuin's temple].

After uttering words like these, old Zenkai always prostrated himself in tears. When I heard how he was praising me in this way, I held my nose a little higher, in spite of myself.

How could I have known that by conducting a lecture meeting on the *Blue Cliff Record* I would penetrate the secret of Tung-shan's Five Ranks?¹⁸⁴ I was so exceedingly happy, my tongue inadvertently poked out of my mouth. Who understands the tremendous power that the Five Ranks possess? They are a great and unsurpassed Dharma treasure that can rescue today's muddled, karma-denying Zennists from the terrible fate awaiting them in the evil paths, a precious torch whose brightness can illuminate the darkness of this degenerate age. Although the Sōtō sect possesses this truly wonderful asset, its priests remain attached to zazen and give it no consideration. Priests of the Rinzai sect reject it because they regard it as different from their own brand of Zen. This is like concealing the fabulous, night-shining pearl inside a box.¹⁸⁵ It is treated like a shard left and forgotten in an old shed. They are like a blind man who discards his walking stick.

The secrets of the Five Ranks have been transmitted through the ages in the *Precious Mirror Samadhi*. The author of the *Precious Mirror Samadhi* is unknown. Zen patriarchs Shih-t'ou, Yueh-shan, and Yun-yen imparted the secrets of the Five Ranks personally from one to another in the privacy of the teaching room. Tung-shan Liang-chieh took great care in composing his verses on the Five Ranks, setting forth with clarity the Five Ranks' gradual progression. Tung-shan's work is like a brilliant torch on a dark night path, like a ferry that appears at a difficult ford to take you across to the other shore.

Master Shōju said, "The patriarchal teachers in their great compassion devised the principles of the Five Ranks in order to save

students who had attained satori from the danger of entering the evil paths. If a student devotes himself assiduously to the Five Ranks, he will surely succeed in realizing the Four Wisdoms. Sadly, the Zen gardens have fallen into their present state of decay because priests who prided themselves on attaining a partial enlightenment remained ignorant of the true essentials of Buddhist practice. Unwittingly they entered the stagnant water of meager attainment, fell forever into a black pit filled with hard, dry seeds. And all because they did not know the secrets of the Five Ranks.”

The Five Ranks appear in the *Precious Mirror Samadhi*:

In the six lines of the Double *Li* hexagram,
Phenomenal and Universal are interdependent:
When they are folded, they become three,
When the permutations end, they are five.

“Universal” is the embodiment of the true formless form. “Phenomenal” describes the functioning of the myriad dharmas in their particularity. When a practitioner in pursuit of awakening kindles a fire in his vitals and presses forward through a thousand trials and ten thousand tribulations, he will, as a result of the dauntless courage he has exerted, smash the eighth storehouse consciousness. As the eighth consciousness shatters, his heart and liver will shatter as well, and he will immediately experience the great death. He will be astonished to discover that the eighth consciousness is itself the radiant Great Mirror Wisdom, and he will note that its radiance is the color of black lacquer. When he attains this point, he will understand for the first time that not a smidgeon of the great earth remains, that heaven and earth and empty space in all directions have vanished. For him there is no seer or seen, here or there, this or that, and yet he embraces all the myriad things in the universe. This is the first of the Five Ranks, called Phenomenal within Universal. Tung-shan’s verse has, “At the third watch of the night, before the moon comes up.” The pitch darkness of the third night watch is the Rank of the Absolute or Universal. Embraced within it are all the myriad dharmas — the Rank of the Relative or Phenomenal. At this point, the practitioner’s discernment is still not fully

clear. He moves as though in the shadow of a lamp — “old suspicions still remain.”

Unfortunately if the student remains satisfied and does not proceed beyond this, he will fall forever into the poisonous seas of empty, one-sided emptiness. If he continues beyond it, he will enter the Samadhi of Phenomenal and Universal, also known as the Precious Mirror Samadhi, in which self and objects reflect each other like two facing mirrors. This is also known as contemplation of the true form of all dharmas. Here the relativities and differences of the actual world are grasped as such, as the true forms of sameness or identity.

Although the two mirrors illuminate each other, no image is reflected in either of them. Mind and its environment are in a state of oneness, self and things in a state of nonduality. The self that views and the objects viewed are fused perfectly into one. This is the Five Ranks' Universal within Phenomenal.

Here the practitioner attains the Wisdom of Sameness in which, unattached to distinctions of this or that, he discerns the sameness or identity of all things. Yet if he stops and resides in this Wisdom, he becomes like a demon keeping watch over a corpse in a coffin. If he does not leave this Rank, he will find himself seated in a sea of virulent poison. The Rank of Coming from within the Universal was devised to free students from this deadly sea. Tung-shan's verse says, “Within nothingness there is a way beyond the worldly dust.” Today, the Sōtō school calls this “coming from the realm of absolute identity into the realm of relativity and difference.”

In the Wisdom of Sameness, where all things are seen as identical, with no attachment to differences of any kind, there is no self or other, no inner or outer, no entering or departing. It is like a round lump of iron or steel. It is here that “the way within nothingness” is to be sought. What is this “way within nothingness”? It is the path that great and unconditional compassion opens up within nothingness. It is not a narrow trail, like those used by woodcutters. It is a great royal road leading directly to the capital of ultimate non-doing.

Thanks to unconditional great compassion, the student learns the comportment of the Bodhisattva and works constantly to create the

conditions of a Buddha-land on earth. This practice is the function of the Bodhi-mind itself. How wonderful, the arousing of the Bodhi-mind! Without the Bodhi-mind, we would all of us fall into the evil ways.

If a person wishes to attain the Bodhi-mind, he must whip forward the wheel of the four universal vows, working to deepen his own enlightenment while helping sentient beings still left behind in illusion. Foremost among all the ways of doing this is preaching the Dharma — the great Dharma gift.

The Dharma gift is not imparted to all students in the same way. It is imparted in response to their differing capacities — superior, average, and inferior. To teach students of superior capacity, the teacher must himself possess superior capacity. The best way to achieve that capacity is through the attainment of *kenshō*, seeing into your true nature. Unless you have clarified your own self-nature, you can hardly expect to clarify it for others. You must achieve a clear *kenshō*, as clear as though you are looking down at it in the palm of your hand.

Next, you must penetrate koan stories filled with deadliest poison — “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower” and “Nan-ch’uan’s Flowering Tree”.¹⁸⁶ You must make your way through impenetrable thorn thickets that stretch for ten thousand leagues, boring into the great matter that is impossible to understand, impossible to enter. Then you must throw yourself into the study of the sutras and commentaries and assemble a boundless store of priceless Dharma assets. When you have done that, you will have attained the Wisdom of Marvelous Observation.

But even when you have assembled an infinite store of Dharma assets, if you just bundle them up and forget about them, they will be of no more use to you than discarded tools in an empty shed. You must gird yourself up and devote yourself with fierce determination to putting these assets to work in liberating the numberless sentient beings. Such is the conduct of the Bodhisattva who strives to establish a Buddha-land on earth. This is called the Wisdom of Benefiting Others. It is Arriving at Mutual Integration, the fourth of the Five Ranks. Recently, some have said that this is the rank of Arriving within the Phenomenal, but such a statement is ludicrous.¹⁸⁷ Tung-

shan's verse says, "Two blades cross — no need for either to draw back."

In a previous verse Tung-shan also said, "Don't break the taboo of uttering unspeakable names." You must not put ultimate things into words. If you speak of such things as "mind" or "nature," or anything relating to the true self, you will break the taboo. "Grandmotherly compassion," chewing up rice before feeding it to your child, would also fall under this taboo. It is like dragging an ox into the weeds and trying to force it to eat.

You must vow never to teach or preach grandmotherly, old auntie Zen. It is a great impediment to a student striving to attain enlightenment. It is like feeding poison to a favorite daughter. Once the poison enters her body, it destroys her womb so that she will be incapable of giving birth. "Cutting open the chrysalis to free a cicada" is also grandmotherly Zen. Such an act hinders the development of the great doubt, and unless a student is able to form a great doubt, he cannot achieve a great satori. Silent illumination, withered sitting, do-nothing Zen, with its "unvarnished bowls just as they are," shuts the gates of enlightenment fast. It takes a valiant hero, a young boy who has left his home and parents to seek the Way, and turns him into a blind and ignorant oaf.

Today, at a time when the true Zen traditions have fallen to earth and the true Dharma is headed for extinction, it is terrifying to see these false priests promulgating such pernicious teachings. Why can't they just teach the true Dharma? A Dharma teaching can be extraordinarily beneficial or extraordinarily harmful. If the Dharma is taught for monetary gain or reputation, it is an impure teaching. Someone who preaches an impure Dharma will fall directly into hell when he dies. Praising oneself and deprecating others violates the Buddhist precepts.

You should regard all people as though they were your only child. Whether court noble or peasant, the self-nature at the depths of their being is one and the same. If there is the slightest discrimination in the way you view them, that also is contrary to the Buddha Way. But among all teachings, the most perverse and abhorrent is one that denies the principle of karma and karmic rebirth.

On the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of National Master Gudō's death, I visited Rurikō-ji in Mino province and lectured on a score of cases in the *Blue Cliff Record*. During my stay I heard stories about the Zen teaching in the Mino area, where in various places in the province successors of the sham priests I have been mentioning seem to have won over clerics and lay people by preaching the heresy that everything ends with death.¹⁸⁸

To refute the perverse and nebulous empty emptiness of these men, I scribbled off a series of rustic verses as I was being carried by palanquin from Mino to Hida province. Words like "servant," "vassal," and even "slave" have been applied to people who merely follow in the ruts of the ancients when composing poetry. Although I have emulated the verses in the Buddha's sutras and disregarded such poetic niceties as meter and rhyme, I will still no doubt be censured as a slavish practitioner of religious verse.

There once was a priest, proficient in both practice and wisdom, who resolved to seek out a peaceful sanctuary where he could engage in a retreat.¹⁸⁹ After considerable effort, he located a cave deep in the mountains. He was extremely happy with the site. There was a large flat rock in front and a great tree towering above it. He did zazen all day long on the flat rock, but when night came a flock of herons, several hundred strong, flew in and perched in the tree overhead. They squawked and squabbled all through the night. The priest looked up, performed *gasshō*, and addressed them in a loud voice, "There are many large trees in the world. With your wings you herons could fly and perch in any one of them. It took me a long time and much arduous travel to find this quiet spot where I could meditate. Leave that tree and allow me to do my zazen in peace. You make so much noise that it is impossible for me to concentrate on my practice."

At first light the herons flew off again, but at dusk they returned and assumed their perches in the tree. Angered, the priest was unable to get any sleep that night. As the herons flew off the next morning, he glared up at them and yelled at the top of his lungs, "Why do you insist on flying to that tree and disturbing my meditation! If you keep coming here, I'll have to leave this cave and

find another one somewhere else. But if I end up wandering aimlessly around the country and am unable to complete my practice, I promise you that I will be reborn as a great and powerful hawk. I will snatch you, rip you to pieces, and devour you all!”

When night came, the herons returned once again, and with tears in his eyes the priest set out for other parts. After much travel he came to a cave among the cliffs. It overlooked a deep lake ten thousand yards across, and was large enough for him to use as his living quarters, a spot of great beauty and tranquility totally cut off from the world. The priest was elated and unpacked his travel pouch to stay. He spent the entire day sitting upright in zazen, immersed in the profound realm of no-mind.

Unfortunately, the lake was inhabited by a great many fish and turtles, and their sporting and splashing through the waves day and night made a considerable noise. This troubled the priest, angering him as much as the squawking herons had. When the fish and turtles also ignored all his pleas and attempts to reason with them, he went to the lakeside and hollered out, “You are obstructing my zazen. What did I ever do to you to deserve this? I’m going to leave this cave, but if I fail to attain the Way, I’m going to be reborn as an otter. I’m going to tear all of you to shreds and eat you!”

