

曹源一滴水

October 1993 - Number 24

From Shodo Harada Roshi, Head Abbot, Sogenji Temple

Rohatsu Roku - 6th Night

As an attendant had just brought him a cup of tea, Master Hakuin said, "When Myoan Yosai Zenji was in China, once he became sick from the heat. An old Chinese man gave him some green tea, and he soon recovered. Remembering this event with gratitude, he brought some green tea seeds back from China to Japan and planted them in Uji, near Kyoto. Myoan Yosai Zenji was the first person to introduce tea to our nation."

The essence of tea is bitterness. This bitterness is good for the heart. When the heart is strong, the rest of the inner organs will be healthy. An old sage said, "Tea wakes us up and helps our practice. Students of Zen should drink it every day. It also helps to make the mind clear and cheerful when our practice is painful."

Hard practice, like the bitterness of tea, is not actually bitter or hard. It is the way to straighten our minds and make them more lucid. All the ancient Zen masters experienced wonderful self realization after hard work and sincere practice. You must do zazen with all your might.

Recently a priest named Bunmei came to see me. He said that he had been preparing for six years to come here to receive my guidance. When I first met him I said to him, "Even if you are of the highest rank of the priesthood and are allowed to wear a purple robe, if your Dharma eye is not open yet, I will have to regard you as a newcomer. You will have to get rid of the pride of being a purple-robed priest. Then you will be ready to do zazen."

Bunmei answered, "I consider myself just an ordinary monk, the same as the others. In order that I may understand the true meaning of the Tathagata, will you please guide me with your compassion? I welcome your stick and am not afraid, even to die."

I therefore permitted him to come to dokusan. During the one hundred day training period, he did zazen dauntlessly. He received innumerable keisaku from me. As a result, he was able to understand the real meaning of the Tathagata--that is the real meaning of his life--and he became my Dharma successor. This is a good example of how a brave attitude, sincere practice and total commitment make our practice successful. Face Mu! Be one with it!

On the sixth night of the Rohatsu sesshin, Hakuin Zenji had just climbed up the high seat and the attendant was bringing some tea. It was when Hakuin Zenji saw this tea that this probably occurred to him. In Japan, one of the founders of the Rinzai sect was Eisai Zenji; he was the founder of Kenninji in Kyoto. Later he received the name of Senko Soshi from the Emperor. This name means "One Thousand Lights." Eisai Zenji studied at Hiei-san and then crossed the ocean to China. This was at the time of the Sung Dynasty in China. While he was in China Eisai Zenji fell ill. It was partly because he was in an unfamiliar land, but he fell sick from the high temperature of the summer heat. Today we would call it "heat sickness."

There was an old monk at the dojo where he was staying in China. The elder monk gave him some herbal tea to drink and it caused his phlegmatic condition to clear up. His fever was broken and he was cured. Eisai Zenji asked the old monk to give him some of the medicine. He asked him what the medicine was called. "This is called 'Tea'."

"This is a very wonderful medicine; would you please give me some seeds of this 'tea'?"

He received some tea seeds. When he returned to Japan he offered them to the Emperor as a souvenir of his visit to China. When people were sent to China from Japan to study they had to go by ship. They went under the sponsorship of the courts; if it wasn't someone whom the government recognized they weren't allowed to go. Therefore they were all exchange students sent by Japan. Only those whom the Japanese government selected were able to go and when they returned from China to Japan they had to report the results of their studies. Eisai Zenji had to report to the Emperor when he returned to Japan. The tea seeds were offered to the Emperor, along with the sutras and a report of their studies. The Emperor sent the seeds to Uji Prefecture to be planted--an area south of Kyoto. This was an area with an abundant amount of mist. In this place the Emperor had the tea planted.

He also sent some to Myoe Shonin. He was a man of the same era as Eisai Zenji who often called on the Emperor. The Emperor set aside a portion of the tea seeds and gave them to him. Myoe Shonin then planted them in Togano, another area like Uji, where there was a lot of mist. An area surrounded by mountains. In Togano they also planted the seeds. In Uji the tea bushes grew luxuriously and in Togano also, the tea bushes flourished. From these seeds Japanese tea drinking came forth. Because of this, Senko, or "Thousand Lights" Eisai Zenji and Myoe Shonin are said to be the founders of tea in Japan. Hakuin Zenji was remembering this.

