Ch. 33: Buddhism in the Edo Period

No student of Japanese culture and religion can fail to be impressed by the consensus that has prevailed regarding the character of Buddhism in the Tokugawa period (1600-1868). For generations, both Japanese and Western scholars have depicted the religion in these centuries as having entered an era of sharp decline. Though the first expressions of this view can be traced back to the Tokugawa period itself, modern Japanese scholarship has generally agreed that, while limited activity could be seen in such areas as sectarian scholarship, clerical discipline, and apologetics, Tokugawa Buddhism generally was a formalized, lifeless religion led by a degenerate clergy.

Though the present chapter stands in some contrast with this characterization of Tokugawa Buddhism, it must be acknowledged that the established view is not without some basis in fact. In the Tokugawa period Buddhism did indeed lose the dominant position it had maintained in Japanese religious and intellectual history shortly after its introduction into the country in the sixth century CE. Neo-Confucianism now attracted many of the best minds of the age, its political and social theories appealing especially, though by no means exclusively, to the leadership of the ruling samurai or warrior class. By the late seventeenth century, Neo-Confucianism, opposed to Buddhism from the start, had become the dominant ideology, while the revival of interest in Shinto, championed by the National Learning scholars, was hardly less critical of Buddhism. To be sure, most Japanese continued to embrace a Buddhist-based syncretism that included elements of Shinto and Confucianism as they had done for centuries, but never before in Japanese history had Buddhism been placed so broadly on the intellectual defensive.

In addition, Buddhism faced internal problems that eroded its religious integrity, problems of a marked decline in discipline within the clergy and of an entrenched and divisive sectarianism. Neither of these issues was entirely new to Japanese Buddhism. Moral laxity within the clergy had
been a problem to one degree or another in every age, and sectarianism—though having no intrinsic relationship to the phenomenon of religious decline—had a history that stretched as far back as the Heian period (794-1185), with the rise of the Shingon and Tendai sects.

However, both laxity in discipline and sectarianism were accentuated by circumstances unique to the Tokugawa period and, in particular, by policies adopted by the Tokugawa military government. Having come to power after more than a century of civil war, in which not only great feudal lords but even certain Buddhist institutions had played a prominent role, the Tokugawa shoguns sought to assert their unquestioned authority over every segment of the re-unified feudal society they inherited. To prevent interference from without, they expelled the Christian missionaries who had been arriving since the mid-sixteenth century, and in 1641 they sealed off the country, leaving only the port of Nagasaki open to a few Chinese and Dutch traders. At the same time, they adopted a variety of domestic policies that reflect this same desire for tighter control.

Among these measures that contributed to the decline in clerical discipline, for example, was the so-called terauke or "temple registration" system. Instituted by the military government (bakufu) as part of its program to stamp out Christianity, as well as to aid generally in the monitoring of population movements, the terauke system eventually required every Japanese family to register at a Buddhist temple as proof that its members had no Christian affiliation. This brought a dramatic increase in the number of Buddhist parishioners, especially in the Pure Land, True Pure Land, Nichiren and Zen sects, and the commencement of an era of financial stability and even wealth for numerous Buddhist temples. Yet enjoying both political backing and relative economic security, a significant number within the clergy appear to have lost sight of their religious calling, the worst (as the popular novelist Ihara Saikaku [1642-93] delighted in pointing out) giving themselves over to
the satisfaction of their material and prurient desires.

Government policy also accentuated the already highly sectarian character of Japanese Buddhism. Stimulating this development was the bakufu's decree that each sect organize its temples along strict hierarchical lines. In this arrangement, known as the main temple/branch temple (honmatsu) system, each sect had a relatively few main temples (honji) under which other temples associated with the sect were ranked as branch temples (matsuji). The government recognized the special authority of the main temples in the management of the affairs of its branches, and by itself keeping a close watch over the main temples, it was able to exercise its control over the entire temple system.

Still further reinforcing Buddhist sectarianism was the government's policy of encouraging the scholarly pursuits of the clergy, while forbidding it from advocating heretical doctrines or from criticizing the doctrines of rival sects. The intent of these directives was, on the one hand, to put the clergy on notice that scholarship—not politics—was its proper sphere of activity and, on the other, to suppress doctrinal disputes, which had been a major cause of instability within the Buddhist community both before and during the Tokugawa era. These policies did lead to a flourishing of Buddhist scholarship during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but on the whole it was a conservative brand of scholarship dominated by narrow sectarian concerns.