The priest left the cave in tears the next morning. As he walked along, however, he was no longer able to endure the resentment burning inside him. “I’ll find similar obstacles wherever I go. I’ll never be able to free myself of the anger I feel. I’ll be better off ending my life right here so I won’t have to endure it any longer.”

In this fit of rage he threw himself into the lake and sank beneath the waves. He was soon reborn as an otter, and began sporting freely through the water. He turned and twisted a hundred different ways, catching the denizens of the lake one by one. He ripped off their heads, he crushed them in his teeth until the lake was crimson with their blood. Exhausted, the otter fell back in a daze. Just then a noisy flock of squawking herons flew overhead. Taking one look at them, the otter’s eyes filled with hate. Gnashing his teeth, he yelled up at the birds, “I’ve been waiting for you. I made a promise on that flat rock under the tree. I’ve been waiting for a chance to carry it out ever since I became an otter. Not a single bird is going to leave here

alive.” Two great hawk-like wings suddenly sprouted from his sides and he rose out of the lake and began flapping his way through the sky. He moved like a lightning bolt, seizing the herons in midair, ripping them apart and devouring them. Heron wings and feathers wafted on the wind like willow fluff. Gore fell like crimson rain from the sky. Once again the clear pure waters of the bottomless lake were red with blood.

How many lives had he taken? He belonged to the fraternity of Buddhist priests, but because he never learned about the practice that must continue after *kenshō*, he ended up inflicting these terrible calamities. He is truly to be pitied.

Long ago at Mount Kasagi there was a priest of great erudition named Gedatsu.¹⁹⁰ He often accompanied Myōe Shōnin to visit the Kasuga Shrine in Nara. Whenever Myōe entered the shrine, the deity opened the inner doors, revealing his entire form, and they engaged in pure spiritual discourse extending over all the sutras and commentaries. When Gedatsu entered, he could see only the deity’s back, and he was never accorded the privilege of spiritual discourse. One day, he tearfully addressed the deity, “What is it the deity finds lacking in me? How do I differ from Myōe? When Myōe comes you engage in long dialogues. But you never have a single word for me. Why do you not treat us the same? In rejecting me, it would seem that you are acting against your great vow to save all beings equally.”

The deity spoke. “It is because of your learning that you are able to see my back. My regret is that you lack the Bodhi-mind.”

Gedatsu performed his bows, retired with tears in his eyes, and departed. From that time on, he constantly sought to understand why the deity had said that he lacked the Bodhi-mind. One night as he hung up the lamp and began to read, he heard a commotion outside, and the sounds of angry voices. Carefully opening a hole in the paper window, he peered fearfully outside. He saw throngs of evil demons in monstrous shape milling about. Some had long noses that curved up to their foreheads, others had mouths that gaped from ear to ear. They lashed out at one another, their eyes filled with hate, hurtling about with lightning speed, snapping and biting with

murderous intent, spattering blood everywhere — it was a scene from the realm of the fighting demons, with bloodcurdling yells that seemed to come from one of the Shrieking Hells.

One look had Gedatsu shaking in terror. His hair stood on end. On the verge of losing consciousness, he noticed an old priest, perhaps eighty years old, standing next to him. The priest was wearing a robe the color of yellow incense with a purple surplice around his shoulders. He was holding a rosary of crystal beads in one hand, a staff in the other. He quietly approached Gedatsu and said, “I am a priest who lives near the fields of Kasuga. I came here when I saw that you were in imminent danger. Those unearthly beings you see come from the realm of the *tengu*. Ever since the time of the very first Buddha, even wise and eminent priests, if they lack the Bodhi-mind and teach others the withered sitting of silent illumination, have all fallen into the paths of Mara. These beings have come here with the sole intent of making you a member of their group. But because you have in the past often provided guidance to younger monks, it is difficult for them to succeed. However, one way or another, they will accomplish their end before long and draw you in with them.”

Astounded, Gedatsu made a bow and said, “Please, explain the teaching of the Bodhi-mind to me.”

The priest said, “Anyone who wants to realize the Bodhi-mind must never give credence to the bogus tenets of silent illumination Zen. Those who would tell you that ‘no-thought, no-mind’ is Zen, that ‘He who has nothing to do is truly noble,’ will never master the Buddha Way. You should before everything else gird up the loins of your mind and achieve a *kenshō* that is as clear as a fruit held in the palm of your hand. Constantly put all the four great vows into practice. Assemble boundless Dharma assets and practice the great Dharma giving to benefit sentient beings. How truly wonderful this Bodhi-mind is!”

Having spoken these words, the priest vanished. So did the infernal shapes outside the room. It is said that this priest was a manifestation of the Kasuga deity. Would he not be deeply saddened if he saw today’s withered-sitting Zennists? Priests who have not experienced *kenshō*, who do not engage in koan practice, who do

not read the sutras or uphold the precepts? Priests who call themselves “upward strivers who do nothing at all,” who after eating their fill of rice every day go sit and doze on their zazen seats, yawning away, totally wasting their lives? Such people, who have learned nothing from the bitter experience of their past lives, are destined to return to their old haunts in the three evil paths when they die. Do you imagine that the deities are pleased to see this? Or does it sadden them?

Long ago a priest named Ronshiki built a small hermitage on Mount Ikoma south of the city of Nara. He led a spartan existence, constantly engaged in the study of the *Lotus Sutra*. By cultivating a small field he was able to eke out enough food to sustain himself. He refused all visitors, fearing the attachments that would ensue from receiving their alms. He had a disciple named Sanuki who placed his faith in Ronshiki’s teaching, which denied future existence and the principle of cause and effect. Refraining from doing either good or evil, Sanuki spent his life in unprecedented idleness and indolence. When Ronshiki died, he left the hermitage to Sanuki.

Sanuki passed away four or five years later, falling directly into the evil paths of existence. He moved from one hell to another, experiencing the full measure of their terrors. In one of these hells, off in a corner, he saw a small dwelling, whose desolate tranquility reminded him of his former hermitage. Peering inside, he saw the frail, gaunt figure of his teacher Ronshiki reciting the *Lotus Sutra*. Saddened and surprised, Sanuki approached his teacher but held back from speaking to him. “My teacher performed meritorious deeds throughout his life. Everyone praised him as a man of deep faith, someone who led a strict and austere life,” he thought. “I always assumed he would be residing blissfully in one of the Pure Lands. How is it possible that he is here in this terrible place of suffering?”

Struggling with feelings of sadness and fear, Sanuki drew nearer and said, “Master, you performed many virtuous acts during your lifetime. You were extremely devout. You engaged in religious practice, earned universal praise. I was sure you had been reborn into the Pure Land.”

Ronshiki, half in joy, half in sorrow, replied, “It is true that I performed good acts in my lifetime. But unfortunately I was utterly lacking in the Bodhi-mind.”

“You always recited the *Lotus Sutra*, even in the bitterest cold of winter or sweltering summer heat. Surely that must show you possessed the Bodhi-mind,” said Sanuki.

“No,” said Ronshiki. “This is something you don’t know about. A person can perform tens of thousands of virtuous acts, but if he lacks the Bodhi-mind, he will fall into the evil regions when he dies. It is true that I was very diligent in reciting the *Lotus Sutra* and always held the sutra in mind. But that was done merely for my own sake. It is the kind of practice undertaken by adherents of the Two Vehicles. I didn’t engage in the greater practice that is directed toward others. Because of that, I ended up here together with followers of the Two Vehicles, those who can reach only a small attainment. I live alone in this isolated corner of hell, a realm filled with the most terrible perils, but thanks to the virtue inherent in the *Lotus Sutra* I have suffered no torment whatever. Nonetheless I find it unbearable, never being able to avoid the constant cries and shrieks of victims. There is never any relief from this torment. This experience has broken my heart and spirit, and the sounds have rendered me deaf. I deeply regret the narrow, meager effort I put forth in my former life. Because I strove only for my own benefit, without giving a thought to others, I must accept the consequences of my actions. I have no one to blame but myself.

“There are priests today who pride themselves on teaching the doctrine of silent illumination, do-nothing Zen. They dispense with all acts that benefit either themselves or others. They preach the doctrine of no-mind while their minds are filled with thought, they seek formlessness while still clutching tightly to form. They are content when they have located a temple with comfortable quarters and plenty to eat, and there they sleep their lives vainly away in a state of ignorance. This is all the result of the teachings propagated by false teachers. Because of them, priests and monks more numerous than Ganges sand have fallen into hell.

“A person who aspires to give rise to the Bodhi-mind must once experience an unqualified *kenshō*. Then he must proceed to rip the

divine, death-dealing koans to shreds, yank out the claws and fangs of the Dharma cave, make his way through impenetrable thickets, thousands of leagues of thorn and briar, and trample over thousands of secret, firmly shut barriers. He must carefully investigate the sutras and commentaries, both partial and complete, and master the scriptures and sacred writings of other traditions as well, acquiring a boundless store of great Dharma assets. He must then extend the great gift of Dharma to all beings, benefiting and liberating them, so they can all perfect the Buddha-wisdom within. This is the practice of the perfectly achieved Bodhisattva. Sanuki, your life in the human world is still not complete. You should return as quickly as possible.”

“If only I could,” said Sanuki. “But I doubt if there is any way in the ten directions that would lead me out of here.”

“Wait until the venerable Jizō appears,” Ronshiki said. “Ask him to help you.”

Sanuki prostrated himself in gratitude. Not long after that they heard the sound of the metal rings rattling in Jizō’s staff. It grew steadily louder, and suddenly the great Bodhisattva passed right in front of them. Teacher and student both prostrated themselves. Sanuki said, “Please, great Bodhisattva, have pity on me and show me the way back to the human world.”

The Bodhisattva smiled and led Sanuki away with him. They entered a vast plain. Sanuki saw noxious fumes rising everywhere, fire flying through the air like sleet, and blackened, charcoal-like objects littering the ground. Here young and old, rich and poor, all dwelled together. There were merchants and peasants, kings and warriors, teachers, scholars, and priests, as well as those of the untouchable castes. There were also figures with shaved pates and surplices on their shoulders. An inordinate number of them were the sham priests of silent illumination Zen. With bloated, drum-like bellies and throats so narrowed that a needle could not pass through them, they were unable to swallow a single grain of rice, or a drop of water. They sobbed and cried out piteously. “How deeply we regret the mistaken notions we held when we lived in the human world! We thought that after we died and were cremated, nothing remained, that heaven and hell were only empty words. We thought that making offerings to the Buddhas and the priesthood was

meaningless. We said whatever we wanted to say, did whatever we pleased, unbound by any rules, and feared nothing. How could we have imagined that we would be subjected to these unspeakable torments!”

The sight of these beings, weeping pitifully, screaming and wailing, was beyond description. One old female ghost, completely naked, her body severely emaciated and blackened like a piece of charcoal, her eyes filled with anger, came up and began waving her arms and screaming at the top of her voice. “Aren’t you my son? Aren’t you Sanuki? Those karma-denying notions of yours caused me to fall into this terrible place. You accepted the teachings of your evil teacher and his doctrine of no-thought, no-mind, and you persisted in saying that ‘silent illumination’ and ‘withered sitting’ is Buddhahood. You were happy to seek out places where you had lots of food and could live in comfort, and then you deceived others as well, people with genuine roots of goodness, and you caused them to fall with you into the black pit of ignorance. Now these wrongheaded teachers are found throughout the land, glibly parroting these same mistaken teachings. How will anyone be able to attain true salvation? Their crimes are so great and vast that heaven itself cannot contain them. Your own mother, your first victim, fell into the realm of hungry ghosts. If it weren’t for you, I would not have to undergo this suffering! People say that a family that gives its son to the priesthood will be reborn into the heavenly realms for nine generations — hogwash! I’m going to rip you to pieces and devour you! It will give me some solace for all the years I’ve been suffering from this terrible hunger and thirst.” Her hair stood up on her head, and she began flitting about like an evil demon.

