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CONTENTS

Okinawan Textile *frontispiece*

ARTICLES

Dōgen, Hakuin, Bankei: Three Types of Thought in Japanese Zen, *D. T. Suzuki* 1

The Pure Land of Beauty, *Yanagi Sōetsu* 18

Emptiness and Time, *Nishitani Keiji* 42

Introduction to the "*T'ien-t'ai ssu-chiao-i*," *David W. Chappell* 72

TRANSLATION

Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō Buddha-nature* (II), *translated by Norman Waddell and Abe Masao* 87

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Introducing Zazen into Christian Spirituality, *Kadowaki Kakichi* 106

A Response to Rev. Kadowaki, *Ueda Shizuteru* 122

Zen and the Art of What? *Alexander Eliot* 124

BOOK REVIEWS

Nakamura Hajime: *Bukkyō-go daijiten* (*J. W. de Jong*) 131

The Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā. Translated by Alex & Hideko Wayman (*Takasaki Jikidō*) 135

The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts. Translated by Edward Conze (*Nagao Gadjin*) 139

Dōgen, Hakuin, Bankei

Three Types of Thought in Japanese Zen

Part I

D. T. Suzuki

When we attempt to fully appreciate the special character of Bankei's Zen, taking into consideration its significance and place in the history of Zen thought, expecially within the context of Japanese Zen, it becomes necessary for us to distinguish between what may be called the three types of thought in Japanese Zen. By "types of thought" I mean the typical attitude of interpretation taken toward Enlightenment, which constitutes the basic reality of Zen. Differences in this attitude are also differences in the way of evaluating the Enlightenment in terms of the thought implied in it, and, accordingly, in the way of bringing it to expression. This comes to involve differences in the methods or techniques for realizing Enlightenment and also differences with regard to how that Enlightenment is construed. These various differences may be said to fall into three general types. They are exemplified in the Zen of Dōgen (1200–1253), Hakuin (1689–1768), and Bankei (1623–1693).

Dōgen's Zen joins the Zen of *shikan taza*, "just sitting," and the Zen of his *Shōbōgenzō*, to the Zen of the Chinese Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō) tradition. It is unique to Dōgen. Hakuin's Zen systematized the traditional Rinzai Zen from the point of view of koan practice and developed it into the Japanese-type Rinzai Zen which we see today. But Bankei, with his term "Unborn," puts Zen experience into the area of general thought, without however forgetting to bring to play within this its direct, intuitive nature.

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* This is the second chapter of the author's *Zen shisō-shi kenkyū*, I ("Studies in the History of Zen Thought," first series), Tokyo, 1943; included in the first volume of his Complete Works. All footnotes are by the translator.

I think that by comparing Bankei with the other two figures, the distinctive character of his Unborn Zen will be given greater clarity. The basic principles of Unborn Zen are well described in the following excerpts from a compilation of Bankei's sermons made by his disciple Itsuzan.[1]

> Bankei spoke to an assembly of people, "Each of you must realize your vitally functioning Buddha-mind. For hundreds of years now in both China and Japan the Zen Dharma has been misunderstood. People think Enlightenment 'opens' by doing zazen, or they try to discover a 'master of seeing and hearing.' They're seriously mistaken. Zazen is another name for the fundamental mind. It means peaceful sitting, peaceful mind. When you sit, it is just sitting, when you do *kinhin*, it is just *kinhin*. The Buddhist Dharma could not be preached even though you had all heaven and earth for a mouth. Men who preach the Buddhist Dharma, by and large, only blind other men. There is not a speck of illusion in the mind your mother imparted to you when she gave birth to you. To say because you're unaware of this, 'I'm deluded because I'm an ordinary unenlightened man'—that's even unjust to your parents. Buddhas of the past and people of the present day are all of one body. There's nothing setting them apart. When you draw water from the ocean and pour it into different buckets, it will freeze solid in very cold weather, and its shape will vary according to the shape of the bucket, large, small, square, or round, that it is in. But when it thaws, it is all the same ocean water.
>
> "You are unaware that you're a living, acting Buddha, and you think that by accumulating merit from religious practice and gaining Enlightenment you become a Buddha. But that's terribly mistaken, and you wander from darkness into darkness. Isn't it a sad thing!
>
> "As for me, I don't preach about Buddhism. I just give my comments and criticism on the mistaken notions you people have."
>
> A visiting priest said, "I practice with an aim to being enlightened. What about that?"

[1] *Bankei Zenji Hōgo*. See *Eastern Buddhist* VIII, 2.

> Bankei said, "Enlightenment is something contrasted to illusion. Each person is a Buddha-body without a speck of illusion. So what are you going to enlighten out?"
>
> "That would mean being a fool," the priest replied. "In the past, Bodhidharma, and after him many Zen masters all attained the great Dharma in Enlightenment."
>
> Bankei said, "As a fool a Tathagata saves people from suffering; he neither comes nor goes,[2] he is just as he was born and doesn't obscure his mind. All the patriarchs throughout past generations were just like that."

The word "Unborn" does not appear here, but that is the signification of such expressions as "vital Buddha-mind," "original mind," and "Buddha-body." Itsuzan was not deliberately avoiding the word; it appears often elsewhere in his compilation:

> Clenching your fist, hurrying around too, all is the Unborn. If you have even the slightest thought that you want to become a good person, or you get the idea to hurry and seek for something, you're already acting counter to the Unborn.
>
> At the place of the Unborn there's no telling the difference between being born and not being born. Everyone speaks about the principle of the Unborn, but there aren't any principles in the Unborn. If there were even so much as a principle, it wouldn't be Unborn. Nor is there any need to become Unborn. It's even beyond not having anything to do with principles. Things being just as they are, that's the true Unborn.

Each of these comments contains the central idea of Bankei's Zen, and, to be sure, Enlightenment itself as well. In all the quotations Bankei would seem at first glance to be denying Enlightenment. However, when he says a Tathagata and the patriarchs work to save sentient beings like fools, that is not a rejection of Enlightenment as such; what he is rejecting is the attitude of this specific questioner with regard to Enlightenment—admonishing him. If from the first he remains as Enlightenment, as the Unborn, that is enough.

[2] Tathagata, an epithet used for a Buddha, means "one who is thus come."

Yet he tries to make something else out of Enlightenment and hopes by some special method to get possession of it—and that, Bankei stresses, is wrong. Make Enlightenment relative by placing it in opposition to illusion and it loses its absoluteness and ceases to be Enlightenment. Since Enlightenment is, as such, the Unborn, its basic nature of suchness, "as-it-is-ness" (*sono mama*), must be preserved and maintained to the very end. That is why what Bankei calls "suchness" is not something relative; it is fundamentally and originally absolute. In the presence of this absoluteness nothing which may be called illusion is discernible—there is "not a speck of illusion," Bankei says. Yet by their mistaken notions people temporarily manufacture what is originally nonexistent, and thus the commencement or "opening" of Enlightenment is said to occur. In reality, however, Enlightenment is not something that is inaugurated; it is something that exists originally, exists just as it is. This is what Bankei calls the Unborn. Around it the central thought of Bankei Zen unfolds. Indeed, it is with an eye to this very point that he says, "I preach neither the Buddha Dharma nor Zen."

There is no question that in this sense Bankei's Unborn Zen is "*sono mama* (being-just-as-it-is) Zen."[3] Ultimately, in any religion whatever the place where peace of mind is finally achieved is not a single step beyond this *sono mama* (as-it-isness). Religions all come to settle down in absolute passivity. The variety of appearances they display comes only from the differences in the paths that get them there and in the manner in which they then enjoy things "as they are." In the thought of a great figure of so-called "total activity" (*zentai sayū*) Zen such as Rinzai, one would probably not expect to find even a trace of the passivity and non-activity that is found in *sono mama* Zen. And yet an open reading of the following passages from the *Rinzai roku* ("Records of Rinzai") demonstrates otherwise. To be sure, Rinzai's words have an intensity and vehemence that makes us sense the commanding presence of the brusque "Shogun Rinzai." But nevertheless what is flowing under the surface is *sono mama* Zen. It is none other than the mental state of absolute passivity of Rinzai's "noble man doing nothing whatever."

Sono mama is also identical with "no-mindedness." Yet those who have

[3] The expression "*sono mama* Zen" has been used, especially in Hakuin Zen, as a term of disapprobation.

not deeply penetrated this reality tend to regard *sono mama* in a merely spatial, static, negative sense, neglecting to see its temporality and its dynamic and positive side.

Here now are excerpts from Rinzai's sermons:

> "I don't have a thing to give you. All I do is cure your ills and take the chains off you. You men of the Way, try to come forward here independent of all things, I'd like to have a real exchange with you. But I've been waiting five, no, ten years now. There hasn't been a single man yet. All I've had here is ghosts hanging around the tree leaves and in the grass, disembodied spirits in the woods and bamboo groves, fox-spooks, biting madly into so many heaps of filth....
>
> "I'm telling you, there isn't any buddha, no holy teaching, no practicing, no realizing! What are you doing looking around in neighbors' houses? You mole-eyed monks, putting on another head over your own! What do you lack in yourselves? You men of the Way, what you're making use of here right now is the very thing that makes a buddha or patriarch. But you don't believe that. You go on seeking outwardly. Make no mistake about it, there isn't any dharma outside. There's nothing inside you can lay your hands on either. You grasp at the words from my mouth. What you should do is stop what you're doing. *Do nothing*....
>
> "As far as I'm concerned, there isn't much to do. Just be ordinary. Put on your robes. Eat your rice. Pass the time *doing nothing*. You come here from all over wanting to seek buddha, wanting to seek Dharma, wanting to seek emancipation, wanting to seek to get out of the three realms. Fools! When you've left the three realms where are you going to go? 'Buddha,' 'patriarch'—those names only fetter you up in chains of praise!"

