

曹源一滴水

November 1995 - Number 32

From Shodo Harada Roshi, Head Abbot, Sogenji Temple

Hakuin Zenji's Song of Zazen

All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas.

*As with water and ice, there is no ice without water;
apart from sentient beings, there are no Buddhas.*

Not knowing how close the truth is, we seek it far away--what a pity!

We are like one who in the midst of water cries out desperately in thirst.

We are like the son of a rich man who wandered away among the poor.

*The reason we transmigrate through the Six Realms is because we are lost in the
darkness of ignorance. Going further and further astray in the darkness, how can we
ever be free from birth-and-death?*

As for the Mahayana practice of zazen, there are no words to praise it fully.

*The Six Paramitas, such as giving, maintaining the precepts, and various other good
deeds like invoking the Buddha's name, repentance, and spiritual training,
all finally return to the practice of zazen. Even those who have sat zazen only once
will see all karma erased. Nowhere will they find evil paths,
and the Pure Land will not be far away.*

*If we listen even once with open heart to this truth, then praise it and gladly embrace it,
how much more so then, if on reflecting within ourselves we directly realize Self-nature,
giving proof to the truth that Self-nature is no-nature. We will have gone far beyond
idle speculation. The gate of the oneness of cause and effect is thereby opened,
and not-two, not-three, straight ahead runs the Way.*

*Realizing the form of no-form as form, whether going or returning we cannot be
any place else.*

*Realizing the thought of no-thought as thought, whether singing or dancing,
we are the voice of the Dharma.*

How vast and wide the unobstructed sky of samadhi!

How bright and clear the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom!

*At this moment what more need we seek? As the eternal tranquility of Truth reveals
itself to us, this very place is the Land of Lotuses and this very body is
the body of the Buddha*

We will now read together the *Song of Zazen* of Hakuin Zenji. For the November issues of the newsletter we have spent the last seven years reading the *Rohatsu Exhortations* of this same Hakuin Zenji. We have finally completed these. Beginning with this issue we will be working together on the *Song of Zazen*. For those of us who make zazen our major practice, these words of Hakuin in the *Song of Zazen* are of great importance and usefulness. They are an excellent guide for the understanding of the actual essence of doing zazen.

With regard to today's Japanese Rinzai Zen we could probably even call it Hakuin Zen without error. This is how significant he is. Today the Zen masters who transmit the Dharma in the Rinzai line are all descendants of Hakuin Zenji. The Zen which flowed from the Kamakura and Motomachi Eras down to today--all of this then joined in Hakuin Zen to become Japanese Zen.

Hakuin Zenji has been very criticized in various writings. Nevertheless, his influence even continues in this modern era. This influence is huge. From when it is not sure, but one ancient put it like this, "There are two things of Suruga that are great beyond anything else: the great mountain of Fuji and Hakuin of Hara." In this way the people thought of Hakuin, even when he was alive--famous and well loved and respected.

The area which used to be called Suruga is the present-day Shizuoka where Mt. Fuji is located. People of Shizuoka are very proud of the this Japanese holy mountain in their prefecture. Spiritually that mountain is exemplified in Hakuin of Hara. Hara is where Shoinji--Hakuin's temple--was located. They were both deeply appreciated and respected already at that time.

For Hakuin Zenji's dates, put simply according to their era, we have the records of Torei Zenji, one of the top disciples of Hakuin. At age 42 the era was divided, so there are records prior to Hakuin's forty-second year and records following his forty-second year. Before his forty-second year he raised his great vow and began with a determined intensity. This first set of records covered his life up until the time of the completion of his formal training. From age 42 until he died at the age of 84, during which time he made many karmic connections in the world and was able to reach many people with his teachings--this functioning of his life is written about in these latter records.

Before we begin the main text of the *Song of Zazen* we will first talk about the life of Hakuin Zenji, which we didn't do with the last text. I would like to introduce you to his life history.