Jizō Bodhisattva addressed her courteously and attempted to console her. “This person may resemble your son, but he isn’t. He is another person’s child. Even if you did rip him to pieces and devour him, it would not bring you any benefit. It would be better for you to work for the peace of your own spirit.” The Bodhisattva concealed Sanuki under the sleeve of his robe to protect him, and they quickly made their escape. Sanuki then fell into a deep, dark pit. When he finally came to, he was human once again, and he was bathed in sweat.

Sanuki told everyone he encountered about the sufferings he had seen people experiencing in hell. Listening to him, they began shaking in panic fear, their bodies covered with sweat. Conferring among themselves secretly with furrowed brows, they said, “For a long time now we’ve been hoodwinked by the deluded notions this evil priest has peddled. Shamelessly feeding us his wicked opinions, telling us, ‘Don’t worry about teachings that describe the terrors of hell. All you need do is remain free from seeking, free from all attachments. I want you to be like an incense burner inside an old shrine, in a constant state of no-self, no-mind. To do that is to be an old Buddha. What need is there beyond that to experience *kenshō* or attain satori? Cast all words and verbal complications aside. The old Zen stories and koans are a pack of nonsense. The teaching I give you is the best one the Zen school has to offer. Even a menial servant can follow it. Hell and heaven are fictions. As long as you don’t murder someone, or commit arson, nothing you could do will cause you to fall into hell. And even if you do commit such grave transgressions, we will enter the evil regions together, hand in hand. We’ll just accept our fate, harboring no doubts or concerns about it whatever.’

“Such teachings took a great burden from our minds. We had no fears of the afterlife at all. We simply followed our desires, eating when we were hungry and drinking when we were thirsty. How could we ever have imagined we would hear about experiences like those Sanuki has now related. We have fallen into a terrible state of fear, not knowing what to do or where to turn.

“We deeply regret that having been so fortunate as to receive human rebirth, which is so difficult to attain, we are now in danger of falling once again into the depths of the Shrieking Hells. Our teacher is already down there undergoing retribution for his evil doctrines, so there’s no way we can rebuke him now, but what in the world could he have been thinking, leading people into the evil destinations like that?”

Years ago, a woman from Hamamatsu turned into an evil demon when she died and took possession of her own sister.¹⁹¹ She described to her the terrors she had experienced in hell and begged

her to help save her from its torments. A person who heard about this and found the story hard to believe asked the demon, “Didn’t a virtuous Zen priest come and offer incense at your funeral? How could you have suffered such a tragic fate?” “Virtuous priest?” the demon replied. “What a sick joke he was. After preaching all those endless sermons that denied karmic cause and effect, he became a cow demon down in hell. He is now pulling a cart of flames. It is because he offered incense at my funeral that I fell into hell with him. Far from being a true priest and teacher, he was a totally untrustworthy, thoroughly disreputable character. Without having achieved *kenshō*, possessing no Dharma assets whatever, he continued to preach his pernicious, karma-denying doctrines. He would say, ‘When you walk under the willow trees, won’t they be green even without *kenshō*? Cherry blossoms will be pink. If you are of a mind to walk around, then walk around. If you want to sit down, sit down. Your utterly free and independent self is a precious thing! It is the natural, intrinsic body of all the Buddhas of the past. Do not go chasing about amid constantly changing circumstances trying to attain it on your own. When the mind ceases its seeking, the self is naturally at peace.’ He hoodwinked a great many men and women with this teaching. It is a yawning, bottomless pit lying in wait for people who are striving to attain liberation. Doing nothing, remaining just as you are, is the golden chain that brings about their undoing.¹⁹² The worthy cause of attaining satori thus ends in an evil result.”

When the demon finished speaking, it began wailing piteously and screaming for help, filling everyone who heard it with terror and draining them of courage. “We are also destined for the evil regions when we die,” they said. “What kind of religious practice did those sham priests perform? What kind of attainment did they achieve? In the present day it is people like them and their false doctrines that have brought the Dharma to ruin and blasted the seeds that give rise to Buddhahood. Where are the deities who stand guard over the Dharma? Why doesn’t Heaven punish these scoundrels?”

It is said that when the Dharma prospers, devils and demons prosper as well. Then why is it that today, when the Dharma is so weak, the demons alone are enjoying such success? Even if master

Gudō were to reappear in the world once again, it would not be easy for him to overcome them. Our only hope is that a redoubtable generation of young monks will appear who will devote themselves assiduously to their training and proceed on to protect the true Dharma. Unless people of outstanding capacity acquire the kind of strength that will enable them to ascend the very heavens, it will be impossible to redeem the conditions that prevail in this latter day. Now everyone lives in fear of the horrible torments that await them in the three evil destinations of karmic existence. It is all because of these ignorant teachers and their pernicious teachings.

After the death of master Gudō, the world was without a genuine teacher, and entered a period of great peril. A person who has not achieved *kenshō* should never put himself forward as a Zen teacher. He will hinder the attainment of genuine satori in younger generations of students and unwittingly harm the Dharma-body's lifeblood of wisdom. All those who regard themselves as descendants of the National Master should strive to revive and revitalize master Gudō's style of Zen, which now lies buried in the dust.

Anyone who desires to return the school to these true traditions should take to heart the teachings left behind by master Shōju. Shōju was a Dharma grandson of master Gudō. He had a mind that was unequalled in loftiness, rigor, and severity. He was always teaching people with words like the following:¹⁹³ "Once you have experienced the breakthrough into *kenshō*, you are a fool to remain content with that small attainment. My ancestor the venerable Daien Hōkan [Gudō], gripping death-dealing talismans in his hands, brought enormous benefit to people. In his dealings with Zen students he always had power to spare.

"Long ago, seven wise women declared to the god Indra, 'If you don't have them, how can you expect to help others?'¹⁹⁴ [When Indra reported this to the Buddha,] the Buddha replied, 'None of my great Arhats could understand this meaning. It is only the great Bodhisattvas who can fully grasp its significance.'"

What is "this meaning"? It is what I call the poison claws and fangs of the Dharma cave.¹⁹⁵

One day — it was before I was even nine years old — I heard someone describe the tortures of hell. It terrified me. I began moping about, unhappy and despondent, my eyes always wet with tears. When I turned twelve, I went in secret to my mother and begged her to allow me to enter the Buddhist priesthood. I prayed to the Bodhisattva Kannon, I worshipped the deity Tenjin, imploring them for their help. When I reached twenty-three, I traveled to the training hall of Eigan-ji in Echigo province. I worked on penetrating the source of my self-nature, keeping at it without rest, pushing myself mercilessly, dying ten times over. When I moved about I was unaware of what I was doing; when I sat I was unaware I was sitting. I was unseeing and unhearing, deaf and dumb, oblivious to all things. I felt as if I had become, as the Zen people say, “just like a dead man.” One night as I was doing zazen, I suddenly heard the sound of a temple bell and my body and mind dropped completely away — I was free of even the finest dust. I experienced for the first time the truth of the saying, “not a speck of ground exists on the great earth.” It was as though a thick veil of cloud and mist had suddenly opened up and I was gazing on a brilliant sunrise. I shouted in spite of myself, “Old Yen-t’ou is alive!” Startled, my fellow monks came running to find out what had happened, thinking I had lost my mind. From that time on, the banners of self-esteem soared up higher than the mountain peaks. I kept crowing to myself, “No one in the past two or three hundred years has achieved such a profound enlightenment!” A constant smile on my face, I was heedless of everyone I saw — they all seemed to be enveloped in thick mist. What ecstatic joy I felt!

I must have been receiving the unseen help of the Buddha-patriarchs, for then, by chance, I encountered Shōju Rōjin and continued my study under him. He was a direct lineal descendant of National Master Gudō. What a priceless treasure such a great and authentic Zen teacher is!

Shōju took my pride and arrogance and crushed it like an eggshell in his hand. He looked down and laughed at me as though I was an earthworm wriggling in the mud. It seemed as though I had tumbled into a black pit thousands of feet deep. All my former joy and elation was now transformed into so much sorrow and woe. My

eyes were constantly filled with tears, as though I had just lost my father or mother.

Seeing me in this pitiful state aroused grandmotherly concern in the old teacher. In his compassion he assigned me one of the venomous Zen stories to work on. [After that he gave me the koans] “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower”, “The Buffalo Passes Through the Window”, “Nan-ch’uan’s Death”, “Nan-ch’uan’s Flowering Tree”, “Ch’ien-feng’s Three Kinds of Infirmity”, “A Thousand Snowy Peaks”,¹⁹⁶ “Rhinoceros-horn Fan”,¹⁹⁷ “Willow-fluff Blowing in the Wind”,¹⁹⁸ “Huang-po’s Gobbler of Dregs”, and “An Old Lady Burns Downs a Hermitage”.¹⁹⁹ As he did, he told me the following:

“These are the deadly old amulets of our school. After National Master Gudō passed away, people began to reject this ‘small matter’ which had been transmitted through generations of patriarchal teachers in India, China, and Japan as though it were dirt.²⁰⁰ What we have left are priests of the Two Vehicle persuasion, groups that are content with a small, partial attainment. Locating true descendants of the authentic Zen way is like seeking the North Star in the midday sun. I am the only one left in the entire country. What I keenly regret is that I have not yet been able to find anyone to whom I can hand on this transmission. The great life-thread of wisdom is hanging by this one thin strand. You must work very hard, grinding your flesh and bone to powder if you must, to instill vital life in these genuine traditions. You must crush those devilish groups who deny the working of karma. Become like a great and glorious minister who restores his country to prosperity. If you want to crush the devils who are destroying the true Dharma, you must struggle through a thicket of thorn that extends for thousands of leagues, knocking over as you do the dark, tightly secured barriers that lead to higher attainment.

“As the Zen teacher Huang-po said, ‘The great teacher Niu-t’ou preaches the Dharma with great freedom, but he doesn’t yet understand about the barriers of our school that lead to higher attainment. Unless he obtains the key to unlock those barriers, how will he be able to overcome the devil legions that would destroy the true Dharma?’”²⁰¹

I took up one of the koans Shōju gave me and tried to penetrate it. It was like trying to clamber up a thick sheet of steel ten thousand feet high, or like climbing a treacherous mountain peak carrying an enormous weight on my back. In time, my conscious mind and its distracting thoughts disappeared; all my arts and skills, all my words and principles, were completely exhausted. I was like an utter simpleton, someone who knows nothing at all.

One day I went into the village on a begging expedition. I was standing in front of a house, just like a wooden statue, when suddenly a crazy person ran out and began pummeling me about the head, smashing my sedge hat to pieces. I fell to the ground unconscious, and as I did, the jade pavilion toppled over, the sheet of thickly layered ice that surrounded me shattered. I gave up the ghost, perishing into the Great Death. Passersby gathered round with looks of pity on their faces. When I gradually returned to my senses and got up, I found my entire body was bathed in cold sweat. I also discovered that I could penetrate all the difficult-to-pass koans I had been struggling with to their very roots. I burst into great peals of laughter in spite of myself, and began clapping my hands together. In all my twenty-five years on earth I had never experienced such joy before. I was dancing on air, waving my arms wildly about.

I walked back to Shōju's hermitage and told him what I had experienced. One look at me filled him with joy as well. He took his fan and began stroking my back with it. I bid farewell to Shōju not long after that and set out alone for my home province. Shōju accompanied me halfway down the mountain. When it finally came time to part, he took my hand in his and gave me the parting words, "In the future you must devote yourself to producing one or two students who can penetrate through the barriers as you have. You will in that way pay back the profound debt you owe the Buddha-patriarchs." I bowed to him and departed. Ever since that time, for over thirty or forty years, I have for the Dharma's sake been tirelessly teaching students who have come to me from all over the country. Among them there are now a score or more who can give good accounts of themselves. Who knows, perhaps one or two of them are the kind of monk Shōju was talking about.

Thirty, forty years ago I used to assign people “Chao-chou’s Mu” to work on. In time I came to realize how difficult it was for students to attain *kenshō* using this koan. Many of them wrestled with it until their dying day without ever gaining the power to penetrate it.