In one sense this too can be called *sono mama* Zen. In any case, just like shrimp that cannot get out of the seine no matter how they jump, all of us are living and dying at the place of the absolute Unborn. But when this is brought forth onto the field of thought it comes to have a diversity of aspects. In which case, where is it the orientations of Unborn Zen and Dōgen Zen may be said to be dissimilar?

Bankei's Unborn Zen rejects on the one hand all relative interpretations of Enlightenment, and on the other does not subscribe to the fixed and ready-made system of koan Zen either. It may on this score possibly be said to resemble greatly the emphasis of Dōgen's Zen. What, then, is the significance of Dōgen's *shikan taza* ("just sitting")? How is "just sitting" different from *sono mama* Zen? Unborn Zen does indeed call to mind views held by Dōgen.

Here I shall first take a look at the so-called "*taza*-ism" of Dōgen. This should result in a more distinct elucidation of Bankei's Unborn Zen as well. A discussion of the points of difference between Unborn Zen and koan Zen will be taken up in a later chapter.

The *shikan taza* espoused by Dōgen stresses something he received in transmission from his master Ju-ching while he was studying at Mount T'ien-t'ung in China. In the sixth part of Dōgen's *Eihei Kōroku* ("Comprehensive Records of Eihei Dōgen")[4] is a lecture that begins,

> The distinguishing characteristic of all the family of buddhas and patriarchs is negotiation of the Way in zazen. My late master T'ien-t'ung (Ju-ching) said, "Sitting crosslegged is the teaching of wise old buddhas. Commitment to Zen (*sanzen*) is body-and-mind dropping off. There is no need for offering incense, paying homage, doing nembutsu, penance disciplines, or sutra reading. It is attained only in *shikan taza* (just sitting)."

"Just sitting," "crosslegged sitting," "zazen"—all refer of course to the same zazen. This "zazen" is used, however, in at least two senses, and there is, moreover, no order to the way they are used, nothing to tell the reader which meaning is intended in a particular case. In *Shōbōgenzō* as well, unless we read along very closely things can become very confusing. In passages like, "Buddha-patriarchs transmit zazen from one to another" (*SBGZ zazenshin*); "For one lifetime or ten thousand, from beginning to end, without leaving the monastery—just sitting crosslegged day and night" (*SBGZ sammai-ō-zammai*), reference is obviously to zazen as such, "body-and-mind

[4] The *Eihei Kōroku* 永平廣錄 is a comprehensive collection of Dōgen's lectures, sayings, and miscellaneous writings in Chinese.

dropping off."[5] In the case of the previous quotation from the *Eihei Kōroku*, the distinction between zazen, crosslegged sitting, commitment to Zen (*sanzen*), and just sitting, cannot be said to be clearly drawn. On the other hand, when Dōgen says such things as, "Sit, and by this means attain body-and-mind dropping off" (*Bendōwa*), "The primary concern above all else for Zen monks is to engage in *shikan taza*" (*Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*),[6] "Clarify the great matter by doing *shikan taza*" (*ibid.*), zazen signifies the technique or method of negotiating the Way in intense seeking (*kufū bendō*).

On the plane of the identity (or nonduality) of practice and realization, both zazen as the means (practice) and zazen as the end (realization) may possibly be called non-dual. But when our chief object lies in explanation, it is best to have this difference well defined. The dispute between *Kanna* Zen and Silent Illumination Zen[7] comes on the whole from not making this distinction. It can be said that "*taza*-ism" places weight on philosophy and overlooks the psychological or practical side. The nonduality of "practice and realization are nondual" belongs to philosophy. This non-duality alone is not enough. Once we speak of practice or of realization, we are compelled to give thought to each of them.

In the *Zazenshin* written by the Chinese Sōtō priest Wanshi Shōgaku, and in Dōgen's own *Shōbōgenzō zazenshin* as well, the writers are expounding their respective understandings of the Buddhist truth. There is no mention of *shikan taza*, "just sitting," only an account of the event of body-and-mind dropping off that is attained through sitting. There, in Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō zazenshin*, we observe how he mixes at will in a confusing way the two

[5] A term used frequently in Dōgen's writings indicating attainment of total freedom from all hindrances physical and mental. Its context will be given more fully in Part II.

[6] A collection of Dōgen's talks and occasional remarks compiled by his disciple Ejō (1198–1280).

[7] Originally, the designation *Kanna* (*K'an-hua*, "examining the koan") Zen was a term of reproach applied to the Daie Sōkō (Ta-hui Tsung-kao, 1089–1163) line of Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen by followers of the Sōtō (Ts'ao-tung) master Wanshi Shōgaku (Hung-chih Cheng-chüeh, 1091–1157) for its stress of koan study. The Daie faction in turn called Wanshi's Zen *Mokushō* (*Mo-chao*, "silent illumination") Zen for its emphasis on sitting.

senses in which he takes zazen, using the word at random to assault just about everything around.

> Many of those who serve at present as temple masters in the various monasteries in the land of the great Sung (China) do not know zazen or learn it. Even if there are some who have clarified their understanding of it, they are few. In the temples there are of course prescribed times set aside for zazen. From the head priests down to the brotherhood of monks, doing zazen is made the proper duty for all. In the counselling and guidance of Zen students as well, zazen practice is encouraged. But, in spite of this, head priests who understand zazen are rare.

An examination of the meanings zazen has in this quotation reveals the following:

1. *"Many of those who serve at present as temple masters in the various monasteries in the land of the Sung (China) do not know zazen or learn it."* I do not think this could mean they do not know or learn how to do zazen correctly in its formal sense. We may suppose that in China monks were engaged in crosslegged sitting in all the monasteries in conformity with traditional practice. So I gather that here Dōgen means that they knew nothing about the proper frame of mind during zazen, the purpose and significance of zazen, or about the introspective investigation of its spiritual implications, and that they made no effort to learn about such things.

2. *"...there are of course prescribed times set aside for zazen"* is apparently a reference to the regular practice of sitting in the Zen Hall.

3. *"...doing zazen is made the proper duty for all."* I presume this means that doing the zazen described in number 2 is the primary responsibility of Zen priests, and also that it is the practice all students of Zen are encouraged to do. As such, this is the same sense as "For zazen a quiet place is suitable," "Exert effort solely in the practice of zazen," and "All buddhas and all patriarchs, when doing zazen..." in *Shōbōgenzō zazengi*.[8]

4. *"But in spite of this, head priests who understand zazen are rare."* This is

[8] See the translation of *SBGZ zazengi*, *Eastern Buddhist* VI, 2, p. 127–128, for the full context of these remarks.

zazen in its inner content: with all but a very few exceptions, head priests are ignorant of where the original aim and essential significance of zazen lies. Perhaps we may even regard this as being spoken from the standpoint of the non-duality of practice and realization: namely, head priests do not know that zazen is what Wanshi in his *Zazenshin*[9] (see below) terms "the essential dynamic moment of all buddhas and all patriarchs." This is the zazen Dōgen describes with these words: "If the Buddha Dharma is not transmitted, neither is zazen. What is passed from master to disciple in the authentic personal transmission is the quintessence of this zazen alone" (*SBGZ zazenshin*).

Dōgen goes on to deliver a withering blast at the category of brief writings on zazen known as *Zazenshin* and *Zazenmei* used in Zen circles in China.[10]

> Therefore, although in the past a few eminent priests have written *Zazenmei* (Zazen Inscriptions), a few have written *Zazengi* (Principles of Zazen), and a few have written *Zazenshin* (Zazen Exhortations), among these, there is nothing at all to be obtained from any of the *Zazenmei* or *Zazenshin*. The *Zazengi* are unclear as to the actual practice of zazen. They were written by people who knew nothing about zazen and who had not received it in authentic personal transmission. Examples of these works are the *Zazenshin* in the *Keitoku-dentō roku* and the *Zazenmei* in the *Katai-futō roku*.

The words *mei* (inscription) and *shin* (exhortation) are similar in their significance,[11] but *gi* (principles), as in Dōgen's own *Fukanzazen-gi* ("The Universal Promotion of the Principles of Zazen") for example, refers to some-

[9] Wanshi's *Zazenshin* (Chin. *Tso-ch'an chen* 坐禅箴) is quoted in full and commented on in Dōgen's work of the same name, *Shōbōgenzō zazenshin*. See below for a translation.

[10] There were a great many works entitled *Tso-ch'an chen* (*Zazenshin*, "Zazen Exhortation"), *Tso-ch'an ming* (*Zazenmei*, "Zazen Inscription"), and *Tso-ch'an i* (*Zazengi*, "Principles of Zazen") in China. Dōgen mentions two which must have been particularly well known, being included in two of the principal Zen histories, the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* (*Keitoku-dentō roku*) and the *Chia-t'ai p'u-teng lu* (*Katai-futō roku*).

[11] *Shin* 箴 is described as a needle or tool used by physicians in treating patients; to needle, to probe; by extension, to inscribe admonitions or precepts, or inscriptions themselves. *Mei* 銘 means to inscribe or carve; inscription.

thing concerned chiefly with the practicer's deportment in zazen, how to do zazen. In the quotation above, the statement, "The *Zazengi* are unclear as to the actual practice of zazen," seems to be an independent sentence; the following "They were written by people who knew nothing about zazen..." thus refers presumably to the authors of all three categories, *Zazenmei, Zazenshin,* and *Zazengi*. The zazen in this context must probably be understood in the meaning of item 4 above. Therefore, these criticisms may be supposed to contend that none of those throughout the past who have spoken about zazen have had any understanding of the zazen of body-and-mind dropping off, the essential and pivotal moment for every buddha and patriarch; that they have all been ignorant of the zazen which is "sitting undisturbed in self-joyous samadhi" (*Bendōwa*).