Hakuin Zenji was born in 1685 in Shizuoka Prefecture in Numazu at Hara, at the base of Mt. Fuji. At the age of four he was already expressing a great brilliance and genius. At the age seven he heard a Dharma talk on the Lotus Sutra at a temple and memorized the whole sutra by heart. At the age of eleven he was taken by his mother to a talk at a temple where he heard about the terrifying things of Hell for the first time and was deeply frightened by this. He was shaking and trembling. Perhaps more than most children he was very sensitive and nervous.

He wept and grabbed at his mother's knees, weeping and crying "Hell is too scary! Hell is so scary! Even when I have you nearby, Hell is so scary! If I fall into hell it will be terrible! Please make it so that I don't have to fall into Hell!" He was a child very affected by things.

At the age of twelve he heard a monk say, "Even if in fire, it won't burn, even if in water, it won't drown." Hearing this he made a vow and gathered his mind to realize this state of mind. He imitated the monk with a fire tong that was heated to red hot. With this he touched his calf and tried to see if it worked. This is how pure he was.

Someone said that Hakuin was a person who lived while keeping an eye on Hell. In his younger days he carried this fear of hell for many years, and as a result of that perhaps he was burning to be ordained. Moving beyond his parents' refusal to let him be ordained, he became a monk at fifteen with their permission. He was ordained at Shoinji in Hara by Priest Tanrei. This priest ordained and supported him and he was given the name Egaku. When

Hakuin was seventeen this priest died, and at the age of nineteen he began actual training. However, one day when reading the *Kosoden*, the records of the old Chinese Masters, he found the record of Ganto telling about how he was killed by bandits--that he'd had his head cut off and died. Hakuin was stopped short. He was sure that a person who did such training should have enough merit that he could change evil people to good people--that there should be enough Dharma power in a man like Ganto to accomplish something like that. While thinking that he thought that if that was the result of all that training it all must have no meaning at all. Just as huge as his hope and expectation was, so was his disappointment and discouragement. "Everything was the bragging left by the old masters--nothing more--fantastic stories with nothing real in them." Thinking this his training lost its verve. He had no motivation and he suffered. He stopped sitting and studying for many months. He wrote poems and read books, doing whatever he felt like.

Still, he wasn't settled. His Mind wasn't yet resolved. One day when they were airing the old books in the sunshine to get rid of any old insects and to protect against bugs destroying the books, he made a vow. He put his future in the hands of the gods and vowed that whatever they said he would follow it. "Please tell me in which direction I should go! Please, I promise that I will follow whatever you tell me to do!" On that very same day when all of the books were out to air, Hakuin Zenji, from the bottom of his heart, made a deep commitment in his mind. Spreading books all over the room he picked up one. The one he coincidentally picked up was by Jimyo Insui.

In the old days this splendid teacher Jimyo taught about when he went to Funyo Zenji Zensho's place. Funyo Zenji was a very, very strict and outlandish teacher who wouldn't let anyone come there to train. If you even fell the slightest bit asleep, he would tell you that you had to leave, and beat you. With this you couldn't sit sleepily! So as he did his full and taut zazen, Jimyo held up an awl and placed it just above his leg. He worked hard and creatively on his practice. People of old always said, "Great effort will, without exception, bring great result." "To be alive in this world without any reason or result--to live and yet be known by no one--for what are we born into this world if this is how it is?" He kept himself going with these thoughts, making extreme efforts with intensity, and he was finally allowed to enter Funyo Zenji's dojo. This Funyo Zenji's Dharma was then transmitted to him in later years--that same Funyo Zenji of whom all people and beings were frightened. He became that roshi's successor.

Hakuin, reading this, thought that if you didn't believe deeply enough in the Buddhadharm--even if you think about why these people did what they did for training, it must be that you haven't done enough yet--and he corrected his thinking. Over and over again he would say to himself, "Great efforts bring great Realization." Again and again and again he raised his courage and once more began training.