More recently, I have been telling them to hear the sound of one hand. After they hear the sound, I test them with other koans. I tell them to produce Mount Fuji from an *inrō* seal-case, to erect Tōji pagoda inside a water vase, to fatten the workhorse in I-chou by feeding grain to the pet cow in Huai-chou, to grind a tea-mill inside a goose egg. I will not confirm that they have attained the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom until they can penetrate these and see them as clearly as if they are in the palm of their hand. Next I have them put a stop to all sounds whatever: birds and animals, flutes and bells and drums. Or I might tell them to stop the sailboats far out at sea.

²⁰² After they have passed these one by one, they are ready to enter the Precious Mirror Samadhi. This samadhi is also called the contemplation of all things as forms of truth. It is the same as the samadhi of the Five Ranks’ Universal and Phenomenal, in which there is no self that sees and no objects to be seen — difference is identity, identity is difference. Lin-chi called it being at home yet on the road; being on the road yet at home. When a person reaches this point, he has attained the Wisdom of Sameness.

If the student regards this sameness as a precious state and dwells in it, he will become like a fox or badger sleeping comfortably in an old lair, or a demon guarding a corpse in a coffin. How wonderful it is that a dragon will never look twice at a pond of such stagnant water.²⁰³ I then have them take up and doubt some koan stories like the ones Shōju first assigned me: “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower”, “The Buffalo Passes Through the Window”, “Nan-ch’uan’s Death”, “Nan-ch’uan’s Flowering Tree”. Not until they have passed through each of these will I confirm their attainment of the Wisdom of Marvelous Observation.

After that they must engage even more vigorously in gathering Dharma assets from a wide variety of sources so they can preach the great Dharma and bring benefit to countless living beings. Such is the true meaning of the Bodhisattva’s vow. How wonderful is this Bodhisattva vow! It is practiced constantly and unflaggingly for

infinite kalpas to achieve deeper attainment while helping others to attainment as well. It is the great Zen function, responding with perfect, marvelous freedom to all things according to their needs and capacities. This is called the Wisdom of Benefiting Others.

How wonderful to finally possess all Four Wisdoms! When the Four Wisdoms are bright and clear, you will also be armed with the four virtues that define the practice of a fully attained Bodhisattva.²⁰⁴ This is the style of Zen that National Master Gudō advocated and embodied in himself.

I wrote this work in a period of a few days. An old priest came around to serve as my attendant, grinding ink and setting out writing paper for me. By the time I had finished the draft and starting writing out a fair copy, the old priest seemed to have memorized it. He could recite five to ten lines at a time. This surprised me, and puzzled me as well.

One day he came and bowed quietly in front of me. “When you have finished writing this out, and the draft is complete,” he said, “would you give it to me? I am ignorant and weak-minded. In my heart I have always performed *gasshō*, thinking that today the Buddha’s Dharma was vigorous and prospering. But reading what you have written in *Gudō’s Lingered Radiance*, I have learned to my great regret that the true and authentic form of our Zen school’s treasury of the true Dharma eye and wondrous mind of Nirvana, our greatest and most essential matter, is now on the verge of dying out altogether. And I also know who is responsible for this calamity. It is karma-denying priests with their perverse notions of silent illumination Zen who have undermined the true Dharma and obstructed later generations of students from attaining it. What a hateful and deplorable group they and their minions are! They are mortal enemies of all followers of Buddha. Even a king or prime minister would be unable to sweep them aside. They could not be removed by armed force. So there is no chance that someone of my meager abilities and intelligence could overcome them.

“But if you give me this manuscript, I will gather young men of great promise. We will band together and pledge a great and sacred oath: No matter what difficulties we encounter we will penetrate

every koan, including those final ones so hard to pass, and we will spur ourselves forward until the old traditions that now lie in the dust have been revived. In the past, the great Chang Liang devised superlative strategies that repelled the enemy and protected the kingdoms of Pa and Chu. Yu Jang swallowed charcoal and lay in wait under a bridge in order to avenge his master's death. If we can muster our efforts as they did, it should not be too difficult for us to requite our debt to the Buddhas by overthrowing these pernicious priests who deny cause and effect."

On hearing that, I handed him the manuscript, telling him, "How splendid! Such a loyal and courageous spirit is altogether extraordinary!"

The old priest then sat up straight and correct and asked, "Who are those shameful priests? What enmity or resentment could make them want to destroy the true Dharma? What do they hope to gain by hindering later generations of students from seeking to achieve enlightenment? Even if you beat four or five of them to death every day, no one would reproach you!"

"No," I replied. "These men are not consciously trying to harm the true Dharma. It is just that they started their practice under an incompetent teacher. They merely followed his instructions, trying to remain thoughtless and mindless. Because a great doubt never arose in their minds, they never attained great enlightenment. Because they ignored the sutras and records of the Zen patriarchs, they have acquired no Dharma assets, and so to the end of their lives they must remain ignorant, dull-witted ignoramuses. Growing old, they begin calling themselves Zen masters, saying they are your 'good friend.' But they can teach only the commonplace notions that happen to pop into their minds. Ignorant of the inner secrets that would enable them to produce a true Zen man, they just go on repeating phrases like, 'I am a Buddha just as I am!' If they are incapable of producing a student to carry on the Zen transmission, how can the true Dharma hope to survive in this latter day? That is the reason the Dharma is teetering on the brink of ruin.

"What, then, is the inner secret for producing a genuine Zen man? If you want to produce a genuine Zen disciple, nothing surpasses the dark and difficult koan barriers. In order to obtain true students to

pass on the Dharma transmission, the Zen patriarchs of India, China, and Japan have laid down these thickets of thorn and briar, extending out for thousands of leagues. Without these barriers, the Zen groves would be like a pool of stagnant water. Its inmates would look like the herds of cranes you see standing around in the rice fields.

“When a new monk comes to my temple, I ask, ‘Do you hear the sound of one hand?’ This koan is like an iron stake. It drives him into a corner. He must gnaw away at it from all sides, hold it up and examine it from every angle. No matter how much he suffers, no matter how tired he becomes, even if he seems to be on the brink of death, he will get no help from me. He exhausts his skills, runs out of words and rational means. [Suddenly, the time comes when] the phoenix breaks free of the golden net, when the crane escapes from the enclosure. Now he cannot hesitate for a split second. Ten thousand more tightly closed barriers lie ahead of him. Not until he has negotiated his way through that barrier forest of thorn and briar will I teach him about the practice that comes after satori, teach him about the Bodhi-mind, and send him out to begin putting the four great vows into practice — an activity that will engage him until the end of time.”

Now, I have not written all these words down because of a desire to record the events of my own foolish life. My sole aim is to make the Zen school’s methods for penetrating the secret koan barriers known to students, so they will be able to forge on and acquire the strength that comes from attaining satori. My desire for them to achieve this strength is in no way different from my eagerness to have them raise up once again the traditions of National Master Gudō, which now lie forgotten in the dust.

I am not pridefully waving my own teaching banners. At the present time, publishing the *Record of Gudō* is the only idea I can come up with to help revive our withering Zen traditions. To the venerable Zen teachers who share my concerns I say with great respect: Let us benefit future generations of Zen students by publishing these Zen records. There could be no greater or more

fitting memorial to the National Master on this one hundredth anniversary of his death.

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SELECT GLOSSARY LIST OF TERMS

alaya consciousness: see eighth consciousness

Avici Hell: see Hell of Interminable Suffering

Bodhi-mind (Sanskrit *Bodhicitta*). The “mind of enlightenment”; the aspiration to carry out the Four Great Vows (deepening self-awakening while working to help others reach liberation) that appears after the attainment of *kenshō*; characteristic of post-satori practice

cinnabar field (*tanden*). The center of breathing located below the navel; often used in the combined form *kikai tanden*, the cinnabar field located in the ocean of *ki*

claws and fangs of the Dharma cave (*hokkutsu no sōge*). Descriptive of a koan’s power to bring students to experience the “great death,” or satori; sometimes that power embodied in an enlightened teacher. Often used together with “divine death-dealing amulets”

difficult-to-pass koans: see hard-to-pass koans

divine death-dealing amulets. (*datsumyō no shimpū*; also life-destroying charms). Originally, Taoist charms said to give the possessor the power to take life at will. Used similarly in Hakuin’s works to “claws and fangs of the Dharma cave,” with which it is generally paired

eighth consciousness (*alaya* or storehouse consciousness; Sanskrit *alāya-vijnāna*). The fundamental consciousness in which all karma of past and present existence is stored. Hakuin often describes it as a pitch-blackness, or a pitch-dark cave; when broken through or “inverted” in the attainment of enlightenment, it transforms suddenly into the all-illuminating Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom

evil paths (of existence). The three lowest of the six paths or worlds in which unenlightened beings transmigrate: the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, and beasts

Four Great Vows (*shigu seigan*; also Universal Vows, Bodhisattva Vows). Vows taken by Mahayana Buddhists upon their entrance into religious life: To save all sentient beings; to end the inexhaustible delusive passions; to study all the infinite Dharma teachings; to master the unsurpassable Buddha Way

four wisdoms (also four Buddha wisdoms; *shi-chi*). The Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom that reflects all things in their suchness; the Wisdom that discerns the ultimate sameness of all things; the Wisdom that discerns the distinctive features of all phenomena; the Wisdom that promotes the work of Buddhahood

gasshō. Pressing the palms of the hands together in an expression of thankfulness, reverence, or prayer

Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom: see Four Wisdoms

hard-to-pass koans (*nantō*; literally, “hard to pass through”). Hakuin gives varying lists of hard-to-pass koans in his writings, typically given to a student after he achieves *kenshō*

Hell of Interminable Suffering (Sanskrit *Avīci*). The lowest level in the realm of hell, reserved for those who have committed one of the Five Cardinal Sins

inka (*inka-shōmei*). The certification or sanction of spiritual attainment awarded to students by a Rinzai teacher

Jambudvīpa (Jap. Embudai). According to the ancient Indian worldview, one of four continents situated in four directions around Mount Sumeru; it is the world inhabited by human beings

Jōza. Title for a Senior Priest

kenshō. “Seeing into one’s own self-nature”; approximate synonym for satori; normally limited to the initial breakthrough experience

ki. The vital energy or “breath,” said to be located below the navel, that circulates through the body and is essential to health and the sustenance of life

koku. One koku of rice is about 280 liters, weighing about 150 kilograms; enough, it was said, to feed one person for one year

Kokushi. National Master or Teacher. An honorific title traditionally bestowed by the emperor

latter day. The age of the Dharma's destruction, the last of three periods a Buddha's teaching passes through after his death as it gradually loses its power to guide people to enlightenment

mani jewel (also "wish-fulfilling gem"; *nyoi hōju*). A metaphor for the Buddha-mind

Nembutsu. The practice used in Pure Land Buddhism of repeating the name of Amida Buddha in the formula *Namu Amida Butsu* ("I entrust myself to Amida Buddha")

Oshō. A term of respect commonly used as a title for a senior priest, usually indicating he is head priest of a temple

post-satori training (*gogo no shugyō*). The practice that begins upon attainment of *kenshō*, defined by Hakuin as working for deeper self-awakening while helping others to reach liberation

Pratyeka-buddha ("Private" Buddha or Solitary Buddha): see Two Vehicles

ri. Originally a unit used for measuring distance in ancient China; often translated as league. In Edo Japan one *ri* was 2.44 miles

rōhatsu training session (*rōhatsu sesshin*). The period of concentrated zazen practice held in Japanese Rinzai monasteries from the first day of the twelfth month and ending on the morning of the eighth day

ryō. A standard gold piece used in Edo-period Japan weighing about 18 grams, a large percent gold

sanzen. Literally, "to study Zen." In Hakuin's works it normally refers to koan study as well as to the Zen teacher's private interview with his students

satori. Enlightenment

Shao-lin. Name for Bodhidharma,

Shōin-ji. Hakuin's temple in Hara, Suruga province

Shravaka: see Two Vehicles

Shuso. Title for a Senior Priest

silent illumination (*mokushō*) Zen. A term usually associated with practices of the Sōtō school, as contrasted with the koan Zen of the Rinzai school. Haikun also uses it for other types of Zen practice,

including those of his own Rinzai school, that do not force the student to focus on the breakthrough to satori

six paths. The six ways of unenlightened existence: (1) hell, (2) hungry ghosts, (3) beasts, (4) asuras, (5) human beings, and (6) devas (heavenly beings)