In this next quotation from *Shōbōgenzō zazenshin* we come upon the words *kufū* (intense seeking) and *taza* (sitting). In what relation do they stand to zazen? *Kufū* is sometimes used in combination with *bendō, kufū bendō*, "negotiating the Way in intense seeking." Again, since Dōgen states that *sanzen* (commitment to Zen) is zazen, *kufū* can also denote *sanzen. Taza* seems to connote regulation-style zazen in some places; in other places, it does not.

> It is to be pitied that those priests pass a whole lifetime in Zen monasteries and yet do not for a single sitting engage in intense seeking (*kufū*). Their sitting (*taza*) is not themselves when they are sitting. Their seeking does not encounter their self. This is not because their zazen dislikes their body-and-mind; it is because they do not aspire to true intense seeking and in their impulsiveness they become confused and muddled. What they have compiled in their works tells merely about how to "return to the source" and "reflect into the origin," about the vain business of thought-cessation and mind-tranquillization. They do not even reach the levels of Tendai meditation practices or the views of the highest Bodhisattva stages. How much less could they personally transmit the authentic zazen of the buddha-patriarchs! Such works were mistakenly collected by the compilers of Zen writings in the Sung period.[12] Zen practicers of later times should lay them aside without reading them.

[12] E.g., compilers of the previously mentioned *Keitoku-dentō roku* and *Katai-futō roku.*

From this we are led to conclude that works like the *Zazenshin* ("Exhortation to Zazen") of the Chinese priest Goun in the *Keitoku-dentō roku* collection of Zen records and miscellaneous writings do not transmit authentic zazen; they teach nothing but thought-cessation, mind-tranquillization and so forth. On the other hand, Dōgen holds up the *Zazenshin* of the Chinese Zen master Wanshi as a rare utterance that expresses the genuine truth of zazen. His praise of Wanshi and his work knows no bounds:

> It is the Buddha-patriarchs, the real zazen exhortation. A direct utterance of truth. It is a single radiant light illumining the Dharma-world inside and out. It is the buddha-patriarch of all buddha-patriarchs new and old. Buddhas before and buddhas after go forward exhorted by this exhortation. Patriarchs of today and patriarchs of old come to appear from this exhortation.

He goes on, raising up Wanshi's work still a notch higher,

> The "exhortation" of Wanshi's zazen exhortation is an actual manifesting of the great activity. It represents a way of life beyond the world of sound or form. It is your features at the time when your parents were not yet born. It is "You'd better not disparage the buddhas and patriarchs!" It is "You could still lose your person and life." It is a three-foot head and a two-inch neck. (*Shōbōgenzō zazenshin*)

Readers without some experience reading the sayings in the Zen records will be able to make very little out of such comments. Briefly, he is saying that Wanshi's *Zazen Exhortation* gives the clearest and most thoroughgoing explanation of that which makes buddha-patriarchs what they are, which is beyond any appearance in sound or form, word or object, and is prior even to the differentiation of heaven and earth, but which, nevertheless, does not lie outside the way of life in the world of appearances where eyes are horizontal and nose is vertical. This, Dōgen informs us, is zazen. Learning this zazen is Zen.

Zazen is therefore both the original realization and the wondrous practice: "As it is already realization in practice, realization is endless; as it is practice in realization, practice is beginningless...If we cast off the wond-

rous practice, original realization fills our hands; if we transcend original realization, wondrous practice permeates our body" (*Bendōwa*). This is the zazen of Wanshi's *Zazen Exhortation*. Dōgen describes it in the following way in *Bendōwa:*

> Because of this, when even just one person, at one time, sits in zazen, he becomes, imperceptively, one with each and all of the myriad things and permeates completely all time, so that within the limitless universe throughout past, future, and present, he is performing the eternal and ceaseless work of guiding beings to Enlightenment. It is, for each and every thing, one and the same undifferentiated practice and undifferentiated realization. Only this is not limited to the practice of sitting alone; the sound that issues from the striking of Emptiness is an endless and wondrous voice that resounds before and after the fall of the hammer. And this is not all the practice of zazen does. Each and every thing is, in its original aspect, provided original practice—it cannot be measured or comprehended.
>
> You must know that even if all the incalculable buddhas in the ten directions, as countless as are the sands of the Ganges, mustered all their might together and by means of buddha-wisdom attempted to measure and know the total merit of the zazen of a single person, yet they could not know the whole of its measure.

Dōgen always attempts to preach Zen from a twofold standpoint. He is, on the one hand, a great thinker, and on the other, a devout, passionate, solemn, practical, conscientious man of religion and student of Zen. As a thinker, he places zazen on the plane of the nonduality of practice and realization; but as a practical man of Zen he treats zazen as the art of intensely seeking and negotiating the Way. At the end of the fifth part of *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* we find the following passage:

> Although there may seem to be some understanding gained through examining koan and model cases, that is in fact something which causes you draw away from the Way of the buddha-patriarchs. If, without gaining or realizing anything at all, you pass your time sitting erect, that in itself is the patriarchs' Way [this is the reason

> for the name "Silent Illumination" Zen]. Those of the past, it is true, encouraged both the study of the model cases and sitting, but they principally encouraged the practice of sitting. And, although there are men in whom Enlightenment opened through the study of model cases, even there, the Enlightenment occurred on the merit of their sitting. Truly, the merit hinges on the sitting.[13]

Dōgen of course does not repudiate Enlightenment; he places a stronger emphasis on zazen. He even says, "among the basic essentials of the study of the Way zazen is first and foremost" (*Zuimonki*). Here practice clearly is preached apart from realization, and that also is a feature of his teaching. In Dōgen's case, realization is Enlightenment, satori, and practice is sitting, zazen, *taza*. And to see the presence of the identity of practice and realization and the nonduality of dhyāna and prajñā in this very "sitting erect" alone—not in vacantly "passing the time sitting erect"—is in effect a wedding of Dōgen's philosophic thought and Zen intuition. At the same time, however, there is in him a strong tendency to take the standpoint of nonduality as a peak and to see, from there, the myriad different ways leading out. Although we find, for example, in the passage in *Bendōwa*, "...make all the myriad dharmas exist in realization and practice the one total Reality on the way that leads out from that realization," a full expression of the core of truth implied in every act of negotiating the Way of intense seeking, in works like *Shōbōgenzō zazenshin* we see a *contemplation* of the Silent Illumination type, and the dynamic aspect of the reciprocal interrelation between one thing and another, the aspect of discrimination in non-discrimination, rather tends to be obscured. Though he does speak of "fish swimming along in utter ease," and "fish swimming like fish," what seems to have a higher level of resonance than this sense of activity, is the silent, contemplative aspect of "the water is clear to the very bottom," "the clarity of the water penetrates into the earth."[14] This feeling is especially pronounced in the parts preceding the last two sentences about fish and birds at the end of Wanshi's *Zazenshin*,

[13] Words in brackets are the author's.

[14] The four phrases quoted here are found in Dōgen's *SBGZ zazenshin:* the first and third are from Wanshi's *Zazenshin* (see trans. below), which Dōgen quotes; the third and fourth represent Dōgen's own paraphrase of Wanshi's lines.

where the compositional development seems, conceptually, to be giving attention to the aspect of identity (*soku*) alone.

It was the richness of the speculative element in Dōgen's Zen that gave rise to his voluminous ninety-five book *Shōbōgenzō*. A thorough historical and scientific study is needed to determine just what parts of it are authentic and what parts are later additions, but at any rate, it is a fact that the difficulties of *Shōbōgenzō* have often left his descendents in the Sōtō sect crying at the crossroads. When we read Dōgen's discourses in Chinese in the *Eihei Kōroku*, they do not seem much removed from Zen tradition, but when we read *Shōbōgenzō*, written in Japanese, we are confronted in the free mastery of the Japanese idiom, the rhetoric and the hermeneutic, with something extraordinary and altogether unprecedented that astounds us. In this, we can see the great difference from the tradition of Rinzai Zen in the direction of applying Zen practice. Now, for reference, here is the complete text of Wanshi's *Zazenshin* ("Zazen Exhortation"), followed by Dōgen's commentary on it, as found in *Shōbōgenzō zazenshin*. First, Wanshi's work.

> The dynamic moment of all buddhas, the momentous dynamic essence of all patriarchs, knows without touching things and illumines without confronting conditions. As it is knowing without touching things, its knowledge is naturally subtle. As it is illuminating without confronting conditions, its illumination is naturally wondrous. As this knowing is of itself subtle, there is not the slightest discriminative thought. As this illuminating is naturally wondrous, there is not the least indicative sign. If there is not the slightest discriminative thought, the knowing is beyond compare or comprehension. If there is not the least indicative sign, the illuminating is ungraspable yet perfectly known. Water is clear to the very bottom, fish swim along in utter ease. The sky is infinitely vast, birds are flying far, far off.

This, with its skillful interplay of parallels, is a finely wrought piece of Chinese literature. The substance, however, is in the part that reads "knows without touching things, illumines without confronting conditions." "Knowing" is absolute knowing, non-discriminative wisdom. "Illumining" is the way

things are before heaven and earth reveal "any indicative sign." "Things" refers to discrimination, "conditions" to differences or distinctions. This is the prajñā logic of *soku-hi*.[15] Dōgen expounds on the significance of this *Zazenshin* with a rhetoric that is typical of his unique style.

> "*Knows without touching things.*" "Knows" is not perceiving [discrimination]; perceiving is an inferior capability. It is not cognitive knowing; cognitive knowing is a mental function. Because of this, knowing does not "touch" events or things [is not objective knowing]; not-touching-things is, as such, knowing. It must not be considered as omniscience or universal knowing. It must not be limited as a personal, inborn knowing. This not-touching-things is "when the bright one appears, smite the bright one; when the dark one arrives, smite the dark one." It is "Sit off your mother-born hide."[16]
>
> "*Illumines without confronting conditions.*" This illuminating is not a reflective illumination. It is not spiritual illumination. "Not-confronting-conditions" itself is this very illumination. Not that illumination *becomes* conditions; for conditions are, as such, illumination. "Not-confronting" means "never being concealed throughout the whole world," "not presenting oneself even when the world is broken asunder." It is subtle and wondrous, and it is non-reciprocity/reciprocity.