Tea was treasured and enjoyed so much by the Japanese from that time on because of its bitterness, because of the tannic acid it contains, which is so

good for the body. This bitterness stimulates the organs, the heart works well, and it helps cure many diseases. The heart, the kidneys, the liver, the gall bladder, and the pancreas--these are the five major organs, and of all of these the heart is the most important, the center of the body. When this organ becomes imbalanced, the whole body is affected. The heart has to be kept working vibrantly. Stimulating the heart is one of the major functions of tea, and this is why people are encouraged to drink tea. This is how Hakuin Zenji introduces us to this subject.

Myoe Shonin's words are brought in next: "Tea is good for helping us stay awake." Myoe Shonin tells us, "Tea wakes us up." He says when we drink tea it takes away our sleepiness. Especially those who are doing training, it's good to drink tea. When doing zazen, reading sutras, it's very easy to become sleepy. To get rid of that sleepiness people are always making various creative and inventive efforts. If we take this further, it develops the heart and its bitterness is also excellent in the metaphorical sense as well--good for making us strong at heart. A strong heart is very important for true practice. We may easily be able to show a good-looking training form, but there will be no resolution from that. Training has to be done enthusiastically from within ourselves, pursued strictly and led by our own motivation, or else there will be no actual results. At this point he said, "Hard practice like the bitterness of tea, is not actually bitter or hard. It is the way to straighten our minds and make them more lucid." Here he has given us his own experience. Training is not just something which is good because we continue to do it for a long time.

It works because we put everything we have into it, we put our whole life on the line for it, and then manifest it in our whole body and mind. If it's not done like this it won't come to its true resolution.

"Hard practice like the bitterness of tea, is not actually bitter or hard. It is the way to straighten our minds and make them more lucid." When these efforts are energetically applied, anyone who makes them like this will realize a clear state of mind, a transparent place of radiant clarity. This is not only from Hakuin's experience but from all those who have done training as well. Even during a one week sesshin, our whole life during that week is put into that sesshin. Everything we are has to be put into the sesshin or it won't work. It can't be done halfway. All of the things we usually do, we put away. We put everything into clarifying our true Original Mind, and from within our life, in order to clarify that Mind, we concentrate internally--leaving behind every other smallest bit of distraction or extraneous thought. We focus within, and put everything into that focusing. The samadhi of Mu, the samadhi of sussokan, the samadhi of the koan--this world of samadhi--in order to bring this forth we have to put all the 10,000 hair cells and 65,000 smallest joints

into the raising of the great doubt of experiencing Mu, as it's written in the introduction to the MUMONKAN. "If we continue through all the twenty-four hours of the day, concentrating as if our Mu is a burning red hot iron ball which we can neither swallow nor spit out," we cut through the root of our awareness, our consciousness, our extraneous thinking. For doing this we have to really take it to the final point or complete realization is impossible.

If we try to do it with dualism and self-conscious awareness and control, it won't get anywhere. We will never get anywhere near the true complete cutting of the deepest root in that way. When the root is truly cut through totally, then no matter who it is that does it, they will come out at the same lucid place. From the very bottom of our heart we will be able to experience that refreshing, clear state of mind.

Here Hakuin Zenji once more brings in his own experience. Here I'd like to add a note to the text and tell you a little about Hakuin Zenji. This will help you to understand.

Hakuin Zenji was born at the foot of Japan's very famous mountain Mt. Fuji. Born in 1685, he was a child who learned fast, and he was very perceptive. At the age of 11 he was listening to the sermon of a priest and for the first time heard all about the horrors of hell. He was shaking with fright. Hearing these terrible things about hell turned out to be a very important event in his life. When he looked at his life--everyday activity--he was sure that he was bound for hell. This was certain without doubt. He killed animals. He started fights. He told lies. He deceived his parents. And when he looked over his life, at what he did, he was absolutely sure he would end up in hell. He would fall into hell without doubt. In this young boy's mind there was great fear and insecurity. One night he was taking a bath with his mother. While it is called a bath, it is made by making a wood fire, over which a tub like a huge pot was placed. This is all there was to it, and when the fire was burning high, the tub would reverberate with the sound. Tall flames would come up and lick the sides of the huge tub. It was really as if the stories about hell had come true and become actual. Hakuin Zenji was so frightened, he grabbed hold of his mother and started sobbing. His mother was astonished and asked him, "What is so scary? What is frightening you like that?" "Hell is scary! I don't want to go to hell! Mother, isn't there a way that I can stay out of hell?"