Sound of One Hand (*sekishu no onjō*). A two-part koan Hakuin devised in his mid-sixties for beginning students: first, Hear the sound of one hand clapping; then, Put a stop to all sounds

storehouse consciousness: see eighth consciousness

talisman, life-destroying: see divine death-dealing amulets

tanden: see cinnabar field

Ten Evil Acts (*jū-aku*; also Transgressions). Taking life, stealing, illicit sexual conduct, lying, harsh words, defaming, duplicity, greed, anger, and holding mistaken views

Ten Kings (Jū-ō). Ten kings of the world of the dead who pass judgment on the sins committed during a person's lifetime

three Buddha bodies. The three kinds of body a Buddha may possess: 1) the eternal and absolute Dharma-body, indescribable and inconceivable; 2) the Reward- or Recompense-body, obtained as a result of practicing the Bodhisattva way; and 3) the Transformation-body, the body he manifests to human beings

Three Worlds or Realms; also Triple World (*sangai*). The realms of desire, form, and formlessness inhabited by unenlightened beings who transmigrate within the six paths of existence. Those in the realm of desire are governed by desires; those in the world of form have physical form but no desires; those in the realm of formlessness are free from both desire and form

Two Vehicles. The Shravaka ("one who hears the voice"), a disciple who achieves liberation upon listening to the Buddhist teachings; and the Pratyeka-buddha, who achieves liberation but does not undertake to teach others. Hakuin regarded them as inferior to the Bodhisattva, whose life is devoted to saving other beings as well

Udumbara flower. A plant said to bloom only once every three thousand years; used to describe the rare appearance of a Buddha in the world

Unborn Zen. The Zen teaching of the seventeenth century Zen master Bankei Yōtaku tends to use the term; it retained considerable popularity into the eighteenth century. Hakuin uses the term, as he does silent illumination Zen, do-nothing Zen, and withered-sitting Zen, in a more general sense to indicate a type of Zen practice that does not focus the student on the breakthrough into *kenshō*, or satori yamabushi. “Mountain ascetic” of the Shugendō tradition
yojana. A unit of measurement in ancient India, equal to the distance the royal army could march in a day

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS

- HHZ *Hakuin Zenji Hogo Zenshu (Zen Master Hakuin's Complete Dharma Writings)*. 14 volumes. Edited by Yoshizawa Katsuhiko. Kyoto: Zenbunka Kenkyusho, 2000–2006.
- HOZ *Hakuin Osho Zenshu (Complete Works of Priest Hakuin)*. 8 volumes. Tokyo, 1935.
- HZB *Hakuin Zenga Bokuseki (Hakuin's Zen Painting and Calligraphy)*. 3 volumes. Yoshizawa Katsuhiko. Nigensha, 2011.
- SH *Shamon Hakuin (Buddhist Monk Hakuin)*. Akiyama Kanji. Shizuoka, 1983.
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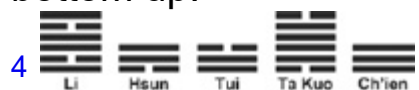
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¹ By remaining attached to emptiness (the two voids: emptiness of self and emptiness of the Dharma), a student fails to go forward and practice the vital Bodhisattva path in which he works to complete his own training while teaching others, and because of that Buddhahood can never germinate within him.

² Yung-chueh Yuan-hsien, a famous Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō) master at the end of the Ming dynasty, wrote about the *Precious Mirror Samadhi* and the Five Ranks in a work entitled *Tung-shan Ku-che*. The Ching dynasty priest Hsing-ts'e evaluates traditional understandings of the Five Ranks including Yung-chueh's in the *Pao-ching san-mei pen-i*, first published in Japan in 1698.

³ The lines of trigrams and hexagrams are always counted from the bottom up.



⁵ A phrase connoting the attainment of enlightenment. “Chao-chou said, ‘Since I was eighteen I’ve been able to break up the family and scatter the household’” (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 80).

⁶ Threefold Contemplation (*Sangan*): contemplation of the emptiness of all things, of the transience of all things, and of the truth of the middle way.

⁷ Based on the story in *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, ch. 76. The source of the next story has not been traced.

⁸ The Three Fundamentals of Tung-shan's Zen (*Tōzan sanshu kōyō*): 1. perfect unity between teacher and student; 2. no attachments, not even to enlightenment; 3. not falling into dualistic views.

⁹ The story of Attendant P'ing is found in *Ta-hui's Arsenal*, ch. 2.

¹⁰ Allusion to a passage in chapter 32 of the *Tao-te ching*.

¹¹ Hakuin attained an initial enlightenment at the age of twenty-three while he was attending a retreat at Eigan-ji (*Precious Mirror Cave*, pp. 165–67).

¹² Literally, “he would refer to them using only two characters of the masters’ (four-character) names, and only one character of his fellow

monks' (two-character) names.”

¹³ The *Hannya rishubon* is the 578th section of the *Great Wisdom Sutra*. Apparently the old priest shoved an entire volume of the sutra into the teacher's mouth.

¹⁴ Hakuin alludes to the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, who appears in a chapter of that title in the *Lotus Sutra*.

¹⁵ Words quoted at the opening of *Precious Lessons of the Zen School*.

¹⁶ *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, Watson, pp. 76–77. A *yojana* was a unit of measurement in ancient India, equal to the distance the royal army could march in a day.

¹⁷ This statement appears in *Ch'uan-lao's Comments on the Diamond Sutra*, by the Sung dynasty priest Ch'uan-lao Chih-fu, which Hakuin lectured on. See #91.

¹⁸ In Chu Hsi's (1130–1200) preface to his edition of *The Great Learning (Ta-hsueh chang-chu)*.

¹⁹ *Wei-mo ching lueh-su, General Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra*, by the Hua-yen priest Chang-shui Tzu-hsuan (965–1038).

²⁰ In other words, the number forty-two thousand (42,000) “means” the four (4) universal vows and the two (2) practices of benefiting others and benefiting themselves.

²¹ Ten (10) and eight (8) are from the number one hundred and eight thousand (108,000). The quotation is from the *Platform Sutra* (see *Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, p. 47).

²² Lin-chi quotes a passage in the “Phantom City” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*: “The Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Buddha sat in the place of practice for ten kalpas’ refers to the practice of the ten perfections or *paramitas*” (see *Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi*, p. 71).

²³ The statement appears in the *Ta-pan nieh-p'an ching shu*, ch. 21 (T.38), Kuan-ting's commentary on the *Nirvana Sutra*.

²⁴ Otherwise known as Genshin (942–1017). The quotation is from his *Essentials for Rebirth (Ōjōyōshū)*.

²⁵ *Hsu-chu Fa-hua-ching*, a commentary on Chih-i's *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra* by the Yuan priest Hsu Hsing-shan. The

eightfold holy path (*hasshō-dō*): right views, thoughts, speech, acts, living, effort, mindfulness, and meditation.

²⁶ In addition to the theory of eight consciousnesses, the T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen schools also posit a ninth *amala* consciousness, which lies below the eighth and remains free of karmic impurity. Hakuin here equates the ninth consciousness with the eighth. "This Buddha Sun Moon Bright appears when you strike down into the field of the eighth consciousness and overturn it" (annotation).

²⁷ *Gonchi*. Conventional wisdom that discriminates aspects of phenomenal existence. The student acquires it after he attains true and fundamental Wisdom (*jitchi*), which grasps ultimate reality.

²⁸ In the "Seeing Akshobhya Buddha" chapter the Buddha tells Shariputra, "There is a country called Wonderful Joy with a Buddha named Immovable [Akshobhya]. Vimalakirti died in that land and was reborn in this one." Shariputra says, "I can't understand how one could leave a pure and spotless world for this one with all its wrath and injury" (Watson, p. 132).

²⁹ Prince Shōtoku was said to be a reincarnation of Nan-yueh Hui-ssu (515–77). The work of Nan-yueh referred to is *Annulling Sin Through Recitation of the Lotus (Fa-hua ch'an-fa)*.

³⁰ Skt. Bharadvaja, "keen-minded," is one the six Brahmin surnames.

³¹ *Fo-pen-hsing-chi ching*.

³² Hakuin refers to the popular belief that having two pupils in a single eye was a sign of greatness; the physical trait was purportedly found in the sage-emperors of ancient China and, in Japan, in Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

³³ Tao-sheng (ca. 360–434) is a scholar who assisted Kumarajiva in translating the *Lotus Sutra* and wrote a commentary on it. Tao-sheng asserted in a comment on the *Nirvana Sutra* that all beings possess the Buddha-nature, a possibility expressly denied in texts of that sutra known in China at the time. He was vindicated later when a fuller text of the sutra became known in China.

³⁴ Adapted from Watson, p. 16.

³⁵ *The finest ghee*. The Tendai school uses the term "five flavors" (*gomi*) — milk, cream, curdled milk, butter, and clarified butter or ghee — to describe the five periods of the Buddha's teaching.

³⁶ *Saha world*: the world of suffering in which humans live.

³⁷ Watson, p. 213.

³⁸ *Fa-hua wen-chu chi*, ch. 3.

³⁹ *Fa-hua wen-ju*, ch. 9.

⁴⁰ The Buddha first preached the Dharma at the Deer Park in Varanasi; he often visited Vaishali to preach.

⁴¹ A reference to the well-known tale “Kantan’s Dream,” from a T’ang work entitled *Chen-chung chi*. A young man named Lu-sheng, on his way to seek a career in the capital, stopped off at a place called Han-tan (Japanese, Kantan). While waiting for his lunch to cook, he took a nap and dreamed that he rose through the ranks of officialdom and finally attained the post of prime minister. Awakening, he saw his yellow millet still cooking on the fire, realized that life is an empty dream, and returned home instead of proceeding to the capital.

⁴² “Was he merely sitting like a withered tree and waiting; or was he focused on something in his cinnabar field [*tanden*]? Hurry up, which was it?” (annotation).

⁴³ Here the reasoning seems to be as follows: the number five in the two Buddhist concepts becomes ten when added together, and the ten becomes fifty when multiplied by the original number five.

⁴⁴ The “Expedient Means” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* says, “In Buddha-lands of the ten directions there is only the Dharma of the one vehicle, there are not two, there are not three.”

⁴⁵ “Fine, fine. We might investigate the evidence, but the problem is you’re not enlightened, so you couldn’t understand it even if I explain it to you. First you must hear the sound of one hand” (annotation). The expression “emitting a joyous *Ka!*” (*kaji ichige*) refers to a spontaneous cry that appears at the moment of enlightenment.

⁴⁶ *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 1.

⁴⁷ *Fa-hua Yuan-i* and *Fa-hua Wen-chu*, both by T’ien-t’ai Chih-i. Ching-hsi Chan-jan (711–82) and Chang-an Kuan-ting (561–632) were both prominent T’ien-t’ai teachers.

⁴⁸ There is no Year of the Jackass; hence, never.

⁴⁹ The phrase recurs in the “Parables” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, together with lists of terrible punishments a slanderer will receive.

⁵⁰ The first part of this paragraph echoes passages from a number of ancient Chinese works, including the *Chuang Tzu* and the *Book of Changes*.

⁵¹ Sengen Daiji (also Sengen Bodhisattva, Senkan Daimyōjin, and Fuji Gongen) is enshrined in the Fuji Shrine’s inner sanctum at the mountain’s summit.

⁵² The Chinese characters *fu-ji*, “not-two,” are sometimes used for the name Fuji, denoting its incomparable beauty and its presence as a symbol of the truth of nonduality.