At the age of twenty something happened that made him choose about his future--deciding how the rest of his life would be at this time. This begins the second period in his life. Hakuin Zenji now went east and west looking for teachers and places to train. At a temple in the Banshu area he wrote this poem:

The mountains' flowing waters give forth the Buddha's sermon endlessly
If you would practice in the same way that these rivers flow,
Before long you will without fail realize *kensho*. "

He did zazen at the temple which was located at the top of a mountain. From the foot of the mountain he could hear the sound of the water's flow in the river below him. All night long the river continued flowing ceaselessly. Listening to this sound he knew that if we would make the firm commitment and deep vow to practice on our Path's way, if we practice in this same way, if our minds would never stop but would go on in this way without a pause--then our Realization was guaranteed without fail. We would awaken to our True Mind without mistake. He then trained with no books or brushes or calligraphies or pictures, no inkstone--none of it at all. He pursued his path like fire and burned totally.

In the spring of his twenty-fourth year he was at Eiganji Temple in Takata, in the Echigo area. At this time his training was well deepened and his state of mind ripened to the place of no inside nor outside--to where it could not be known what was himself and what was the Mu. He was truly still and clear--serene. His was the state of mind of a mute person who has seen a dream and cannot express it, sitting without knowing you are sitting and standing without knowing you are standing, speaking and not knowing you are speaking--the world like one smooth layer of Muji, closed into this one layer completely. This was that moment just before one's own purified Mind extends throughout the heavens and earth--that very state of mind. "People of old said that great efforts will without fail produce great light!" He vowed deeply in his mind and began a sesshin sitting in the Daimyo's graveyard. He began his sitting determined not to stand up until he was enlightened. He continued intensely with this determination and entered a great samadhi.

It was the dawn of the last day of sesshin. From far away in the dim light of the dawn he heard the sound of the bell. At that moment Egaku Zenji jumped up, crying out, "That's me ringing! That is me ringing!" His still and clear mind had become pierced through by the bell's sound and that and every moment was full of deep wonder. There was a huge joy with every movement of the hand and foot. "Ganto has never died! He is here--right here!- Alive, just like this!"

In just this way he had struggled so much and endured so much, and finally those efforts were at that moment coming to fruition. He realized that which he'd hoped to realize for so long. He figured that no one had had such a deep experience in about 300 years. Egaku Joza was truly full of that realization and in deep wonder and impressed so completely that he would get very excited. And sometimes he would look at the people suffering everywhere and be moved to tears that the Buddhadharma had come to this earth. He was truly deeply moved. The priest of Eiganji, Shotetsu, couldn't do anything with him. Hakuin had fallen seriously into a severe case of conceited self-importance.

This Hakuin Zenji, if he had stopped there he never would be famous to the whole world as he is today. That great functioning that he expressed in his life would never have been possible. The person who was responsible for making this happen was Shoju Ronin, Dokyo Etan Zenji, and the person who encouraged him to see and speak with this Dokyo Etan Zenji was Doyu Sokaku Joza. He was questioned immediately, "How did you see Muji?"

"Muji! There is no place to lay a hand on it."

The teacher took Hakuin's nose in his hand immediately and twisted it, saying, "You say it can't be touched but this is how much it can be touched!" He got furious at him. Hakuin Zenji saw his own conceit and it left immediately in front of Shoju Ronin. He became like a baby with him. Next, Shoju Ronin asked him how he had seen the koan of "Where did Nansen go when he died?" "How about it: where did he go?" He was checked over and over again by Dokyo Etan.

Shoju Ronin was truly unusual and unique. No matter what Egaku Joza brought for the answer he wouldn't accept it at all. One time Egaku Joza grabbed him and hit him and almost threw him off the porch--this was how strong and energetic he was. "You stupid priest! Stuck in the dark hole and blind besides!" Hakuin had experienced that Mind of the Great Death but from there he was unable to function; he was stuck and fixed. That reborn consciousness and way of being--he was deeply troubled. Whenever he encountered Shoju Ronin he would call him "that Egaku Joza who is stuck in a deep dark hole." It is written that Shoju Ronin would hit him and pull him around.

Hakuin Zenji stayed with Shoju Ronin and trained there for eight months. One day Hakuin Zenji was doing *takuhatsu* in the town of Iiyama. He was still working on the koan about where Nansen had gone when he died. He was standing in front of a house, steeped deeply in samadhi when an old lady came out of the house where he was standing and told him to go over there to the other side of the street.