Dōgen's outlook has always this characteristic of non-reciprocity/reciprocity (*ego-fuego*).[17] Non-reciprocity implies twoness, but having the two relate reciprocally, he makes this twoness not two. One is not treated apart from the other; the whole is said to be reciprocal and non-reciprocal. Or, taking advantage of the grammatical possibilities inherent in the Chinese, he simply leaves both in juxtaposition as "reciprocity/non-reciprocity." It is left to the understanding of each reader to furnish the logical connection between these two concepts. The fish swimming the deep waters like fish, the birds

[15] See footnote 15, p. 67.

[16] Words in brackets are the author's.

[17] *ego-fuego* 回互不回互.

soaring up to the heavens like birds—this is the "real and immediate manifestation of truth" (*genjō kōan*); this is *shikan taza* (just sitting); this is the "zazen personally transmitted between the buddhas and patriarchs."[18]

This zazen Dōgen speaks of as the personal transmission of buddhas and patriarchs—*shikan taza*—can be said to have features which resemble closely Bankei's Unborn Zen. And yet the odour of Silent Illumination that accompanies Dōgen's kind of sitting is not easily removed. This tendency, which has been described by Hakuin as "sitting still and silent like a withered tree and holding on to the death," is readily discernible in words such as these in Dōgen's *Eihei Kakun* ("Precepts of the Eihei Dōgen School"):[19]

> Zen master Daibai Hōjō...went into the highest peak of Plum Mountain. Living on pine tree flowers and wearing lotus leaves for clothing, he practiced zazen day and night for the rest of his life, nearly thirty years....Therefore, his is an excellent achievement in the Buddha Way. We can thus understand that zazen is the deportment that comes with Enlightenment. Enlightenment is just zazen, nothing else.

In contrast, Bankei's Unborn Zen is active. With the Unborn, he says, all is perfectly well taken care of. The Unborn is not found in intractable nonthinking. It is presenting itself in its unbared eloquence on all occasions in our daily life. It is something that makes do with "you yourself as you are today." Bankei's Zen is our everyday mind just as it is. In Dōgen's Zen a faint shadow of inactivity and stagnation is visible. He is a great thinker, the author of a magisterial ninety-five book collection of unique Zen writing. Bankei is like the common citizen, more down-to-earth, ordinary, less articulate. Yet he musters all the deep profundities of the buddhas and patriarchs which he fully embodies in himself and brings them together in the one word "Unborn," and he casts it before people, leaving it to each one to grasp what he can according to his own capability. Of course, with different

[18] These three expressions, *genjōkōan*, *shikan taza*, and *tanden no zazen*, are key terms in Dōgen's Zen.

[19] *Eihei Kakun* 永平家訓. A two-fascicle work compiled by the Tokugawa Sōtō priest Menzan Zuihō (1683–1769) from Dōgen's *Eihei Kōroku*, and comprised of various admonitions for Zen practicers.

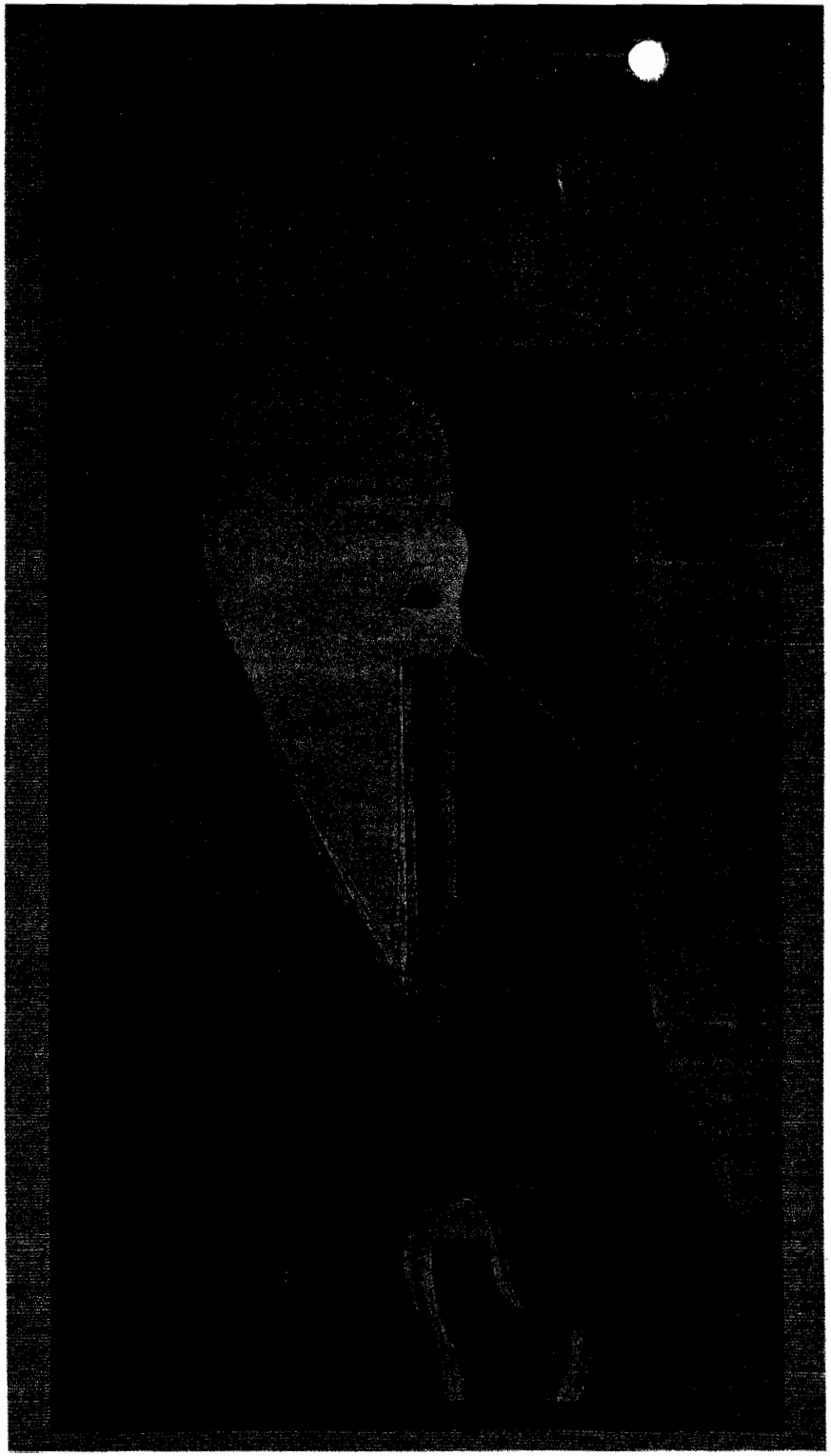
historical backgrounds, both Dōgen and Bankei have their own unmistakable singularities. Bankei seems to have a largely Japanese character. I mean, for instance, the way he shies away from theoretical argument, stands clear of all verbosity and goes to the bare essentials of the matter at hand, while at the same time somehow making sum and substance understandable. Whether or not this is a characteristic that should be unconditionally promoted in the future is of course a separate matter. Really, with Bankei the ultimate source of this knack of directly grasping the essence cannot be ascribed merely to his being Japanese. And that the Unborn is the product of his thought should of course go without saying.

Dōgen, as a thinker, is surely one of the great Japanese. Yet I think the reason for his position of reverence as the founder of the Sōtō sect and for the unabated continuance to this day of the religious line emanating from him, is due really to the specific character of Dōgen himself and not to the *Shōbōgenzō*. Unquestionably, *Shōbōgenzō* is also an important factor making up one side of his great personality. But is there not something even more important and more potent in Dōgen? Rather than the philosophy incorporated in *Shōbōgenzō*, is it not the spirit that moves that philosophy and at the same time supports the "sustained practice" (*gyōji*),[20] that has built the Sōtō sect? I feel as if Dōgen's true face is seen even more deeply in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* than it is in *Shōbōgenzō*. Of course, in the formation of a religious sect, an individual, his personality, sustained principles, and so forth are not in themselves enough. In the disciples that gather around the teacher and then succeed him, true talent and capacity must be present. The background of the age cannot be overlooked either.

(To be continued)

Translated by Norman Waddell

[20] *gyōji* 行持. One of the key terms in Dōgen's Zen. Title of a long two-part book of *Shōbōgenzō*.



DŌGEN KIGEN (1200–1253)

This portrait of Dōgen is the oldest still existing. Known as the "Moon-Viewing Portrait," it is said to be a copy made during the time of the Sōtō priest Giun (1253–1333) from an original probably dating from Dōgen's lifetime. The calligraphy above the painting, which in the original was presumably in Dōgen's own hand, has been attributed on stylistic grounds to Giun. The poem itself is found in Dōgen's *Sayings* in a rather altered form. As found here, it reads:

With a spirit pure and refreshed,
Amid the deepening autumn of the mountains,
I gaze up where the moon floats in her white
brilliance:
Even the One cannot approach this,
Even the Six cannot hold it.
There is complete freedom, with rice and
rice gruel in dearthless plenty,
Vibrant life, totally true from top to bottom—
In heaven, on earth, the clouds and the waters
flow free and unrestricted.

Written by Shamon Kigen (Dōgen), founder of the Eihei-ji, in the first year of Kenchō (1249), on the night of the full moon.

Reproduced courtesy of Hōkyōji temple.