⁵³ This colophon is not found in the *Poison Blossoms* version of the text; it has been added from a holograph draft in *Hakuin’s Zen Painting and Calligraphy* (HZB #191).

⁵⁴ He was thirty-one and according to his life records was engaged in solitary practice on Mount Iwataki in Mino province. Rōdō Gidon (n.d.), head priest at Yūsen-ji in present-day Mino-kamo, later founded Dairyū-ji in the nearby village of Kaji.

⁵⁵ Oda Nobunaga (1534–82) was lord of Owari province. His military successes enabled him to unify much of the country. Notorious for his ruthless suppression of Buddhism, Nobunaga is not known for the sensitivity and devotion he displays in this narrative.

⁵⁶ The phrases “to clasp Mount T’ai under the arm and step over the Northern Sea” (impossibilities) and “breaking a branch from a tree” are both from *Mencius* (I.i.vii).

⁵⁷ Shakamuni is reported to have said, “In the forty-nine years [from his enlightenment until his death], I have never preached a single word.”

⁵⁸ Hakuin writes: “When the light of wisdom suddenly illuminates the mind of a student practicing the Way, it is like splitting open a mote of dust and seeing the universal body of Vairocana Buddha in its entirety” (see #163 on p. 252).

⁵⁹ An allusion to Chu-chih’s “one finger Zen” (*Gateless Barrier*, Case 3).

⁶⁰ The allusion is to Chao-chou’s “turning” the sutra repository, as explained below.

⁶¹ The legend that P'ang Yun, a famous Zen layman, cast his fortune into Tung-t'ing Lake is found in the preface to the *Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*, p. 40.

⁶² Fukino-zan Hōzō-in, a Sōtō temple in Matsuzaki, Izu province.

⁶³ Fumon-in was a Sōtō temple in Kawazu village on the eastern coast of the Izu peninsula. Although nothing is known of Tetsugai, an annotation states that he accompanied Hakuin on some of his early Zen pilgrimages.

⁶⁴ From the *Sutra of Forty-two Sections*.

⁶⁵ Benzaiten (Sanskrit, Sarasvati) is the goddess of music and wisdom; she is possessed of perfect and unbounded eloquence that helps her spread the Buddhist teachings.

⁶⁶ Eidō Eibō (d. 1778).

⁶⁷ The monk is Tetsugen Dōkō (1630–82) of the Ōbaku school. He traveled around the country collecting donations to finance the first complete woodblock edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon in Japan. Known as the “Tetsugen edition,” it was finally completed in 1678. The story is told in Gettan Dōchō's *Gasankō* (1698).

⁶⁸ The Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods (Sk. Trayastriṃśa) is one of the heavens in the realm of desire, located atop Mount Sumeru. According to the *Lotus Sutra*, rebirth in this heaven is possible to those who perform good works, such as transcribing sutras. The Tushita Heaven, the fourth of the six heavens in the realm of desire, is the dwelling-place of Maitreya Bodhisattva, the future Buddha. According to the *Flower Garland Sutra* (“Maitreya,” ch. 19), rebirth in the Tushita Heaven is possible to those who receive Shakamuni's teachings and strive to attain enlightenment.

⁶⁹ Yueh-t'ang Tao-shao (n.d.). This story appears in *Chronicles of the Buddha-patriarchs*, ch. 47.

⁷⁰ The story is told in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 4.

⁷¹ A *gatha* read out at the end of sutra recitations and other religious services.

⁷² Literally, “four or five strings of hundred-*mon* coins.” Four strings equaled one *ryō*.

⁷³ Semi-legendary emperors of ancient China renowned for their moral uprightness and wisdom, and as rulers of an ideal society.

⁷⁴ Based on a saying from the *Book of Rites*: “Confronting wealth, [the sage] does not attempt to acquire it. Confronting a calamity, he does not attempt to avoid it” (*Li Chi* I. 1-4).

⁷⁵ Hakuin refers to fifteen senior monks by the shortened names he used for the men in his assembly. Besides Kyū (Ekyū), those about whom something significant is known are *Jun*, Enkei Sojun, age twenty-nine at the time; *Ka*, Tōrei Enji, twenty-three; *Tetsu*, Kaigan Kotetsu (n.d.); *Chū*, Bunchū (n.d.); *Yaku*, Donsen Gen’yaku (n.d.); and *Daku*, Sōkei Ichidaku (n.d.). *Akiyama Kokan* is a name of Akiyama Yohei Michitomo, a wealthy farmer and landowner of Yasuhisa village in northern Izu (now incorporated into the city of Numazu), who appears elsewhere in *Poison Blossoms*, most prominently in the long inscription Hakuin wrote awarding him the name Ittsui (below #185). *Layman Kōrin Jimbei* cannot be identified.

⁷⁶ *Ch’uan-lao’s Comments on the Diamond Sutra*, containing comments in prose and verse by the Sung dynasty priest Ch’uan-lao Chih-fu (n.d.). Hakuin lectured on this work a number of times. See #39.

⁷⁷ *Shih-chi*, ch. 92.

⁷⁸ That is, the lectures on *Ch’uan-lao’s Comments*.

⁷⁹ “Perhaps this man was a follower of Nichiren Buddhism” (annotation). Nichiren Buddhists have a reputation for hostility toward other Buddhist traditions.

⁸⁰ The realm of hungry ghosts (*preta*), whose beings are condemned to constant, unappeasable hunger and thirst, is the second lowest of the ten realms of living beings, the lowest being hell.

⁸¹ From the *Hsun Tzu*.

⁸² “When Confucius was in Ch’en, he ran out of provisions and his followers became so weak that none of them could stand up” (*Analects*, Duke Ling of Wei).

⁸³ *Ch’en Kui*, which takes its title from a famous minister of that name who served during the Three Kingdoms period (3rd century), sets forth a vassal’s proper role in serving his master.

⁸⁴ A recasting of a passage in the *Record of Ta-hui*, ch. 20.

⁸⁵ “You can’t lay a hand or foot on this great mass of fire; if you [are in the adamantine cage, a place from which it is almost impossible to escape, and] try gnawing your way out, it will shatter your teeth and destroy your mouth” (annotation).

⁸⁶ Attributed to Yung chia Hsuan-chueh (665–713), *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 5.

⁸⁷ “The Master said, ‘A superior man has his mind fixed on virtue; a petty man’s mind is fixed on other men. A superior man has his mind fixed on the sanctions of the law; a petty man has his mind fixed on the favors he may receive’” (*Analects*, IV).

⁸⁸ The first story is from the *Nirvana Sutra*, ch. 14. Sessen Dōji heard the first half of a verse on impermanence by a Buddha of the past, “All things are impermanent, Such is the law of birth and death,” and sacrificed himself to a *yaksha* demon (a form assumed by the deity Indra) in order to hear the remaining two lines: “Once birth and death disappears, the happy state of tranquility and nirvana prevails.” The following three stories are from *The Golden Splendor Sutra* (*Suvarna-prabhāsa-sūtra*), ch. 10; *Ching-lu i-hsiang* (*Divergent Concepts in Sutra and Vinaya Texts*), ch. 47; and *Liu-tu-chi ching* T152 (by K’ang Seng-hui, a Chinese collection of Jataka tales), ch. 3.

⁸⁹ *Ta-chih-tu-lun*, ch. 27.

⁹⁰ “One who sets out on a great enterprise does not concern himself with trifles; one who achieves great successes does not achieve small ones” (*Book of Lieh Tzu*, “Yang Chu” chapter, p. 152).

⁹¹ The word translated “chambers” (*hōjō*) is normally used for the quarters of a teacher or head priest; it also alludes to the room where the great Layman Vimalakirti taught. An annotation says that the room was Ishii’s teahouse.

⁹² Hakuin uses the term *chijō kōhai*, the second of three kinds of “leakage” posited by Tung-shan Liang-chieh, in which the student, while trying to rid himself of delusory thoughts, still remains within the realm of dualism (*Eye of Men and Gods*, ch. 3).

⁹³ *Black snake*. A *shippei* or black-lacquered bamboo stick.

⁹⁴ A false makeshift seal carved from melon rind.

⁹⁵ Wild fox slobber (*kōen*) is a highly poisonous substance, generally used by Hakuin with a positive connotation for the “turning words” used by Zen teachers.

⁹⁶ The story on which this is based is given in Supplementary Note 1 at the end of the letter.

⁹⁷ The Dragon Gate (*Lung-men*) is a three-tiered waterfall cut through the mountains to open up a passage for the Yellow River. It was said that on the third day of the third month, when peach trees are in flower, carp that succeeded in scaling this waterfall turned into dragons.

⁹⁸ See Supplementary Note 2 for both “dead otter Zen” and “dumb sheep Zen.”

⁹⁹ See Supplementary Note 3 for “box-shrub Zen” and “carry the day.”

¹⁰⁰ The story is found in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 1; also *Gateless Barrier*, Case 4.

¹⁰¹ *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 3.

¹⁰² Based on lines by Yuan-wu K’o-ch’in: “I venerate the Sixth Patriarch, an authentic old Buddha who manifested himself in the human world as a good teacher for eighty lifetimes in order to help others” (cited in Tōrei’s *Snake Legs for Kaien-fusetsu*, 21v).

¹⁰³ The purity of the steel of Pin-chou in China was legendary; it was attained by using an extremely hot furnace.

¹⁰⁴ The head monk in Huang-po’s assembly at this time is unidentified in standard accounts of this episode in *Record of Lin-chi* and *Records of the Lamp*; in others he is given as Ch’en Tsun-su (Mu-chou Tao-tsung, n.d.), but in none of the versions does he utter such words directly to Lin-chi.

¹⁰⁵ See Supplementary Note 4 for the original story.

¹⁰⁶ “One day Hsuan-sha took up his traveling pouch and left his temple to visit teachers in other parts. On his way down the mountain he struck his toe hard on a rock, drawing blood, but amid the intense pain he had an abrupt self-realization . . . and promptly returned to Hsueh-feng” (*Essentials of Successive Records of the Lamp*, ch. 23).

¹⁰⁷ Hakuin paraphrases an account in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 9.

¹⁰⁸ See Supplementary Note 5 for the full story.

¹⁰⁹ These are among eighteen types of questions Zen students are said to ask teachers, as formulated by Fen-yang Shan-chao (947–1024) in the *Eye of Men and Gods*. A complete listing and explanation of them is found in D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism, 2nd Series*, pp. 80–82.

¹¹⁰ *Free up the cicada's wings*. A similar expression appears in the *Book of the Later Han*, to describe a lord showing great partiality to a favorite; here it seems to refer to the statement made earlier about a teacher ruining a student's chances for enlightenment by stepping in prematurely to help him achieve a breakthrough.

¹¹¹ Two of eight difficult situations (*hachinan*) in which it is difficult for people to encounter a Buddha, hear him preach, and attain liberation: being in Uttarakuru, the continent to the north of Mount Sumeru, where inhabitants enjoy lives of interminable pleasure; and being enthralled by the worldly wisdom and skillful words of secular life. "Dried buds and dead seeds" (*shōge haishu*) is a term of reproach often directed at followers of the Two Vehicles, who are said to have no possibility for attaining complete enlightenment.

¹¹² In the system of Zen study developed in later Hakuin Zen, *hosshin* or Dharma-body koans are those used in the beginning stages of koan practice to awaken the first insight into [sunyata](#) (see *Zen Dust*, pp. 46–50). The lines Hakuin quotes here, though not found in the *Poems of Han-shan (Han-shan shih)*, are attributed to him in *Compendium of the Five Lamps* (ch. 15 on Tung-shan Mu-ts'ung). They are included in a Japanese edition of Han-shan's poems published during Hakuin's lifetime: "The master ascended the teaching seat and said, 'Han-shan said:

Red dust dances at the bottom of the well.
White waves rise on the mountain peaks.
The stone woman gives birth to a stone child.
Fur on the tortoise grows longer by the day.

If you want to know the Bodhi-mind, all you have to do is behold these sights” (annotation).