When she told him this, because he was in deep samadhi, he didn't hear her voice. The old lady became very, very angry. "If you don't get over there across the street I will hit you with my broom!"

She began hitting him and he suddenly came to and spontaneously he encountered his true Life Source-that actual Truth was touched. Until now koans that he couldn't have touched before, he could pass them one right after the next. He saw them all in one flash. He was so full of joy, he returned to see Shoju Ronin and when he saw how Hakuin looked, he confirmed his experience completely.

Hakuin Zenji was only eight months with Shoju Ronin at this time

Shoju Ronin confirmed Hakuin's experience, but he did not confirm Hakuin's understanding. Hakuin Zenji left Shoju Ronin's place and while nursing his former teacher he continued to deepen his practice. While giving that nursing care he further developed. But his body was so tired and exhausted from the great efforts that he became sick with tuberculosis and so troubled in mind that he often became depressed for days on end. At that time he went to Kyoto to visit the hermit Hakyu and learned the hermit's way of practicing "Naikan."

After the age of twenty-eight he continued to deepen his way by going on pilgrimage to meet the great masters in Fukui, Aichi, Mino. Here and there he looked for the masters and did his inventive practice, steeped in samadhi everywhere he was. At thirty-two he finally returned to his own temple of Shoinji. For ten years he worked in society a little bit at a time, and to give life to his experiences he gave Dharma talks .

He then reached the age of forty-two. At this time he once again took in hand the Lotus Sutra which he hadn't looked at for such a long, long time. As he read the part called "The Chapter of Examples" he coincidentally heard the sound of a weakly crying cricket under the porch and was suddenly awakened to the deepest truth of the Lotus Sutra. At the age of sixteen he had thrown down this sutra, declaring it simple-minded, and now after twenty-seven years he had finally been able to realize its truth clearly.

In his own diary he wrote how without even thinking about it he gave a great cry of joy and astonishment. He must have been deeply moved. Until then he thought it was a light work without much meaning and he had taught people in this way. He realized that he must apologize from the roots of his being for having done this. At this time, for the first time, he also understood what a great state of Mind Shoju Ronin lived in every single day in his daily life. Shakyamuni Sesson hadn't deceived people after all! This he also understood--that in Buddhism there is only one straight Path: this fundamental Truth of the Mahayana he now understood clearly. He was now able to live the Buddhadharma freely. As the Buddha had put it, "Everywhere in these Three Worlds is my home and all of its beings are my children." This great compassion of the Buddha was further and further absorbed deeply into his being. Knowing without doubt how all beings are from the origin Buddhas and how all of these Buddhas have come into this world to open all beings' Eye of Wisdom--to open and enlighten this Eye of Wisdom. In all of its subtlety, he saw how there is nothing but this in the Buddhadharma. The exemplary teachings in the Lotus Sutra were to illustrate this and teach how to do it, like a mother trying to somehow get her child to be able to understand. Teaching how to understand the Mind of humans--to chew the food to feed the child--this kind of compassionate Mind and Wisdom is expressed here. He realized this great kindness he hadn't understood until now--that great determination of the Buddha to liberate all beings, to not leave out a single one. This immensity of all-embracing, compassionate Mind was what he could then also feel, and the overflowing tears couldn't be held back in his deep and intense amazement.

At the beginning from when he had heard about being in fire without being burned and being in water without being drowned, looking for dreamy miracles he had become ordained. But now, that which he had finally realized, that great, all-embracing compassion of the Buddha--- now it was known how this was his very own life energy as well.

In the Lotus Sutra it is written, "I do not have any feeling against you, nor deride you. You are one who will become a buddha." In this way, to old people and young people, to children and rich people and poor people--to prostrate and to realize this vow. Jofukyu Bodhisattva encountered every single person. Shakyamuni Sesson's Mind is expressed in this teaching clearly. For those of us who do zazen, it is in the realizing of this that we are able to be rid of our own heaviness. To awaken to this, we let go of the layers and realize the Essence. This is what our zazen teaches us. For all beings to be liberated it is required that all beings are awakened to this very fact.