Dōgen, Hakuin, Bankei
Three Types of Thought in Japanese Zen

Part II

D. T. Suzuki

When we isolate two objects of a comparison as absolutes abstracted from their contexts, we do not see things in a true light. Whoever or whatever it may be has emerged from within a certain historical milieu, and this also ought to be taken into our comparative considerations. We should not limit ourselves merely to general historical circumstances; in the case of a person, for example, we should consider the many areas he as an individual lived in actual contact with. When we come to compare the Zen of Dōgen and Bankei, therefore, instead of treating their teachings as isolated entities, we find an even deeper interest is obtained by examining the paths the two men travelled prior to the time they began to expound their own Zen teachings. I think that while a straight comparison of *shikan taza* ("just sitting") and the Unborn also deserves separate study of its own, we should beyond that look into the circumstances which led Dōgen to become the exponent of *shikan taza*, and those which brought Bankei to advocate his Unborn Zen. In that way, the truths embodied in each of their Zen teachings should come to be demonstrated, *taza* and the Unborn each on their own terms. I think then we will be able to appreciate the place each holds and the meaning each possesses with regard to Zen as a whole.

Let us first take a look at the process by which Dōgen was led to declare that "negotiating the Way in zazen" (*zazen-bendō*), that is, just sitting, is the sole way of Zen practice, and at how Bankei was brought to proclaim that in

★ The first part of this article appeared in Vol. IX, no. 1. All footnotes are the translator's.

all the many generations of enlightened Zen patriarchs, there was until him no one who had "given real proof of the Unborn."

As for the teaching Dōgen received from his master Ju-ching (Nyojō) during his two-year stay in China at the T'ien-t'ung monastery, it may be summed up in words he reiterates again and again in his writings: "Cross-legged sitting is the Dharma of old buddhas. Commitment to Zen (*sanzen*) is body and mind dropping off. Offering incense, making bows, nembutsu, penances and reading sutras are unneeded. It is only attained in just sitting." His practice under Ju-ching was pursued in accordance with this teaching.

Ju-ching told him that he should bring his mind into his left hand when he did zazen. This is a zazen technique based on the same psychological principles as the Contemplation on the Letter A and the Moon Contemplation found in the Shingon sect. In the Shingon practices, however, one places the object of meditation at some distance from oneself; in the meditation taught by Ju-ching, it is not apart from one's body. From the sources now available to us it is unclear just how, according to that technique, Dōgen was supposed to conceive the mind as it rested on the palm of the hand. Was it as some sort of crystalline sphere? Or was it just as something present there? We have no way of determining this for certain. But we may nonetheless assume that the meditation was a question of concentrating the mind on the palm of the hand.

After practicing this method of meditation for a period of time, Dōgen went and reported to Ju-ching: "I did as you taught me and both my hands disappeared. There is no place to put my mind." Ju-ching replied with the following advice: "In that case, from now on make your mind fill your entire body. Fill it so there isn't a single empty place anywhere."

"To fill the body with the mind"—how does one go about doing that? Here there can be no question of the mind as a crystalline sphere. Neither may we imagine it as having a vaporous or liquid quality. Hakuin describes in his late work *Yasenkanna* a method of meditation he learned from Hakuyū, a hermit he found living in the mountains northeast of Kyoto, in which one is to imagine a lump of butter on his head slowly melting down to cover his whole body.[1] With Dōgen, though, what was the real essence of what he called

[1] There is an English translation of *Yasenkanna* ("A Chat on a Boat in the Evening") by R.D.M. Shaw, in *The Embossed Tea Kettle*, Allen & Unwin 1963, pp. 25–48.

"mind"? All we can say is, whatever it was, by virtue of the sort of practice described above he was one day able to go to Ju-ching with the information that, "As a result of making my mind spread throughout my body as you directed me to, my body and mind have completely dropped away. It's like the sun spreading its light throughout the great sky, its round shape unseen." When he heard this, Ju-ching confirmed Dōgen's attainment: "You have gained today true emancipation, and have entered into great samadhi. Keep and preserve this truth. Do not lose it."

In a work entitled *Nihon tōjō rentō roku* ("Records of the Succession of the Lamp in the Japanese Sōtō School")[2] we are given a slightly different version:

> One night, when Ju-ching was going around the zazen hall, he saw a monk in zazen dropping off to sleep. He rebuked him: "Commitment to Zen calls for the falling off of body and mind. What good will it do you, just sleeping like that!" Dōgen who was sitting nearby and heard this, suddenly became one with Enlightenment.
>
> At daybreak he went to the abbot's quarters and offered incense. Ju-ching said, "Well, what about it?" Dōgen said, "Body and mind dropping off." Ju-ching said, "Body and mind dropping off, dropping off body and mind." Dōgen said, "This is merely a temporary bypath I've entered, master. Do not give me your seal of approval without due cause." Ju-ching said, "I do not approve you without due cause." Dōgen said, "What do you indicate by your not giving approval without due cause?" Ju-ching said, "Dropping off body and mind."

Despite the discrepancies between this and the version I related above, what is certain is that Dōgen experienced the state of "body and mind dropping off" (*shinjin datsuraku*). If we grant that his efforts to make his mind pervade his whole body was the method which induced this experience, an interesting notion then suggests itself. In contrast to the meditative practices of the Shingon sect which are objective and realistic, the one performed by

[2] 日本洞上聯燈録. 12 fas. A standard work of the Japanese Sōtō school, giving the lives of over 700 Sōtō priests beginning with Dōgen.

Dōgen is subjective and psychological. Although we do not know how Dōgen or Ju-ching actually conceived the mind in trying to make it permeate the body, it seems obvious they were regarding mind and body as two things. The result achieved through this meditation was the forgetting of body and mind, though perhaps to say "falling off" is preferable to "forgetting," inasmuch as forgetting implies something of a psychological nature, something conscious. Falling off suggests that something which has been covering over or attached to, or binding and burdening one externally as in a state of discrimination, now drops or falls away. In Dōgen's own recording of the event, he tells us that this falling off was complete and thorough-going. Yet we see no appearance of anything positive or affirmative. "Body and mind dropping off, dropping off body and mind" represents negation. He makes no mention of anything emerging beyond this negation. We may compare his utterance with the declaration of the T'ang Zen master Yang-shan, to the effect that "skin and flesh fall completely away, there is nothing but the one reality," where the "one reality" becomes manifest. In Dōgen's utterance, something is lacking. There is no way that "just sitting," if it ends in the experience of mind and body dropping off, can avoid being mere "Silent Illumination," taking that designation in a pejorative sense. Why is it he did not direct his effort affirmatively toward the "one reality"? Was it perhaps that the realization of this reality, which emerges spontaneously when one experiences psychologically liberation from the fetters of the dualistic consciousness of body and mind, was in his case rendered relatively weak by the intensity with which that liberation was experienced? A dualistic view of body and mind is fundamentally a production of the discriminating intellect. As long as one is unable to free himself from this intellect, he is destined to be trapped within such as dualistic consciousness, with freedom altogether beyond his grasp. Zen practice culminates in one direction in the liberation from this consciousness, or in what is the same thing, the experience of "body and mind falling off," and that is no doubt why Dōgen's writings repeat over and over that "commitment to Zen is body and mind falling off—just sitting." Judged from the standpoint of what Zen calls the Great Function and Great Activity (*daiki*, *daiyū*), however, there is in this the unavoidable feeling of some lack. Nonetheless, it must be said that Dōgen was faithful to the tradition of his master Ju-ching.

We are, Bankei says, the Unborn Buddha-mind just in the state in which we are born, living the kind of life described in Zen as "a single iron rod stretching straight out for ten thousand leagues," untrammelled by such things as "body and mind" or "birth and death." The mewling cry of the newborn babe fresh from its mother's womb is in fact a lion roar like that of the Buddha at his birth: "Heaven above, earth below, I alone am the honored one." Here there is no duality whatsoever. No discrimination is employed. We are then in a manifestation of body and mind dropping off. Although this of its nature does not lend itself to modern psychological analysis or objective observation, it is nevertheless something which we experience in our normal daily life. But as we grow older, what Bankei calls "self-partiality" gradually begins to emerge. We lose our way and employ our minds in "irrelevant tasks," becoming ever more deeply set in our growingly wayward habits. In the everyday world, this coming of age is sometimes referred to as "attaining the age of discretion." But this "discretion," or "discrimination," is a nasty customer. When it comes to full fruit in a self-centered thirsting for possession that holds sway over the whole surface of our consciousness, our way of life no longer possesses the basic and intrinsic nature that was ours when we first appeared in the world. The duplexity of body and mind is a presence which shadows us wherever we are. From it too emerges "birth and death." At all events, we must once experience and realize in ourselves "body and mind falling off, falling off body and mind." Dōgen's teaching of "just sitting" is, in that sense, one of great significance. But if the so-called discrimination of non-discrimination does not issue forth from this, then, to put it in Bankei's words, "the wonderful, enlightened activity of Unborn illuminating wisdom cannot come into play." Dōgen, however, was not always "just sitting." *Shōbōgenzō* and his other works consist to a large extent of his commentaries on a great variety of koan old and new. And he does not confine himself to comments on koan but goes on and even establishes a unique philosophy. Those who came after him either saw only this "just sitting" aspect at the expense of his philosophy and the difficult complexities of his koan interpretations, or else they saw only the latter, forgetting his insistence on sitting. Or again, ignoring neither of these, they attached little importance to the rigor of the life he led or to his scrupulous concern for the cultivation of his disciples. None of these aspects may be overlooked if we wish to see the real

Dōgen. Here, however, for the sake of comparing him with Bankei and his Unborn Zen, I am confining myself to examining the meaning zazen has in his teaching, and the source from which this meaning derives.