¹¹³ *The Ten Ox-herding Pictures* is a work comprised of a series of pictures and verses that illustrate a Zen student’s progress to final enlightenment. The Five Ranks, comprising five Ranks of the Particular and Universal, are a teaching device formulated by Tung-shan of the Ts’ao-tung (Jap. Sōtō) tradition (see #144).

¹¹⁴ See Supplementary Note 6 for the stories of Tse and Chen Tien-hsiung.

¹¹⁵ Liu Hsiu (1st century) was a royal descendant of the Western Han who deposed the usurper Wang Mang and established the Eastern Han dynasty. Emperor Su Tsung (8th century) also regained his father’s throne after it had been usurped.

¹¹⁶ Wang Mang (c. 45 B.C.–23 A.D.), a powerful official of the Western Han dynasty, and rebellious T’ang An Lu-shan (c. 703–57) both attempted to usurp the throne and declare themselves emperor.

¹¹⁷ Nan-t’ang is Ta-sui Yuan-ching (1065–1135), an heir of Fa-yen Wen-i. The quotation, from the *Eye of Men and Gods*, ch. 1, is cited frequently by Hakuin. It is included in *Redolence from the Cold Forest*, a selection of quotations Hakuin made for students, first published in 1769.

¹¹⁸ In *Detailed Study of the Fundamental Principles of the Five Houses of Zen (Goke sanshō yōro-mon)*, Tōrei explains the Zen terms “gains you half” (literally, “raise it up halfway”) and “gaining it all” as follows: “Raising it totally up’ refers to grasping the treasury of the Buddha’s true Dharma eye and making it one’s own activity. ‘Raising it partially up’ means this total attainment is still not fully achieved; getting only half, or only one tenth” (HOZ7, pp. 157–58).

¹¹⁹ No source has been found for these words; perhaps they are Hakuin’s own.

¹²⁰ “If you can just cease your mind from its constant striving, you are no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas. Do you want to grasp the Buddha-patriarchs? They’re none other than you, the people standing in front of me listening to my lecture on the Dharma” (*Record of Lin-chi*, p. 23).

¹²¹ For this saying, see above, #68, pp. 85, 86.

¹²² Similar formulations are found almost verbatim among the teachings of Bankei Yōtaku, whose Unborn (*fushō*) Zen was extremely popular in Rinzai circles in the decades prior to Hakuin's appearance as a teacher. See *Unborn: The Life and Teachings of Zen Master Bankei*.

¹²³ “There is a type of priest whose understanding consists in remaining deaf and dumb, doing nothing whatever. He lives in a temple, gobbles down rice, and clings to this inert and lifeless state like a dead otter in expectation that enlightenment will come to him. He is called the Great King Stuck-in-Satori, a clod of mud lying forgotten in the corner of a broken-down house in a vast swamp somewhere deep in the mountains. He does nothing but consume rice he undeservedly receives as alms” (*Record of Yun-an*, ch. 7).

¹²⁴ “A monk asked Ta-sui, ‘It's said the whole universe will be destroyed in the world-ending kalpa fire. I want to know whether “this” [the eternal Buddha-nature] is destroyed along with it.’ ‘Destroyed,’ replied Ta-sui. The monk said, ‘It disappears together with the universe?’ ‘Together with it,’ said Ta-sui. Yuan-wu, in his commentary on this koan, quotes a verse by T'ang priest Ching-tsun that begins: ‘Clearly no other Dharma exists. Who said it was transmitted to Hui-neng? The single phrase, “Together with it,” made one monk walk through a thousand mountains’” (*Blue Cliff Record*, Case 29).

¹²⁵ The Udumbara flower is said to bloom only once every 3,000 years; one blossoming amid flames would be inconceivably rare.

¹²⁶ Chen Tien-hsiung (n.d.) and Supervisor Monk Hsuan-tse (n.d.), judging themselves to be fully enlightened, left their teachers early. When they discovered their mistake, they returned and completed their training. Their stories are found in Supplementary Note 6 to the letter to Layman Ishii, pp. 337–8.

¹²⁷ The golden chain is a metaphor for attachment to satori.

¹²⁸ See Supplementary Note 1 at the end of this letter for the story.

¹²⁹ See Supplementary Note 2 for the story.

¹³⁰ See Supplementary Note 3 for the story.

¹³¹ “A single drop of lion milk from the Tathagata's enlightened mind, put into a sea filled with boundless delusions, will destroy them all”

(*Flower Garland Sutra*, ch. 78).

¹³² Chu-tun of Lung-ya's story is told in Case 20 of the *Blue Cliff Record*; Tsung-i of T'ien-p'ing's in Case 98.

¹³³ *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 45.

¹³⁴ There is mention of an alternate, more roundabout, route, but it had hazards of its own, since it involved taking a boat down the swift-flowing Fuji River west of Mount Fuji.

¹³⁵ The name *Ujō*, "Feather Castle," used for the region surrounding Yamura village, was the site of the "White Feather Castle" and Keirin-ji.

¹³⁶ It is nine miles to Gekkō-ji in Yoshida from Keirin-ji in Yamura village.

¹³⁷ *Ichijō-ji* is located between Yoshida and Keirin-ji; the priest is unidentified.

¹³⁸ *Kinsei* is a name given to the area around Yamura and Tsuru villages.

¹³⁹ "Hundred-foot lion" translates *Hyakushaku no shi*, the name of a crag-like cliff behind Keirin-ji.

¹⁴⁰ The *four necessities* of a monk are sleeping quarters, clothing, food and drink, and medicine.

¹⁴¹ "Pounding on the drum" and "blowing the conch shell" to announce Dharma talks and other important events are here metaphors for Hakuin's talks; "Dharma rain" is a metaphor for his teachings, which benefit sentient beings.

¹⁴² *Nine Peaks (Chiu-i shan)*. A range of jagged summits in Hunan province, alluding here to Hakuin's teaching style.

¹⁴³ *Shao-lin* is Bodhidharma, a name derived from the place where he lived. The "praiseworthy one man" is Rempō.

¹⁴⁴ The *Chronological Biography* account has Hsuan-sha for Ch'ang-sha (*Precious Mirror Cave*, p. 214).

¹⁴⁵ That is, it's a shame we can't read Daikyū's records in their entirety.

¹⁴⁶ *T'ao Chu* (Fan Li, 5th century B.C.) and *I Tun* (Huan Tan, 1st century B.C.) were both officials who amassed large fortunes, their names becoming synonymous with great wealth. *Hsiang Chi* and

Chao Yun were great heroes of the wars of the Three Kingdoms possessed of Herculean strength. *Fei Ch'ang* was a Han dynasty necromancer; *Chang Hua* was a scholar and statesman under the first Ch'in emperor. *Yang Kuei-fei* and (*Wang*) *Chao Chun* are two of the great beauties of ancient China.

¹⁴⁷ This string of flattering comparisons ranks Daikyū's *Record* with the teachings of Zen predecessors that Hakuin held in the highest esteem: the utterance made by *Tz'u-ming* (Shih-shuang Ch'u-yuan, 986–1039) when he stuck a gimlet into his thigh to keep from dozing off during zazen, which Hakuin quotes frequently in his writings; the informal talk (*shōsan*) of *Chen-ching K'o-wen* (1025–1102) that is found in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 17; the general discourse (*fusetsu*) of *Ling-yuan I-ching* (d. 1117), also found in *Compendium*, ch. 17; the talks from the high seat (*jōdō*) of *Hsi-keng* (Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu, 1185–1269) in *Record of Hsu-t'ang*; and the letters of religious instruction from *Ta-hui* to lay followers in the *Letters of Ta-hui*.

¹⁴⁸ Hsi-keng (Hsu-t'ang) is said to have made this prophecy in a verse he gave to his Japanese disciple Daiō on the latter's departure to return to Japan (see #59, second note, p. 78). Nothing seems to be known about Bon Zennin (Zennin means "Zen man").

¹⁴⁹ Later known as Shikyō Eryō (1722–87), Ryōta was one of Hakuin's most important Dharma heirs, said to have been instrumental in spreading Hakuin Zen in the Kyoto area. Ordained at the Kaifuku-in subtemple of Myōshin-ji in Kyoto, he studied with Hakuin for about ten years, returning to become head priest at Kaifuku-in in 1757.

¹⁵⁰ Ryūge ("Dragon Flower") is a sobriquet used by Muchaku Dōchū, after the name of his retirement temple Ryūge-in.

¹⁵¹ *The priceless jade that the experts had failed to recognize* is an allusion to a story in the *Han-fei tzu*. A man named Pien Ho found a block of jade in the mountains and presented it to the king. An expert pronounced it to be an ordinary stone, and for attempting to deceive the king, Pien Ho's left foot was cut off. When the next king ascended the throne, Pien Ho again presented the jade, but it was rejected again, and his right leg was chopped off. When the next

king was enthroned, Pien Ho went before the gates of the city and wailed out in lamentation for three days and nights. Hearing of this, the king asked the reason. Pien Ho told him, "I do not cry because of my mutilation, but because a true gem has been rejected as a false one, and a loyal subject branded as a deceiver." This time, the lapidary who tested the stone pronounced it to be jade of the finest quality. The story gave rise to the proverb, "Having eyes but not recognizing the jadestone of Mount Ch'ing."

¹⁵² According to legend, *Mother Mu (Mu Mu)*, the fourth of the Yellow Emperor's wives, was ugly but very sagacious. *Lady Hsi-shih*, one of the four beauties of ancient China, would knit her brows as if in pain, thinking it enhanced her beauty. The *woman of Wu-yen*, who is said to have been repulsive in every feature, demanded an audience at the age of forty with the Emperor; despite laughter from the surrounding courtiers, she so impressed him with her intelligence that he took her for a wife. The imperial consort *Yang Kuei-fei*, another of the four great beauties, was strangled to placate rebellious imperial troops.

¹⁵³ Practicing the ancient tradition of Shugendō, which incorporates elements of esoteric Buddhism, Taoism, and Shintō, yamabushi are said to acquire supernatural powers by performing ascetic practices in sacred mountain areas. They came to be associated with the *tengu* goblins, which are often depicted wearing the distinctive garb of the yamabushi. The reference to the yamabushi Gyōshin appears in the sixth part of the final volume (*gekan*) of Razan's work: "Moreover many priests who are arrogant and prideful, envious or bad-tempered, are transformed into *tengu* goblins. Dengyō, Kōbō, Jikaku, and Chishō are examples of this. One of those who became a *tengu* was Gyōshin of Yamato province. He declared to the priest Kyōen: 'I was formerly a ranking priest [Sōzu] of the Naka-no-in. How can Buddhist priests or temple maidens exorcise me? My mind is filled with notions of abusing and slandering, reviling and disdain. I have over three hundred followers, all possessed of miraculous powers, who seek people at the end of their lives to haunt and oppress. From long in the past, when eminent and erudite priests approaching death were beset upon by evil demons, that was all my doing.'" Unkei appears in the same section: "In the fifth year of

the Jōwa period [1349] a yamabushi named Unkei from Mount Haguro in Dewa province was on his way to visit Tenryū-ji in Kyoto. When he reached the western outskirts of the capital, he encountered an elderly yamabushi priest, and accompanied him up to the temple on nearby Mount Atago. He noticed a strange-looking priest among the assembly there. The priest declared, ‘These are Gembō, Shinsai, Kanchō, Jie, Raigō, Ninkai [eminent priests of former times].’” After listing a number of former emperors and empresses who were present as well, the text continues, “As Unkei was getting ready to leave, the elderly priest declared, ‘This is the dwelling place of Tarōbō,’ and he awoke as if from a dream. Dazed, he found himself seated under a *muku* tree at the site of the ancient capital.”

¹⁵⁴ From the *Fa-yuan chu-lin*, ch. 76. The story appears in *Dharma Words Written for Bonji*, Book Three, p. 215.