Recent scholarship however has brought out more positive aspects of Edo period Buddhism. New interest has been shown in Buddhism's role in the formation of early Tokugawa ideology, in its place in the social history of the period, and in its continuing influence in literature and the arts. Also, researchers in both Japan and the West have brought to light leading practitioners of Buddhism who stand as concrete examples in which Buddhism sought to speak to the new situation in which
it found itself. In this chapter we give six such examples. One cannot say that they represent a concerted or consistent movement, but together they demonstrate that Buddhism had the resources to regenerate itself, maintain certain vital continuities, and through self-critical re-examination and reform, renew its own religious life.

33A: Suzuki Shōsan

The teaching and writings of Suzuki Shōsan (1679-1655) constitute an original Buddhist response to the era of peace initiated by the triumph of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Although not an influential thinker, Shōsan vividly represents an age that seemed to offer new opportunity to all. He is particularly noted for having recognized the contribution that merchants make to society.

Shōsan was born into a samurai family in Mikawa, Ieyasu's home province. His father was a minor vassal of the Tokugawa house, and he himself fought at the battle of Sekigahara (1600) and the siege of Osaka (1615). In 1621 he became a Zen monk. He seems to have remained fiercely independent of both the Rinzai and the Sōtō schools of Zen, although he sympathized with Sōtō.

In a world in which Confucianism, with its emphasis on society and statecraft, was beginning to overshadow Buddhism, Shōsan argued that Buddhism alone could give Japan the lasting benefits of peace. The Buddhism that he meant was his own teaching, and his single-mindedness on the issue resembled that of Nichiren. His great mission, as he saw it, was to have the Shogun proclaim Buddhism (Shōsan's Buddhism) as the faith and above all, the practice of Japan.

Although Shōsan's teaching had an individual dimension, centered on overcoming death, he insisted that practice to this end be carried out in society, in accordance with one's inherited station in life, for the good of all. For this reason he would not ordain anyone (though he himself was ordained), and he strove to address his message to all social classes as they were then defined. He even described Buddhist monks as "officers" who properly serve, in their own way, the interests of society as a whole. It was in this spirit that he addressed samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants in his best-known work, Right Action for All (Banmin tokuyō).

In Banmin tokuyō, Buddhism converges with attitudes more commonly associated with general Confucianism, particularly the insistence on selfless performance of one's duty to society. For samurai, Shōsan recommended his own, strenuously energetic practice, while for the other classes he urged the easier and more accessible practice of the Nembutsu (calling the name of the Buddha Amida). In Japan the Nembutsu does not properly belong to Zen practice at all, but Shōsan had no interest in making that sort of distinction.

Right Action of All (Banmin tokuyō)
Prayers Regarding Practice

The Buddha-treasure, the Dharma-treasure, and the Sangha-treasure: he is not a monk who accepts these Three Treasures and still practices without the goal of giving generously to the people and making himself a treasure for the whole land. It is my prayer that you should preserve in your practice the aim of the Three Treasures.

The Buddha's teaching is the teaching of the attainment of Buddhahood. However, there are a right way and a wrong way to understand "attainment of Buddhahood.".

The practice of Buddha's teaching is the way of emancipation from the three worlds. Therefore a monk is said to have "left his home." He has not left his home who does not aim to emancipate himself from the three worlds.

The Buddha's words teach that once one fully enters the world, he cannot leave it because there is nowhere left to go. This statement signifies that it is by the world's teaching that one attains Buddhahood. Thus the world's teaching is the Buddha's teaching. The Avatamasaka Sūtra makes the following declaration: "The Buddha's teaching does not differ from the world's teaching." If we do not proceed according to the principle that one achieves Buddhahood by following the world's teaching, we are totally ignorant of the Buddha's intention.

Now the Buddha's teaching is one that destroys the evilness of men. Shall disciples of the Buddha not take that road? At present, however, practice capable of matching the Buddha's intention is rare. People dwell upon fame and fortune and take wrong paths. This is my prayer, and none other: that the Buddha's disciples should enter the true Way and lead sentient beings out of their bewilderment.
The Benefits of the Three Treasures in Action (Sambō tokuyō)

The treasures of Buddha and Dharma:

1. to be employed in the exercise of martial courage. . . .
2. to be employed in regard to the laws of the land. . . .
3. to be employed in correctly following the way of the five relationships. . . .
4. to be employed in all the arts. . . .
5. to be employed in one's own profession. . . .
6. to be employed without hindrance from good or evil. . . .
7. to be employed in setting mind and body at ease. . . .
8. to be employed for the greatest good in all things. . . .
9. to cure the sicknesses of the mind. . . .
10. to dwell in the Pure Land of Supreme Bliss. . . .

Buddhist practice is to observe the precepts strictly, never opposing the teaching of the Buddha and of the patriarchs; to banish the mind warped and twisted, and to become of good mind; to clearly distinguish right from wrong, then to let right go; to practice only a morality without morality; and to lead all people, uprightly and with compassion, to enlightenment. This mind is the treasure to use in connection with the law.