By observing how Bankei's Unborn Zen came into being we can learn the aspects in which it differs from Dōgen's view of zazen, and at the same time ascertain the proper angle from which to attempt a comparative assessment of the two. Bankei's point of departure is altogether different from Dōgen's. This is not solely to be blamed on the different ages in which the two men lived. The courses along which their religious practice progressed may be said to have had altogether opposite bearings as well. Dōgen was guided step by step in his practice by an experienced master. But in Bankei's case there was no one who might in a real sense of the word be called his master. As a youth Dōgen is said to have been visited by doubts as to the necessity, in light of the Buddhist teaching that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-nature intrinsically, for men to engage in practice and attain realization. Bankei's entrance into religious life occurred within a Confucian context. While reading the *Great Learning*, one of the basic texts of Confucianism, the twelve-year old boy came upon the sentence, "To clarify bright virtue is the way of man." He was curious to know what this bright virtue (*meitoku*, 明徳) could actually be. Confucianism does not teach explicitly that bright virtue is intrinsic in everyone. It just says that clarifying it is the proper path for man. In Buddhism, one of the fundamental tenets is that not only man but all beings are originally endowed with a Buddha-nature. Naturally, Bankei was not without some notion of the Buddhist teaching at this time, but the first step toward his study of Zen was prompted by his uncertainty over the meaning of the Confucian bright virtue. Being unable to understand it, he turned to Zen for an answer. Yet he could for all his searching find no Zen teacher able to help him or to give him the kind of guidance he needed. Perhaps, if he had had a master such as Ju-ching, he too might have come to experience "body and mind dropping off," and arrived thereby at an understanding of bright virtue. Since he did not have such an opportunity, he had no choice but to work through to a resolution on his own.

The power of his will was remarkable. Evidence of this is found even in some of the episodes from his early childhood which are included in his biographical

records.[3] So it was with an extraordinary tenacity of purpose that he threw himself into the struggle to find a way to dissolve his doubt. Some idea of his incredible perseverance in the face of the intense mental and physical suffering he went through during this period is gained from the reminiscences he frequently includes in the sermons and talks of his later life.[4] By any standards, his prosecution of this struggle was extraordinary. It may be regarded as having been instrumental in his forging out his Unborn Zen. Had he not undergone the difficult ordeal he did he might well have wound up in the traditional role of most ordinary Zen teachers, giving *teishō* (Zen lectures) on koan and Zen writings, perhaps emphasizing sitting too.

But as it was, he did not want others to have to repeat his trying experience, and from the compassionate desire to enable them somehow to attain what he had without the accompanying suffering, he brought forth his teaching of the Unborn. From the bottom of his heart he poured out his truth for the sake of younger men, to make them realize that in the Unborn was found something they could grasp without such great difficulty.

> All of you here are highly fortunate. I wasn't so lucky. When I was a young man there wasn't any wise teacher to be found. Or at least if there was I didn't have the luck to meet up with him. Being rather foolish, I suffered through tribulations unknown to others and

[3] Several of these are found in a work entitled *Shōgen kokushi itsuji jō*, 正眼國師逸事状 ("Anecdotes of Shōgen Kokushi"). One story relates how Bankei left school and returned home early to avoid attending the calligraphy class which he disliked. His elder brother, who was the head of the family, remonstrated with him repeatedly to no avail. To get home Bankei had to cross a river, so his brother instructed the ferryman not to take Bankei across if he should return early. But when Bankei was refused, he simply said, "The ground must continue under the water," strode right into the water and struggled his way along until he emerged, out of breath, at the opposite bank.

Then he decided to commit suicide to avoid further conflict with his brother. He swallowed a mouthful of poisonous spiders and shut himself up in a small Buddhist shrine waiting for death. When after a while he realized he was not going to die, he returned home. *Bankei Zenji Goroku*, ed. Suzuki Daisetz (first edition 1941, Iwanami bunko), pp. 245–6. See also *Living by Zen* (Sanseidō, 1949), pp. 136–7.

[4] In particular see "The Zen Sermons of Bankei Yōtaku," Part II, *Eastern Buddhist* VII, 2, pp. 130–3.

expended a great deal of futile effort. The experience of that engrained itself deeply in me. I can never forget that bitter lesson.

That's why I come here like this day after day, urging you to profit from my own painful performance. I want you to be able to attain the Dharma while you're seated comfortably on the *tatami* mats, without putting forth any needless effort. You should consider yourselves very fortunate. Where else can you find something like this?

I was a foolish young fellow. I want to tell you about how I wasted all that effort, but I'm afraid some of the young men among you will get it into their heads that they won't be able to achieve the Dharma unless they struggle as I did, and will start to do that. And that will be my fault. I really do wish to tell you about this, but if I do I want the young people to please listen very very carefully. You can attain the Dharma without the profitless struggle I put myself through. Keeping that in mind, then, listen to what I say. . . .

This being said, Bankei goes on at great length about the futile effort he expended in his youth. But the fact of the matter is that without this "useless effort" the discernment and character which were eventually his could not have come into existence. There is no reason to imagine that he himself was unaware of this. What is at work here, I think, is the Buddhist psychological principle of vicarious suffering.

In any case, hardship aside, with Bankei's Unborn Zen it is enough if one just comes in touch with its vital central point. Because Bankei was there actually in grasp of that point, he was, as he often declared, always ready to confirm whether others were or not. The Unborn is originally something each person receives from his mother at birth, so there is no question here of any abstract, *ex nihilo* impossibility. It was his mind of great compassion (*karuna*) instilling him with the desire to make this fact known to his fellow men that kept Bankei constantly occupied for over half a century travelling and spreading his teaching. He is never high-flown like Dōgen. He spent his life in contact with the ordinary common people, explaining to them that there is nothing at all difficult about Unborn Zen. Moreover, when judged from the standpoint of the authentic Dharma itself, there is something about

this which does indeed make us conscious of Bankei's personal hardships as "vain effort." He touches on this in the following passage from his sermons.

Imagine a group of travellers climbing through a stretch of high mountains devoid of water. They get thirsty, so one of them goes into a distant valley below in search of water. He does this with considerable difficulty. When he finally finds some and returns and gives his companions a drink, don't all those who drink without having exerted themselves quench their thirst just the same as the one who did? There isn't any way to quench the thirst of a person who is suspicious and doesn't drink the water.

Because I didn't meet a clear-eyed teacher I mistakenly undertook great austerities. My ultimately discovering my own mind-Buddha and making all of you know about your inborn mind-Buddha, is just like those people drinking water and quenching their thirst without going anywhere. For each of you to be able like this to use the Buddha-mind inherent in your own self just as it is and achieve a mind of blissful tranquillity without resorting to any illusory austerities—isn't that a Dharma teaching of inestimable worth!

From such a perspective it can be said that for all the formidable self-abandon with which he negotiated them, the extreme hardships Bankei incurred in his young manhood were not absolutely indispensable for his realization of the Unborn. His teaching was not always centered popularly in the Unborn, however. He was not urging people only to follow the Way of Easy Practice. Apparently, he took two different teaching postures, one when he was dealing with the common people and laymen in general, the other with the monks immediately under him. With his personal disciples, he showed not the slightest quarter, demanding without compromise the full opening of their Dharma eye. The reason for this is not hard to understand. Those who leave home to enter the priesthood are destined to become the great teachers of all beings in the world. They must command the respect of their fellows in the Dharma. This is a responsibility a half-baked priest would be unable to shoulder. Bankei set for himself an extremely high standard. His life throughout was the embodiment of ultimate truthfulness. That explains why he urged on his disciples. "I'm now teaching you about how you can

achieve your goal right while you're seated there without any expenditure of effort," he told them, "but you aren't capable of really trusting in it. Your commitment to the Dharma isn't thorough enough."

After he had broken through his Great Doubt, Bankei was possessed by the strong desire to find some means by which he could communicate the understanding he had thus gained. To convey this to others unimpaired, and to do it so that people would come to be convinced of its truth, called for a more than common amount of deliberation.

Personal experience can come to have universal application and function in society only through the agency of thought. Whenever it stops in personal experience alone, it comes to resemble Sakyamuni in his initial inclination tempting him to enter Nirvana immediately after he attained his Enlightenment. "Somehow," said Bankei, "I wanted to be able to reach to the capabilities of ordinary people with a few words, and that is how it came to me to teach you like this using the word 'Unborn.' " It took him long years of reflection and deliberation spent in isolated hermitages in various parts of the country to finally arrive at this teaching. In China, priests sometimes engage in this type of solitary practice even today. It might be that had Bankei been in the hands of a real teacher from the outset he would never have thought of evolving an original teaching of his own. But this is also what makes him different in kind from other Zen masters, those of his age and those who have appeared after him as well, and the reason it was Unborn Zen in particular that he enunciated.

I believe the difference between Unborn Zen and "*taza*" Zen is accounted for in large measure by the contrasting ways in which the two men started out on their course of Zen practice. Bankei, however, has an originality which sets him apart from Dōgen and Hakuin alike. This is something which is linked to the teaching method he adopted once he had decided to take up the banner of the Unborn for his lifelong missionary activity. He did not use or rely on Buddhist sutras or Zen writings; he rejected the use of Chinese, the language used traditionally in Japanese Zen. That was a basic inclination of his teaching activity that developed early during the beginning years of his practice and also on through the time of entrance into his Enlightenment. It may be said to have its origins in the influences of the historical period in which he lived. More precisely, it was his intent to go against the prevailing

current of his time. It would also appear that much is attributable to the character of the practice he subjected himself to. He says:

> I never quote the words of the Buddhas or Patriarchs when I teach. I need only to examine directly the personal affairs of people themselves. That's enough, so I don't have to quote others. I don't say anything about either the "Buddha Dharma" or the "Zen Dharma." I have no need to. Inasmuch as my examining directly you and your concerns here and now takes care of everything perfectly well and clears everything up for you, I don't have to bother preaching the "Buddha Dharma" and "Zen Dharma."

One of his disciples adds:

> The master was always critical of the many evil customs which were prevalent among teachers and students in the Zen temples of his day. Because of this, his own dealings with students were for the most part direct and to the point. He did not allow indiscriminate use of the staff or katz, diversions in literature, deliberations using words and phrases, or unnecessary displays of one's own insight. He himself never brought up words and phrases from sutras or Zen texts. If anyone would come to him for teaching, he just talked to him intimately using the common language of every day, without regard to whether he was possessed of special intelligence or not.