From that time on Hakuin Zenji truly worked with sharp intensity. In his fifties and sixties, never resting and regretting the passing of a single wasted moment, he spoke wherever he was invited and gave Dharma talks, did calligraphy and painted pictures, leaving simple texts and dynamically working in every direction.

At the age of 79 he was a little sick yet never rested. At the age of 84, in the year 1768, he said at New Year's, "I am 84 this year--an old monk--but I have never had such a wonderful New Year's. This is all thanks to Torei. It is so wonderful and I give great thanks!"

That year--in November of 1768--he was sick and was visited by the local doctor. The doctor took his pulse. The doctor said that from his pulse he could tell that there was nothing to be concerned with. Hakuin said to the doctor, "If you cannot even recognize that a man is going to be dead in three days you must really be a blind quack!"

On the tenth of December, his disciple Suio was called and Hakuin told him how he wanted things to be done from then on. On the morning of the eleventh of December, quietly laying on his side, he gave a great growling sound and died. Six years later he was given the posthumous name of Jinki Zumyo Zenji and following that he was also given the name Shoju Kokushi.

Now we will read Hakuin Zenji's *Song of Zazen*.

First Hakuin Zenji says, "*All sentient beings are essentially Buddhas.*"

Religion is the seeking of the Eternal, the Perfect and the Pure, the Absolute Good. If we put it another way we can say that it is the seeking for God or Buddha. Is this God or Buddha inside or outside of us? We leave that question for now since there are different points of view and ways of looking at this depending on the fundamental view of various religions and practices. All religions seek this eternal Pure and Perfect. There is no difference in this. This is why religion is necessary--because we are not perfect and pure and because our life is not eternal. It is because we are incomplete. So we seek something complete in God or Buddha to complete this incomplete, imperfect small self.

In the records of Buddhism we read that the Buddha at his time of birth walked seven and one-half steps. He walked around and pointed his right hand to the sky and his left hand to the earth and said, "In all the heavens and on earth only One is holy."

This is only a legend perhaps, but this legend holds the flavor of Buddhism in a kernel. The Buddha stood and immediately walked seven and one-half steps: What this is saying is that our own Mind is our place of refuge. True humans' freedom and rights are being expressed here. "In all the heavens and on earth only One is holy." There is nothing that can be permitted that will take away and deprive us of our true freedom and actual rights. If we return to our Original Mind we will always realize that place of absolute dignity and profound meaning. In each being there is this True Mind. In Buddhism in its basic teaching we have this point made clearly: that humans are free and dignified. That Wisdom and deep Compassion are encompassed in each of us and this absolute freedom cannot be denied us. If we think of it this way we can see how the birth of the Buddha and that legend have deep meaning for the teaching of Buddhism.

The Buddha was the prince of the country of Kabira. He was versed in all of the philosophies

and schools of learning that were taught in India at that time. In the martial arts he had thrown off all rivals that would come. He had a summer palace a winter palace--and autumn and spring palaces as well. He was this rich and full of blessings and without anything missing in his pleasant life. So then why did he leave his beautiful wife and adorable child? His deeply respected father he had to leave, against his father's wishes. He had to leave all of his possessions and political power and even his countrymen. So why did he go into that mountain anyway?

Material and animal pleasures no longer had any meaning for him. He saw how meaningless they are and saw that no matter how we try to satisfy them they are impossible to fully and completely satisfy. He had understood this melancholy state of mind thoroughly. He went to the mountain to know that true joy, that true eternal life and meaning. He had to know these things and to seek them and to find a resolution for that unfulfilled path that he had been walking until that time. Someone had to do it or it would never be realized and resolved. This was the greatest problem of all beings that he was taking on and making a determined commitment to resolve.

For six years he continued his ascetic training. At the age of 35 on the 8th of December near the bank of Nirenzen River, near Bodhgaya, he glanced at the morning star and was suddenly and deeply awakened to the Supreme Truth.

At that time, without even thinking of it he said, "How wondrous! How wondrous! All beings, without exception, are endowed with this same bright, Clear Mind to which I have just been awakened!" That is to say that there is in the deep Mind of each person a clear, Pure and Eternal state. This true place is what he was enlightened to. It is not external to us. This is the first declaration, since the beginning of humans, of the true liberation of all beings.