Hakuin held on to his mother and could not let go. His mother was confused and told him that she would tell him the next day. Saying this she temporarily fooled him. His mother did not run away, however; nor did she deceive him. The next day he grabbed her hand and asked, "Please, please tell me how I can not fall into hell!" His mother was caught. She said to him, "You have been born on the day of Tenjin-san, the god Tenjin. You have a strong

karmic connection with Tenjin-san--you should pray to him." At that moment she successfully escaped the questioning.

But the boy believed her completely, and went devotedly into the religion that believed in Tenjin-san. Everyday he prayed to Tenjin-san, reading the Kannon sutra. Everyday, everyday, he renewed and deepened his faith and firm vow.

A traveling play came to town, and its story was about a priest of olden times. He had been a strong and deeply practicing priest. He had put a burning red hot kettle on top of his head and wasn't hurt at all--this was the subject of the play. When Hakuin saw this play, he felt that if he only had absolute faith like that--then he could win against the terrors of hell. Thinking like this, he made a deep vow and practiced devotedly to Tenjin-san for a week. He chanted the Kannon sutra over and over and over again. On the day that his promised week had finished he put his whole faith into it and put the red hot burning fire tongs on his thigh, but his thigh burned. A bright red burn was left by the burning hot fire tongs. "That won't do! I haven't done enough practice yet! I have to really do it!" He decided he would have to get ordained. It had to be ordination or it wouldn't do it. "I have to become a monk and do serious training." He decided to be ordained at age fifteen. He expressed his deep vow to his parents, received his parents' permission and was ordained by priest Tanden at the Shoinji temple in the town of Hara. At this time his childhood name Iwajiro was changed to Ekaku. At the age of nineteen, Ekaku Zenji read about the Zen master Ganto. He was a famous Zen master who lived during the Tang Dynasty. He had his head cut off by thieves, and ended his life with a great shout. How was it possible and what did it mean that a very deeply enlightened master should have his head chopped off? Hakuin was astonished. That deep fear of hell had sent him into training. He had become ordained to become liberated from that great fear, and now he heard that a great master who had already completed his training was slain by thieves! How could this be? "Isn't it the power of Buddhism to turn these evil thieves into good and faithful people? Isn't this the work of compassion? He was no different from an ordinary person in society! For what do we do training then?"

That super strong priest he had seen in the traveling play had put the burning hot kettle over himself--and he hadn't been burned--that must have been a big lie! If, as it said in the records, when someone chants the Kannon sutra wholeheartedly, even a sword piercing through him will break into pieces--that must also be bragging and falsehood! He had of course burned himself with the hot tongs--that was a matter of course! In the Buddhadharma there are no miracles! There is nothing one can believe in! For what reason

would anyone practice and study the Dharma? He was completely disillusioned. In direct proportion to his great vow, he was tremendously disappointed. Finally, he went far away from his passionate training. He hit the very bottom of despair about his training for several months. He quit all his zazen. He lost his passionate thirst for training. Soon he became a student of culture and wrote poems and stories and became absorbed in reading--his mind was insecure, hopeless and tired, everyday in deep despair. What had that all been about? For what had he been training? How should he live now? He could not answer himself. At the temple where he was living, on one sunny day, they were airing the books in the sunshine. He once more decided firmly, as he faced all the books airing there, to ask all the Buddhas of the Three Worlds and all the gods what path he should follow--which is best for me to follow?--please give me a sign. Ekaku Zenji closed his eyes and made a prayer, a deep request. From all of the books in the room he took one book in his hands and opened it. It was the ZENKAN SAKUSHIN, the book which people of training read for encouragement and support. That place which he happened to open to was the part on Master Jimyo. In the olden days when Jimyo Zenji entered training, he and his friends of training, Taigu and Roya, sought a teacher and a dojo. They went to the place of the famous Funyo Zenshi Zenji and knocked on this gate. Funyo Zenji was a very, very strict teacher; no matter who came to him, he would hit them. He didn't let anybody in. Even if you came to the entrance, he would hit you.

Even if you endured that and stayed firm and were allowed to stay over at his temple for one night, if a single gap in your attention was noticed, you would get a bucket of water poured over you, even in the middle of winter --and on top of that he'd then throw you out. This is how he taught. Priest Jimyo, all by himself, sat motionless, and if the slightest bit of sleepiness crept in he'd pierce his leg with an awl. "People of the old days endured great difficulties which, without fail, then became bright radiance. To live in this world, unknown by anyone, not having it matter if you had lived or not lived--there is no meaning in that."