Practice of Buddhism is to abandon self-preoccupation; to set the six harmonies in action, making no distinction between self and other; and to achieve integrity of mind, thus requiting, above, the four generosities, and saving, below, sentient beings in the three worlds. This mind is the treasure to use in the correct pursuit of the way of the five relationships.

Practice of Buddhism is to let go the mind of cleverness and discrimination, and thus to leave
behind thoughts that cling to form; to reach the mind of selflessness; and to entrust yourself to things without any personal partiality whatever. This mind is the treasure to use in all the arts.

Practice of Buddhism is to erase the mind of evil desire. Here, there is no more arrogance, flattery, covetousness, or seeking after fame and profit. This mind is the treasure to use in the trades and the professions.

The Four Classes

For the Warrior's Daily Guidance

A warrior said, "You claim that the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching are like the two wheels of a carriage. Even without the Buddha's teaching though, the world would still lack nothing. Why then do you use the simile of the two wheels of a carriage?"

"The Buddha’s teaching and the world's teaching are not two separate things," I replied. "The Buddha has said that if you fully enter the world, you cannot leave it because there is nowhere left to go. The Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching both establish the right and true, practice morality, and take the way of uprightness; that is all. As far as uprightness is concerned, there are the shallow level and the deep. Worldly uprightness, in my view, is to preserve morality without bending principle, to follow correctly the way of the five relationships, and not to be at odds with things but to have no personal bias at all. This is the road down which to proceed from shallow to deep. From the Buddhist standpoint, true uprightness is to realize that all conditioned things are lies, empty and illusory, and to act at one with the original Law Body (dharmakāya), the natural self-nature. . . .

Methods of practice are infinitely diverse, but the main thing is simply to banish all thought of oneself. The source of suffering is the one thought "I," "I." To know that this is so, is right. To
Strive on this basis and to annihilate that one thought, with sincerely fierce courage, is exactly what is meant by moral conduct. . . .

The very foundations of fierce courage [are:]

2. Acknowledging generosity.
3. Advancing to the front line of battle.
4. Acknowledging the principle of karma.
5. Perceiving illusion and transience.
6. Perceiving the impurity of this body.
7. Regretting the passing of time.
9. Offering this body up to one's lord.
11. Being always ready to give up one's life.
12. Acknowledging one's own faults.
13. Feeling that one stands before a great personage or before one's lord.
14. Keeping to humanity and morality.
15. Keeping one's eyes upon the words of the Buddha and of the patriarchs.
17. Keeping in mind the link with the one great matter (birth-and-death).

For the Farmer's Daily Guidance

A farmer said, "I do not neglect that great matter, my Rebirth, but I have no time, for work
on the farm never lets up. It is a wretched way I have to make my living. This present life of mine is worthless, and suffering will be mine in the future. This distresses me very much. What can I do to attain realization?

"Farm work is Buddhist practice," I replied. "It is misunderstanding that makes it menial work. When your faith is firm, it is the practice of a Bodhisattva. You are wrong to think you need leisure to pray for Rebirth. Those who insist upon attaining Buddhahood torment both body and mind in their quest, while those who pray for Rebirth will not reach Buddhahood in ten thousand eons. As you labor so painfully hard in burning heat and freezing cold, with spade, hoe, and sickle, take body and mind, where the passions grow so thick, as your enemy. While you hoe and reap, press the attack and press it again upon your mind, as you work. In any period of leisure the passions will grow thicker yet. When you work painfully hard as you assault body and mind, your mind is untroubled. Thus do your Buddhist practice the year round. Why should a farmer prefer any other practice? A man can enter a monastery and worship all day long, but if he does not give up preoccupation with himself, everything he does will turn to the karma of transmigration, let him be as holy as he likes. To reach Buddhahood or to fall into hell, therefore, depends upon the mind and not upon the work.

To receive life as a farmer is to be an officer entrusted by heaven with the nourishment of the world. Give your body, therefore, utterly up to heaven, without the least thought for yourself. Work the fields in true service to Heaven's Way and celebrate, as you grow the five grains, the Buddhas and the kami. Make a great vow to give to all, yes, even to the very insects, and say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu in time with the strokes of the hoe.

For the Artisan's Daily Guidance
An artisan said: Enlightenment in the life to come is certainly important, but my trade leaves me no leisure. Day and night I do nothing but work at my living. How can I possibly reach realization?

I replied: "All trades whatsoever are Buddhist practice. It is on the basis of men's actual work that Buddhahood is to be attained. Without smiths, carpenters, and all the other trades, the needs of the world would never be met. Without warriors, the world would never be governed. Without farmers it would not be fed, and without merchants nothing in the world would circulate freely. Every other trade, as it comes into being, works for the good of the world. . . .