Hakuin Zenji was telling of this great Wisdom--this compassionate Wisdom that we all have from the origin. This resolution is expressed in his first line, "All sentient beings are from the origin Budhas." Beginning with this conclusion he commences his Song.

Putting it a different way, he puts out that most basic teaching of Buddhism in his first line, teaching us about zazen. Putting out the conclusion first, in this way showing us the basic tenet of Buddhism which relates to all beings: When we are born with life into this world, why do we suffer and become deluded and confused?

This deluded mind and why we have it is expressed in the next line. Furthermore, the way to liberate oneself from that delusion is to chant the Buddha's name and to confess what one has done. There are these many ways spoken of, but among those the Mahayana teaching is the most important. That teaching of samadhi as the very most important way. This is what is being pointed out. In accordance with this we are able to encounter that true quality of our Original Mind, and finally "*This very body is the Body of the Buddha*" is known clearly. This is the overall flow of this *Song of Zazen*

(please turn over)

Sogenji Sesshin* Schedule - 1996

January:

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

May:

Kosesshin, 4-10
Osesshin, 15-21
Kosesshin, 26-30

September:

Kosesshin, 4-10
Kosesshin, 15-19
Osesshin, 24-Oct 1

February:

Kosesshin, 4-8
Kosesshin, 12-18
Osesshin, 22-28

June:

Kosesshin, 3-7
Osesshin, 12-18
Kosesshin, 23-29

October:

Kosesshin, 5-11
Osesshin, 16-22
Kosesshin, 26-30

March:

Osesshin, 4-10
Kosesshin, 15-19
Kosesshin, 24-30

July:

Osesshin, 4-10
Kosesshin, 15-21
Kosesshin, 26-30

November:

Osesshin, 12-18
Kosesshin, 23-29

April:

Kosesshin, 5-9
Kosesshin, 14-18
Osesshin, 23-29

August:

Kosesshin, 4-10
Kosesshin, 17-21
Kosesshin, 26-30

December:

Rohatsu, **4-10
Osesshin, 14-20
Kosesshin, 24-28

Roshi will give sesshin February 6 - 12 in Seattle; contact Tony Fairbank, 135 N 75th St, Seattle WA 98103; fax (206) 706-8510.

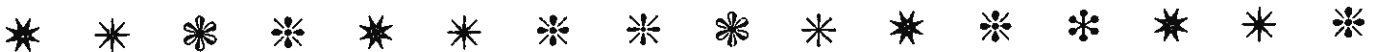
The Fall osesshin at Cloud Mountain will be September 6 - 14.

Roshi will also give sesshin in Denmark this spring, in early May. Contact Tim Pallis, Norrebrogade 7A1TV, 2200 Copenhagen, Denmark; fax 001 (45) 313-90623.

Please Note:

Sesshins at Sōgenji begin with kokoho (opening ceremony) the evening before the first date listed, i.e., if the listing reads "[K]osesshin 6-12" this means the opening ceremony is the evening of the 5th and the sesshin goes through the evening of the 12th, ending approximately 9:30 p.m. except for Rohatsu osesshin, which ends the following morning.

Sesshin dates sometimes change. Please contact Priscilla Daichi at Sogenji if you are thinking of coming.



People Training at Sōgenji

Doitsu - Japan
Doryu - Japan
Doyu - U.S.A.
Doho - Spain
Shonen - U.S.A.
Sotatsu - Japan
Mitra - U.S.A.
Dokyo - U.S.A.
Sozui - Germany
Domyo - France

Shoe - Germany
Dosho - England
Shosei - Australia
Doshin - U.S.A.
Larry - U.S.A.
Peter - Denmark
Jyl - U.S.A.
Elian - France
Ensai - Australia
Beth - Ireland

Bruno - France
Bjarne - Denmark
Teal - U.S.A.
Juan - Mexico
Tanya - U.S.A.
Jundo - U.S.A.
Ferdinand - Germany
Daichi - U.S.A.