People of old struggled and made great effort. They did this because they knew, with certainty, that this would bring great radiance. There would always be a result equal to the intensity of their efforts. If there was no meaning to the struggle, no one would bother to endure it. It will always bring illumination without fail! The more we apply ourselves intensely, the brighter the light which comes from the efforts. To be born into this world and not be at all useful for the world in which we have lived--to not be at all useful in society, to die and then have no one even caring or knowing what we did when

we were alive--then we have to ask: "For what was I born? Was there no meaning to it?"

Finally, Funyo Zenji allows him in to train and he becomes Funyo Zenji's Dharma heir. Jimyo Zenji's way of training was known to everyone. He became a true successor of the lineage of Bodhidharma.

Hakuin Zenji says if it is difficult for someone to believe in the Dharma, they should ask themselves why people have gone through so much in the past. We must not be mistaken and enter into some side path. Hakuin Ekaku Zenji once more brought life to his vow and once more moved straightforwardly ahead. That path from which he had begun to stray, he realigned it. He corrected his way of life and returned to the straight path. "People who endure great struggle and difficulties will, without fail, encounter great light." Hakuin said this to himself over and over again; he raised his great strength and bravery once more and moved forward on his path of practice. Hakuin Zenji was 25 years old at this time. From that time on, Hakuin Zenji trained with extreme energy in one straight line to his final goal. At one temple, he wrote, "If we practice like the never-ceasing waters of the strong flowing rivers of the mountains, never stopping, putting our whole self into this, we cannot fail to realize kensho."

When he stayed at one temple in the mountains, he could hear the sound of a river in the distance surging forth all night; the valley's river water flowed forth without stopping all night long. He thought to himself, "If my samadhi, the samadhi of Mu, the samadhi of sushokan, was as constant and non-stop as this river's water, then without fail I would realize kensho." He left this poem for us as an expression of his one uninterrupted, undistracted, straight line of practice. In the spring of his twenty-fourth year, in Nigata in the Hokuriku area, he was at the temple Eiganji in Hakata. At that time his state of mind was already very deep. That place where there is no difference between inside and outside. Only one solid layer. He had entered the world of Mu. Standing without knowing he was standing, sitting without knowing he was sitting, speaking without even knowing he was speaking. One solid layer of the samadhi of Mu. His state of mind was clear and transparent. He was in that state of mind without a single gap, or even a place where a gap could be inserted. However, he had still not broken through. He began a week of sesshin, sitting in the cemetery. He decided that if he didn't realize enlightenment in the week he didn't want to stay alive. Making this deep resolution he entered the deep, great, diamond samadhi. On the morning of the final day, he heard the morning bell coming through the early glow of the day; it was the sound of the temple bell--"gooong." At the very moment when he heard the bell he jumped up, "That ringing! That ringing! That ringing!

That's me that's ringing!" He had broken through that solid layer of the samadhi of Mu--his whole body had entered that in which there had been not a single speck, not a single motion of anything whatsoever.

It had been broken through by the sound of the bell. The great joy of that moment he expressed jubilantly, "Ganto didn't die! Master Ganto is still alive and well! Right here, right now he's still alive! He's vibrantly alive, right this very moment! He's radiantly, brilliantly alive!" Hakuin from within himself spilled forth his experience of great wonder.

Next Hakuin tells us, the reason we don't deepen in our training is because we don't strive enough, don't make our effort with enough intensity. "You all know about Priest Bunmei of Zuiganji who recently came to me to ask if he could train here. He's the kind of priest of a big temple where to leave that temple for even a little while is a big thing. In six years he worked diligently to make the time to come. He used everything possible to allow himself to come here to train. He came here and asked if he could do sanzen with me. I told him, 'You are a priest, a great, high abbot, the head of a big temple. However, if you haven't yet opened your eye of enlightenment, to me you're still a novice monk. I'll hit and beat you. If even that's okay with you, then you can do sanzen here. If you have even a smidgen of a sense that you are the head of a big temple and you wonder even for an instant why the head of a great temple can be hit--if that even occurs to you, then there's no meaning at all to your doing sanzen.'"