When Zen was first being introduced into Japan there was little the Japanese could do but follow the Zen and other Buddhist writings in the Chinese language. Even in Dōgen's writings in Japanese such as *Shōbōgenzō*, which were composed during this same period, stiff Chinese phrases and quotations in Chinese, many of considerable length, are interspersed freely throughout the Japanese text. The situation was much like that in modern day Japan, where scholars introduce Western words into their speech and writings and create new words translated from European sources which no one can understand unless he knows the original words. It was in the former case and is also in the latter something unavoidable. New thought was entering Japan from

foreign lands and there was often no way for it to be expressed fully using the given resources of the language. When it is developed from within that already present, and produced by the Japanese mind, the thought may be expressed somehow with the existing language. But confronted with thought intruding in in a discontinuous, piecemeal manner, the available language cannot answer the need. Thus the reliance of priests of the earlier period of Japanese Zen on Chinese language literature—sutras, Zen records, and the like—must be regarded as a choiceless necessity. We should remember also that someone like Dōgen was part of an intellectual vanguard, and that those who were the recipients of his teaching would also have belonged in such a classification. It was quite natural therefore that the medium used for thought communication should have been Chinese. Even Pure Land teachers like his contemporaries Hōnen and Shinran, who are regarded as exponents of the so-called Way of Easy Practice which aims at making Buddhism easily understandable to all people, when they came to write down their own thought, did so in Chinese, though they may have used Japanese in their letters and occasional writings.

Bankei, though he lived in an entirely different world from the Kamakura period of Dōgen, is on this question of language a "nationalist." Some four hundred years had passed since Dōgen's time and it might well be imagined that Zen thought had in the meantime become fully Japanese, with all its exotic tinges removed. But that, in fact, was not the case. Only fifty years after Bankei's death in 1693, transcripts of his talks and sermons and other related writings, all in Japanese, were taken by his disciples and translated into Chinese. A kind of superstition regarding the Chinese language seems to have still persisted among the Japanese educated classes. But Bankei himself was remarkably thoroughgoing in his adoption of Japanese.

> One day, Bankei said, "When I was a young man I also tried practicing question-answer type deliberations with other monks. I worked hard at it. In spite of that, I think it's best for Japanese to use the language they use everyday when they inquire about the Way. That is most suited to them. Japanese aren't very good at Chinese. When questions and answers are carried on in Chinese they can't express themselves fully just as they'd like. There's nothing at all they can't ask if they use the same language they use in daily life. So

> instead of straining around trying to ask things in Chinese, it would be better for them to ask them freely in a familiar language they use comfortably, without any special struggle. Now, if it were a case where we couldn't achieve the Way unless we used Chinese, I would of course tell you to go ahead and use it. But the fact is that we can ask about the Way and achieve it with ordinary Japanese without any trouble at all. In view of that, it's wrong for us to ask questions in a language that we have difficulty using.
>
> I want all of you to keep this in mind, and whatever you want to ask about, I don't care what it is, feel no hesitation. Ask it just the way you want to in your own words, and clear it up. Since you can work things out this way, what could be more valuable than the Japanese language you use every day?

The distinguishing feature of Bankei's pedagogy is his utter rejection of anything apart from himself in any way—spatially or temporally—and his endeavor to "clear things up for people" through comments and criticisms directed to the person right before him at a given time. Here we see the reason for his refusal to place any reliance on sutras or words from the Zen records, and for his rejection of Chinese. Zen has no part whatsoever in talking about what is past, or with abstract, conceptual comments on things removed from oneself. Since the matter of "you yourself today" is in fact Unborn Zen itself, and since we always say we are cold when it is cold and hot when it is hot and our everyday language serves perfectly well for this, Unborn Zen has really no need for a voluminous ninety-five fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*. Neither does it need the hundreds of old koan and cases of the ancients that Dōgen deals with at great length in that work. Basically, what sets Zen apart from the other schools of Buddhism is its lack of interest in theory and its stress upon the importance of personal experience. To tell the truth, that is how all religions ought to be, and it cannot be said that this emphasis is found only in Zen. That is why in religious literature it is customary for the writer to give elucidations of his belief using the vocabulary and language in common use among the people who make up his audience. The Zen records of China are permeated throughout with the colloquial language of the age which produced them. It can hardly be otherwise. Zen is something a person

experiences with the utmost concreteness, and the medium he uses to give expression to it must also be the one which is closest and most personal to him.

I said above that Bankei went against the current of his age, but that is not quite true. It would be more accurate to say he transcended such things. He tried to communicate the substance of his own experiential understanding to others directly as it really was, with the most immediate sense of personal intimacy. This indeed is where Unborn Zen differs from Dōgen Zen (which makes zazen paramount) and from Hakuin's koan Zen.

It is time to say a few words about Hakuin and his *Kanna* ("seeing into the koan") Zen. First, let us note the manner of his entrance into Enlightenment. It is different from that of either Dōgen or Bankei, and in this difference we can discern the special character of his Zen.

Bankei from the beginning of his practice seems to have had no dealings with koan. While he apparently had contact with Zen priests (he was initiated by a Rinzai priest named Umpo from his native Ako), there is nothing in his biographical or other records to suggest he was ever given koan to work on. We do not know what teaching methods Umpo used with his disciples. All we know from Bankei's own accounts is that he embarked on a rigorous life of religious practice because he couldn't understand bright virtue. In the *Angōkyokki*, a compilation of sayings and episodes from Bankei's life by his disciple Sandō Chijō,[5] we are told that it was Umpo who gave him confirmation in his Enlightenment. But elsewhere, Bankei clearly stresses the importance of his meeting with the Zen master Tao-chê (Japanese, Dōsha), a Chinese priest who had come to Japan and was currently residing in Nagasaki. In later life, though, Bankei could not even endorse Tao-chê as his teacher.[6] It seems likely that at no time in his career did Bankei have any active involvement with koan practice. He regarded the method in koan

[5] 行業曲記. One of several compilations consisting of fragments of dialogues and biographical episodes from Bankei's life that were made by his disciples. The exchange between Bankei and Umpo in question is found in *Bankei Zenji Goroku*, pp. 207–9.

[6] Cf. "Bankei's Zen Sermons," Part II, p. 130. "At that time, Dōsha was the only master who could have given me confirmation of my understanding in such short order. Now, as I reflect with some deliberation I can see that even Dōsha was not fully satisfactory. If he were only alive now, I could make him into a fine teacher. Unfortunately, he died too soon. It is regrettable."

practice of raising a doubt as an artificial, unspontaneous maneuver pressed upon the practicer from outside. Therefore, when the time came to deal with students as a teacher himself, he cut down everything that rose to the encounter with the single, self-fashioned blade of his Unborn Zen.

Hakuin was involved with koan from the start of his practice. He wrestled with Jōshū's "Mu" koan. He also had his share of religious anguish, but he seems not to have had, as Bankei did, something that might be called a philosophical Great Doubt. Probably the reason for Bankei's natural opposition to the artificiality of koan Zen is located here. However that may be, Hakuin's writings tell how he finally resolved to concentrate once and for all on a course of assiduous Zen practice through reading a passage in the *Zenkan-sakushin*,[7] and the occasion of his breakthrough into Enlightenment occurred as he was working on the "Mu" koan, so there was an inevitability surrounding the fact that his subsequent course was oriented toward *Kanna* Zen. Afterwards, when Shōjū Rōjin (1642–1712) prodded him on by badgering him with the koan "Nansen's Passing," it undoubtedly served to strengthen this disposition to koan practice even further.[8]

The custom today in Rinzai Zen—actually Hakuin Zen—which divides training into certain stages, with each stage allotted its own particular koan, is not the total creation of Hakuin alone, but was brought to its present form over a period of many years by his followers.

How did Dōgen go about the actual forging of the monks under him? We

[7] Chin., *Ch'an-kuan ts'ê-chin*, 禪關策進. A collection of anecdotes of the ancient Chinese masters and short passages from a variety of Buddhist writings, compiled by the Ming Zen master Yun-ch'i Chu-hung 雲棲袾宏 (Unsei Shukō). According to the biography of Hakuin by his disciple Tōrei, Hakuin, at a time of uncertainty in his religious life, was visiting a temple where the priest was airing his library of Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist texts. He closed his eyes and picked a book at random from among them. His hand chanced to fall on the *Zenkan-sakushin* and he opened it to the story of how the Chinese Zen priest Tz'u-ming (Jimin) had kept himself awake during long periods of zazen by sticking himself in the thigh with a gimlet. This is said to have instilled Hakuin with the resolve to continue his own practice in Zen until he too had attained Enlightenment.

[8] Hakuin himself describes these events in several works. For an English translation of the account in the *Orategama*, see *The Zen Master Hakuin*, trans. Philip Yampolsky (Columbia Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 117–120.

may be fairly sure that he had them practice his "*taza*" Zen; may we not at the same time, however, suppose that he also made considerable use of koan work, that is, the method of having his disciples introspect the "public cases" from the Zen records? Is not his *Shōbōgenzō*, a work in which he uses both Japanese and Chinese, something which was written to serve as a kind of touchstone for testing their understanding? There is the fact that for hundreds of years after his death *Shōbōgenzō* was treated by the authorities in the Sōtō sect as a secret book to be used only in the *sanzen* room. It was inaccessible to the public, of course, but was not easily seen even by ranking Sōtō priests. Study of *Shōbōgenzō* did not begin until the Tokugawa period, at about the same time that Bankei rose to eminence as a Zen master. I will just make the observation, without going into any further detail, that when it came to the scrutiny of old koan, Dōgen yielded little to the *Kanna* Zen specialists in the Rinzai school. And while granting it was not like the testing koan work which takes place today in the *sanzen* rooms of the Hakuin school, we can believe that even in the centuries after his death Dōgen's followers were not totally negligent in investigating the "*exempla* of the ancients."