¹⁵⁵ When the priest Hui-t’iao made intemperate remarks against Buddhism during a sermon, his tongue suddenly popped three feet out of his mouth and blood began trickling from his eyes and nose and ears (*Hsu-kao-seng chuan*, ch. 15). Sung-yu burned Buddhist statues to keep himself warm, and when Hui-tang sent him a letter of reproach, he used it as toilet paper (*Hsu-kao-seng chuan*, ch. 25).

¹⁵⁶ Chang Wu-chin is Chang Shang-ying, 1043–1121. His wife is reported to have said: “It is said that from the first, no Buddha exists, but why write about that? You should write about the Buddha that exists” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 11).

¹⁵⁷ The four essentials (*shishu seiku*) are food and drink, clothing, bedding, and medicine. The three learnings (*sangaku*) are meditation, study of the precepts and sutras, and *prajna*.

¹⁵⁸ Hōdō Shinsen is a legendary figure who is said to have flown to Japan from India at the time of the Emperor Kōtoku (7th century) and established temples in Harima province. En no Gyōja (7th century) is regarded as the founder of the Shugendō tradition of ascetic “mountain” Buddhism.

¹⁵⁹ Zōga, a Buddhist monk from Mount Hiei, received an oracle from the deity of the Ise Shrine telling him to give his clothing to a beggar and did so, returning naked to Mount Hiei (*Zoku Honchō Ōjō-den*,

12). The other eminent priests mentioned here also received communications from the deities of the Shintō shrines they visited (or from their intermediaries). The stories appear in the *Collection of Sand and Pebbles*, vol. 1, except those of Taichō Hosshi (*Honchō Kōsō-den, Lives of Eminent Japanese Priests*, ch. 6) and Gyōgi (source unknown).

¹⁶⁰ The three stories referred to here — of Shōen, Shōshin, and the monk of Miidera — are also found in the *Collection of Sand and Pebbles*, vol. 1.

¹⁶¹ On a visit to the Liang state, Mencius was asked by the king what he should do to profit his kingdom. Mencius replied he had only counsels of benevolence and virtuousness to give, and cautioned the king against speaking of profit. “If a king asks what can be done to profit his kingdom, ministers will ask what can be done to profit their families, superiors and inferiors of all ranks will try to profit from one another, thus endangering the kingdom. In a kingdom of ten thousand war chariots, a usurper who murders a king will become head of a state of a thousand chariots; in a state of a thousand chariots, the murderer of its prince will become head of a clan of a hundred chariots. Although to have a thousand chariots out of ten thousand, or a hundred out of a thousand, is not an insignificant gain, if virtuousness is put last, and profit put first, people will not be content until they attempt to usurp it all” (*Mencius*, p. 49).

¹⁶² Wang Mang (c. 45 B.C.–23 A.D.), known infamously as “the Usurper,” plotted to overthrow the Han dynasty. Ssu-ma I (178–251) hid his ambitions while serving the Wei dynasty, later betraying his masters; he later came to be regarded as founder of the Chin dynasty.

¹⁶³ *Resolving Doubts About the Land of the Kami*, published in 1673 by the Shintō priest Tatsuno Hirochika (1616–93), uses Buddhist concepts to explain basic Shintō principles.

¹⁶⁴ *Shih-shih tzu-chien*, ch. 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Shih-shih tzu-chien*, ch. 7.

¹⁶⁶ In 819 the Emperor Hsien-tsung placed in his palace a finger bone of the Buddha said to possess miraculous powers. Han Yu, a well-known scholar and statesman of the time, presented a written

protest, for which he was exiled (*Shih-shih tzu-chien*, ch. 7). The story of Han Yu's encounters with Zen master Ta-tien Pao-tsung (732–824) appears in *Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 20.

¹⁶⁷ Ts'ui-hao (d. 450) was a scholar who served under Emperor T'ai Wu of the Northern Wei (440–451). Discovering stores of arms and wine in a Buddhist temple at Ch'ang-an, he advised the emperor to have the priests put to death (*Shih-shih tzu-chien*, ch. 3).

¹⁶⁸ *Shih-shih tzu-chien*, ch. 9.

¹⁶⁹ The sound of the drum and Hell's conflagrations are said to kill all those who come into contact with them.

¹⁷⁰ They did this in secret because Yun-men would not allow any transcription to be made of his teachings.

¹⁷¹ Angulimalya, a ruthless killer, vowed he would murder a thousand people and make a wreath with their fingers. Buddha stopped him from making his own mother his one thousandth victim and converted him to Buddhism.

¹⁷² Harima was Bankei Yōtaku's home province, so this can be taken as a reference to one of Bankei's successors.

¹⁷³ *Kon* is the soul or spirit's *yang* aspect, *haku* the *yin* aspect. It was believed that at death the *kon* part returned to the heavens and the *haku* part to the netherworld, or Yellow Springs.

¹⁷⁴ Reference to the story "Po-chang's Fox" in the *Gateless Barrier*, Case 2. "Whenever Po-chang delivered Zen lectures, an old man was always there listening together with the monks; he left the hall when the monks did. One day he remained behind. Po-chang said to him, 'Who are you standing before me?' The old man replied, 'I am not a human being. In the distant past . . . I was the head priest here. Once a monk asked me whether an enlightened man falls into cause and effect, and I answered, he does not fall. Because of that, I have been reborn a fox for five hundred lives. I now beg you to release me from this rebirth by uttering some turning words on my behalf.' Then he asked Po-chang, 'Does an enlightened man fall into cause and effect or not?' Po-chang answered, 'He does not ignore cause and effect.' Hearing this, the old man was enlightened. Making his bows, he said, 'I have now been released from the fox body, which you will find on the other side of this mountain. I wish to make a request.

Please bury the remains as a deceased monk.’ . . . Po-chang led the monks to the foot of a rock on the far side of the mountain. There, using his staff, he poked out the dead fox’s remains and had them cremated. That evening Po-chang ascended to the hall and told the monks the whole story. Huang-po thereupon asked. ‘You say this old man made a mistake in his answer and suffered reincarnation as a fox for five hundred lives. But what would have happened if he had answered correctly every time?’ Po-chang replied, ‘Come closer to me, and I’ll tell you.’ Huang-po went up to Po-chang and boxed his ears. Po-chang, clapping his hands and laughing, exclaimed, ‘I thought the foreigner’s beard was red, but here’s a foreigner with a red beard.’”

¹⁷⁵ These were Buddhist priests, or people posing as such, who received money from people by preaching to them in a humorous style at the roadside.

¹⁷⁶ Hakuin uses the saying, *kuchi areba, kui; kata areba, kiru*: “As long as you have a mouth you can eat; as long as you have shoulders you can wear a robe,” meaning: no one need worry about sustaining life; he will be able to manage somehow or other.

¹⁷⁷ Literally, the *danmu* (or *danken*) heresy, which denies that one is rewarded or punished in a subsequent existence for deeds committed in the present life.

¹⁷⁸ Butchō Ka’nan (1642–1716), a Sōtō priest perhaps best known as the teacher of the haiku poets Bashō and Kikaku.

¹⁷⁹ *The direct, rough-hewn spirit of Kantō*. The words Hakuin uses here, *Kantō rappa*, are not altogether clear, but apparently denote a kind of boastful swagger. They are associated with the Zen teacher Suzuki Shōsan (1579–1655), who used them to describe the rugged and direct character of the samurai of the Kantō region (around Edo), as opposed to the elegance and refinement of men from the more cultured home provinces around Kyoto.

¹⁸⁰ Hakuin uses the name *konren-zai*, a well-known Chinese herbal medicine that was applied at the time as a purgative.

¹⁸¹ From the proverb *moto no Mokuami* (“the same Mokuami as before”), which is based on an episode in Japanese history. The 16th-century warlord Tsutsui Junshō, suffering from a fatal illness

and wanting to conceal the fact of his death until his son and heir came of age, ordered his followers to use a poor blind monk named Mokuami, whose voice resembled his, as his double. Mokuami performed this role, living in extreme luxury for over a year, the son attained his majority, and Mokuami was abruptly returned to his former indigence.

¹⁸²*Records of the Lamp*, ch. 10.

¹⁸³ Similar verses are found in the *Lotus* and *Flower Garland* sutras.

¹⁸⁴ Hakuin explains the Five Ranks in Book Three, #144 and #145. The upcoming step-by-step elucidation can be compared with Hakuin's analysis in #145, pp. 203–8.

¹⁸⁵ See #149, note on “the precious night-shining gem,” p. 224.

¹⁸⁶ “Su-shan’s Memorial Tower” is given in #26, second note; “Nan-ch’uan’s Flowering Tree” in #126.

¹⁸⁷ Hakuin presumably refers to some contemporary Sōtō work on the Five Ranks, though Tung-shan himself uses a phrase similar to this, Coming from within the Phenomenal (*Henchūshi*). It was later emended by the Sung dynasty Lin-chi priest Fen-yang Shan-chao (947–1024) to Arriving at Mutual Integration (*Kenchūshi*), a change Hakuin embraces.

¹⁸⁸ The *danmu* heresy, which teaches that the self has no existence after death, thus denying the Buddhist principle of cause and effect.

¹⁸⁹ This story is told in the *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra*, ch. 17; also in Hakuin’s *Horse Thistles*, HHZ2, p. 225.

¹⁹⁰ Hakuin tells this story in somewhat more detail in *Wild Ivy*, pp. 39–44.

¹⁹¹ A version of this story appears in *Wild Ivy* (p. 5), where Hakuin says it comes from Suzuki Shōsan’s *Tales of Cause and Effect* (*Inga Monogatari*). A story somewhat similar in content is found in chapter five of that work.

¹⁹²*Kinsa no nan*, literally, the “golden chain calamity,” is a teaching that promises the ultimate prize of total freedom but, because it causes you to attach to a partial attainment, ends up hindering you.

¹⁹³ Hakuin has a tendency to add elements of his own when he quotes Shōju’s teachings; sometimes, as in this case, it is difficult to distinguish Shōju’s utterance from Hakuin’s.

¹⁹⁴ “Them” are three things the women had requested of Indra: a tree without roots, a piece of land where there is neither light nor shade, and a mountain valley where a shout does not echo. A fuller version of this story appears in *Essential Teachings of Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 31–2.

¹⁹⁵ In a manuscript copy of *Oradegama*, Hakuin adds to this: “It is the final, ultimate word” (*matsugo no ikku*).

¹⁹⁶ Ts’ao-shan’s Thousand Snowy Peaks: “When the thousand peaks are covered with snow, why is it one peak has none?”

¹⁹⁷ The *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 91.

¹⁹⁸ “Willow-fluff Blowing in the Wind” is a koan based on a verse comment by Ta-hui on the “Mu” koan: “Lotus leaves, perfect discs, rounder than mirrors; / Water chestnuts, spiked needles, sharper than gimlets. / Wind blows through the willow flowers, fluff-balls sail; / Rain strikes the pear blossoms, dragonflies dart.”

¹⁹⁹ “Years ago, there was an old lady who for twenty years took care of a monk who lived in a hermitage. She had a sixteen-year-old girl take food to the monk and attend to his needs. One day she told the girl to give the monk a hug and ask, ‘How are you now?’ ‘A withered tree growing on a cold cliffside; middle of winter, not a hint of warmth,’ replied the monk. When the girl returned and reported this, the old woman exclaimed, ‘For twenty years I’ve been taking care of a feckless worldling.’ She threw the monk out of the hermitage and burned it down” (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*, ch. 6).

²⁰⁰ “Small matter” (*shashi*) — the true essence of authentic Zen transmission.

²⁰¹ *Records of the Lamp*, ch. 9.

²⁰² All these koans, except the one about fattening the workhorse, which is found in the *Records from the Groves of Zen (Lin-kuan lu)*, were evidently created by Hakuin himself.

²⁰³ “A dragon that would be content to sleep at the bottom of a stagnant pool would never be able to soar up into the heavens [as he should]” (annotation).

²⁰⁴ Four virtues (*shi-toku*) that come with the attainment of Nirvana, or satori: permanency, joy, freedom, and purity.

[*Colophon*]

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