Having been told this, Priest Bunmei said, "Relative to the Dharma I am a total beginner, a real novice. No matter how strict the training, no matter how fearsome the teaching, I am not afraid. I have resolved to put my life on the line for the purpose of totally and thoroughly fulfilling my goal. Please, out of your great compassion and kindness, please hit me as much as and whenever it is necessary." Because he was this committed, he was allowed to do sanzen. During three months he devoted every moment to his training. At night, without ever sleeping, he sat without relaxing in his efforts, never missing a sanzen. Whenever he entered sanzen Hakuin would hit him. "You haven't pierced through your mozo yet! You haven't died completely!" Because of all of this assistance, by the end of the three months' time he was able to realize a very deep experience. He could taste the flavor of the very razor's edge of life, of the Dharma's razor's edge. It came to the time of parting and he made the bows of a student to his master. "From now onward as well, please allow me to continue as your disciple." This is what he said to Hakuin when he came to say his departing words. "That great determined training--followed in one straight line, until it reached the final place." The true secret of training is in the doing of this. That one true, straightforward effort of

great bravery. Putting everything we have into it, putting our whole body and mind into it--the jumping wholeheartedly into it until we realize the final point. The reason we can't realize it is because we haven't put everything we have *totally* into it yet. Everyone should review their own actions sincerely in the matter. With these words Hakuin ends this exhortation. Truly, just as Daruma Daishi has taught us:

To cut all connections with the outside,
To let go of all concerns within.

"To cut all connections with the outside world," all of these things in society to which we are always relating--we let go of every last one of them. We don't allow in anything. What we see, hear, feel or experience, we don't give attention to any of it. "Letting go of all concerns within," means to have not a single speck of any thought within our mind; our mind becomes like a straight, firm wall. We are then truly on the Path.

Just like the state of mind where from the top of our head to the bottom of our rear, our whole body taut, we become one energy, full and awake. If this state of mind is completely realized, then all delusion, all attachment, all of it will melt away in this state of mind. It will all melt and fade away. This is not about enduring and guarding this state of mind. If just once we cut through to the root, if we experience that even once--and this doesn't mean not to see or not to hear--it means that even without thinking about it, we don't have any extraneous thoughts.

If we're still thinking to ourselves, "I mustn't think about this. I mustn't give rise to that thought," and gritting our teeth into doing that, it still won't work. We have to let go of *all* of it. Our mind becomes absolutely clear, holding onto nothing extra whatsoever, and nothing needs to be added on. Things must be done to their most final point, experiencing that place where not a trace is left, then from within ourselves a liberated, free and vibrantly awake, unattached state of mind will come forth, without fail. If we think about "Isn't it this way, or shouldn't it be that way," it won't do it either. We can't pull it along limply forever. Once we have completely and totally realized it, there will be a clear tasting of the flavor of pure life energy. At that time we can experience the birth of that new life energy which naturally surges forth.

It's not about holding on to something, whining and whimpering, but on the spot in each moment to let it go and forget it--allowing each moment's new world to flow in--and to receive that new world openly. To realize that liberated state of mind is Zen. Hakuin Zenji tells us completely, thoroughly, of the all-out efforts used in realizing and experiencing this state of mind.

In September 1993, the Roshi made his yearly trip to Seattle, Washington; Cloud Mountain; Portland, Oregon; and Commonwealth, in Bolinas, California. In May of 1994 he will do a sesshin in Switzerland which anyone who is interested is welcome to attend. Please contact Sogenji:

Maruyama 1069
 Okayama 703
 JAPAN
 tel: 086-277-8226
 fax: 086-276-7161

With the assistance of several of our Sangha members from various countries we are presently constructing a guest house from wood thinned from the forest on Sogenji's mountain. We currently have a foundation laid and beams and posts cut and milled. Its location is just above Nakabayashi-san's house, where the old Bishamon location used to be. It will be a place for guests to stay, with a place for Sangha members to study and sit, and a small tea ceremony room.

SESSHIN SCHEDULE

December 1993

4 - 10 Rohatsu
 15-21 Osesshin
 24-28 Kosesshin

April

8 - 12 Kosesshin
 16 - 22 Osesshin
 26 - 30 Kosesshin

January 1994

7 - 11 Kosesshin
 16 - 22 Osesshin
 26 - 30 Kosesshin

May

5 - 11 Kosesshin
 15 - 21 Osesshin
 25 - 29 Kosesshin

February

4 - 8 Kosesshin
 12 - 16 Kosesshin
 21 - 27 Osesshin

June

4 - 10 Kosesshin
 15 - 21 Osesshin
 25 - 29 Kosesshin

March

8 - 14 Osesshin
 18 - 24 Kosesshin