Hakuin Zen is a koan Zen through and through. This means it has in it the dangers and the benefits inherent in such an artificial system. Dōgen's *taza* Zen, with no stages, has a want of definiteness with regard to practice; it is from the beginning beyond all grasp. One may in a sense say of koan that they are beyond grasp as well. But when you work on a koan it is right there before you, and all your effort can be concentrated on it. With *taza* Zen, for all its talk of "body and mind dropping off," to know where and how to begin is no easy matter. For its part, koan Zen provides steps for the practicer, and if he can somehow get a foothold on the first step he is brought along from there without much difficulty. This is clearly a form of artifice. But one cannot deny its convenience. And this is the real reason why masters of the past devised the method of giving koan to their students. It was, as I have been saying, an expression of the deepest compassion—what Zen calls "grandmotherly kindness." But along with that kindness goes an accordingly great danger. The danger lies in the tendency to formalization. It may happen that a petty thief crowing like a cock at dawn will get past the barrier by deceiving the gatekeeper into opening the gates. As a matter of fact, in the koan system such fellows do get past, or we should say rather that they are

passed through. The danger that the goods will be sold cheap is something intrinsic to the system. In any construct devised by man a pattern always evolves. When the pattern becomes fixed, the quick of life cannot move within it. When the realm of true reality which is freed of samsaric suffering is treated in such a way that it comes to resemble the fixed gestures and patterned moves learned in a fencing class, Zen ceases to be Zen. At times patterns work well and are useful. And they do have the virtue of universal currency. But by that alone no living thing is produced. I suppose, though, there are some who even find enjoyment in such a counterfeit, lifeless thing, much as they would divert themselves with games of chess or mahjong.

> These days people occupy themselves with the records of the ancients. They deliberate meaninglessly over them. Intent on chasing after others' words, feeding on others' dregs, they cannot break free of others' orbits. They make their livelihood in a dark ghost-haunted cave, gauging and speculating in the region of discriminatory illusion. It is never like that here with me. Here, you must open wide your own eye at once and stand absolutely alone and independent, overspreading all heaven and earth. The few words and sayings left behind by those of the past were uttered in response to particular occasions, according to changing conditions—a way of stopping a child's crying by showing him a fist with nothing in it. How could there be a Dharma to be preached at all in the school of the patriarchs! If you chase after phrases and cling to words, you're no different than a man who loses his sword over the side of a ship and marks the spot on the rail. The sword is already far away.

In Zen it is often said that real *satori* comes only with real practice. When an existential doubt has welled up spontaneously from within and drives one to intense concentration, as it did in Bankei's case, he will as a natural result try to resolve it by any means he can devise. So when this total, all-out quest arrives at its denouement, genuine *satori* should result. On the other hand, left to a framework which depends on the use of koan, what will be created is a doubt which can only be termed artificial and not the kind of demand that rises from deep within. Bankei's criticism is based on his own experience.

> People nowadays say they must have a doubt because those in the past did. So they cultivate one. That's an imitation of a doubt, not a real one. So the day never comes when they arrive at a real Enlightenment.

After all has been said of Hakuin Zen, it must be admitted that here lies its pitfall. Hakuin Zen evolved after Bankei had already left the scene, but even during his lifetime it seems to have been the fashion in Rinzai Zen for priests to make a kind of game of learning koan and imagining this charade, so-called "lip-Zen," was Zen itself. Here are two passages from Bankei's sayings relevant to this.

> A monk said, "Suppose right now the 'Triple Invalid' appeared before you, master, how would you deal with him?" Bankei said. "You seem to think very highly of triple invalids [those who are blind, deaf, and dumb at the same time], the way you scrutinize them, all eager to actually become one. Right at this instant you are not a triple invalid, so instead of trying to be one—which would be very difficult in any case—please, get to the bottom of your own self! That's the first order of business for you who do not have those three incapacities. To go around talking about other things will get you absolutely nowhere. Listen now to what I tell you."

The "Triple Invalid" refers to the 88th case in the *Pi-yen lu* (*Hekiganroku*), "Hsüan-sha's Triple Invalid." Here are Hsüan-sha's (Gensha) words:

> All masters speak about their office of ministering for the sake of living beings. How would you deal with a triple invalid if he should appear suddenly before you here? You may hold up a mallet or a hossu, but a man suffering from blindness cannot see you. You may give play to all the verbal resources at your command, but a man suffering from deafness cannot hear you. You may let him tell his understanding, but that is impossible for a man who is mute. How then will you deal with him? If you cannot deal with him, the Buddha Dharma will be pronounced wanting in spiritual efficacy.

This type of thing is of course hypothetical, yet Zen masters of the past devised various means for testing religious seekers. Or we can say that this was their way of guiding them. In any case, all are but "skillful means" growing out of their compassionate concern for their students. Regarding one's real peace of mind, though, it is immaterial whether one understands such koan or not. Regarding one's understanding of the true purport of Zen, too, we can state flatly that this "Triple Invalid" is idle hairsplitting. Since Bankei is thoroughly aware of just where the questioning priest stands spiritually, he says, "The first order of business for you is to get to the bottom of your own self!"—an indeed salutary instruction.

Here now is the second passage.

> The main figure of worship at the Ryūmon-ji (Bankei's temple) was an image of Kannon. It was made by Bankei himself. Fully aware of this, while Bankei was giving a talk a monk from Ōshū who was standing insolently against a pillar asked, "Is that figure a new Buddha or an old one?" Bankei said, "What does it look like to you?" "A new Buddha," replied the monk. "If it looks to you like a new Buddha," said Bankei, "then that's that. What is there to ask? Since you don't know yet that the Unborn is the Buddha-mind, you ask useless questions like that thinking it's Zen. Instead of bothering everyone here with such silly questions, sit down and keep your mouth shut, and listen to what I say."

This monk also makes a rather foolish display of himself. It is said that in the Tokugawa period Zen monks would often engage in such mockeries of Zen dialogues the moment they encountered one another on pilgrimage. It seems from this similar diversions were already taking place in Bankei's day. The annoyance he displays may be said to be fully warranted. The koan system clearly has in it abuses beyond the limits of toleration if it can happen that the question whose resolution should be prosecuted as a matter of life and death is merely something directed toward a koan which has been assigned by someone else, instead of something which emerges from within oneself. It is not for this Zen teachers instituted the use of old model cases and koan. They represent the skillful means of Zen masters

rooted in Great Compassion. They desired thereby to bring a student face to face with the wonder of nondiscriminatory *prajñā* wisdom. In this respect Bankei can be said to have attempted a return to the Zen of the early T'ang dynasty. He himself said, "I preach neither the Buddha Dharma nor the Zen Dharma"—that tells the real truth of the matter.

> Zen masters of modern times generally use "old tools" when they deal with pupils, apparently thinking they cannot make the matter clear without them. They do not show it by thrusting it straight forward without using the tools. Those fellows make it so that tools become indispensable and one cannot do without them. They are the blind sons of Zen.
>
> Also, they tell their students that they won't be able to get anywhere unless they raise a "great ball of doubt" and then break through it, and that they need first of all to raise this ball of doubt, setting everything else aside until they do. Instead of teaching them to live by their unborn Buddha-mind, they saddle students who haven't any doubt with one, thereby making them transform their Buddha-mind into a ball of doubt. A terrible mistake.

The real face of Bankei Zen emerges in the words "[they] transform their Buddha-mind into a ball of doubt." This might be thought to imply that Bankei stresses *sono mama* Zen from a position of relativity or duality. But if that were so, he would not speak of the "Unborn." In this feature of Unbornness his unique standpoint appears to us. It also goes to explain what makes Unborn Zen unlike Dōgen's *shikan taza.*

If we wish to understand Bankei's Zen in even greater depth, I think the shortest way will be to investigate on the one hand Zen before and after the appearance of koan Zen, and on the other hand, to inquire into the relation which must exist between Silent Illumination Zen and realization or Enlightenment. There is, in fact, a close mutual relationship between these. If we can get a good grasp of the former, the latter will become understandable, and with that, I personally feel, an overall picture of Zen will be achieved.

(Concluded)

Translated by Norman Waddell

The Concept of Grace in Paul, Shinran, and Luther

FRITZ BURI

DESPITE the manifest differences between Paul, Shinran, and Luther, and their differences from us today, these three religious thinkers have something in common which, over and beyond time, unites them not only with each other but also with us.[1]

First, they are all at home in religious world-views, which are, to be sure, very different, but which intend to show men the way to salvation from the meaninglessness of existence. That is, generally speaking, the essential intent of religious world-views. Paul's spiritual home is Judaism or Jewish Christianity; Shinran's is Buddhism in the form of the teaching of the Pure Land of

[1] A German version of this article has been published in *Theologische Zeitschrift,* Jahrgang 31, 1975. The opportunity to do this study was provided through the publication of two important works: D. T. Suzuki's English translation of Shinran's chief work, *The Kyōgyō-shinshō,* and his *Collected Writings on Shin Buddhism* which were published by the Eastern Buddhist Society in Kyoto in 1973 on the occasion of the celebration of Shinran's 800th birthday. I used parts of the subject matter of my present treatise for lectures given in the winter semester of 1974–75. The present treatise, which is a summary of those lectures, was presented in August, 1975, at the International Congress for the History of Religions in Lancaster, England. As far as I know, this material has not been dealt with before in any other publications. In their comparative studies, G. Mensching and H. Butschkus referred only to Shinran and Luther, and their approach is different from mine. Albert Schweitzer, whose interpretation of Paul I have generally followed, does not make such comparisons at all even in his unpublished manuscripts on the history of religions. Catholic and Protestant theologians, as far as they are concerned with Buddhism, are generally interested in Zen, although, regardless of philosophy, they should have very good reason for confronting Shinran.