For the Daily Guidance of Merchants

A merchant said: "I was born into the human realm, it is true, but my work is the sorry business of buying and selling, and there is no instant when my thoughts are not on profit; therefore I cannot advance toward enlightenment. This situation pains me greatly. Please, teach me a remedy."

"He who proposes to engage in trade," I replied, "must first of all develop the right frame of mind for increasing profit. That is the frame of mind for you, that and none other. Give your own life up to heaven and single mindedly study the way of uprightness. . . . But he who, in his longing for profit, cheats people and makes a difference between himself and others will come under the malediction of heaven. Thus calamities will befall him. He will be hated by all, loved and respected by none, and nothing will ever be the way he wants it. . . .

Offer this body to the world, and make up your mind that what you do is only for the sake of the land and of the whole people. Vow then that you will transport goods from your own province to others, that you will bring goods from other provinces to your own and trade them in lands and
villages yet more distant, and thereby please everyone. . . . When thus you conduct your trading
without greed, having given up all clinging, the devas will protect you, the gods will be generous
toward you, your profits will be enormous, and you will become a man of the greatest wealth. . . .

[Banmin Tokuyō; Tyler, tr., "Suzuki Shōsan," pp. 53-74]

33B: Takuan Sōhō: Zen and Swordsmanship

Takuan Sōhō (1573-1645) was a commanding figure in Rinzai Zen at the beginning of the
Tokugawa period. In 1628 Takuan, representing a radical group at Daitokuji in Kyoto, where he had
received his training, protested against bakufu regulations and the government's intervention in
temple affairs in order to increase its administrative power. As a result, in the following year, he was
exiled to the province of Dewa in the northern part of Japan. In 1632 he was released, but was not
permitted to leave Edo to return to Daitokuji until two years later. While he was in Kyoto, some of
his admirers who were influential in the bakufu asked him repeatedly to meet the third Shōgun,
Iemitsu. Takuan could no longer refuse their urgent requests and reluctantly went to Edo in 1635,
taking residence with Yagyū Tajima no Kami (1571-1646), a great fencing master of the day.

The story has it that Iemitsu once asked Yagyū the secret of his knowledge of
swordsmanship. Yagyū replied that he had mastered the art through the practice of Zen under
Takuan. At their first meeting the Shōgun was very much attracted by Takuan, and therefore would
not release him from Edo. The Zen Master, however, had no ambition to associate with the Shōgun
and other dignitaries of high rank. He complained to his students about his unfortunate
circumstances, for his cherished desire was to be free to live out his life, unnoticed by the world, in
a quiet mountain spot. In order to keep Takuan near him, therefore, the Shōgun built the Tōkaiji in
Edo and installed him as its head.
Takuan Sōhō: Marvelous Power of Immovable Wisdom (Fudōchi shinmyōryoku)

The instructions excerpted below originally were written in a letter addressed to Yagyū as official fencing instructor to Tokugawa Iemitsu. Takuan's letter explains how several common Buddhist and Confucian concepts might be interpreted in terms of fencing to argue for the importance of cultivating a strong sense of imperturbability, the immovable wisdom that allows the mind to move freely, with spontaneity and flexibility, even in the midst of the most frightening or difficult circumstances. It concludes by stressing that the purpose of all self-cultivation is to enable one better to serve one's lord by living a moral life.

Since it first appeared in print in 1779 entitled The Marvelous Power of Immovable Wisdom (Fudōchi shinmyōryoku), Takuan's instructions have been included in innumerable anthologies addressed not only to martial art devotees but to general audiences, and thus, they have helped promote the popular perception that Zen is an intrinsic element of martial art training. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that success in martial arts demands mental discipline, a topic about which Zen monks (among others) have much to say.

Where to Focus the Mind

To what ends should the mind be directed? If you focus on the opponent's movements, then his movements will restrict your mind. If you focus on the opponent's sword, then his sword will restrict your mind. If you focus on cutting down the opponent, then that thought of cutting will restrict your mind. If you focus on wielding your own sword, then your own sword will restrict your mind. If you focus on avoiding the opponent's cut, then that intention of not being cut will restrict your mind. If you focus on a person's stance, then that stance will restrict your mind. In short, there is nothing on which to focus the mind.

Someone might ask, if focusing on any one object causes that thing to restrict my mind and thereby allows the opponent to defeat me, then wouldn't it be better for me to concentrate my mind in the area below my navel, prevent it from being moved by distractions, and merely respond automatically to the opponent's moves?

Yes, the above sounds reasonable. From the viewpoint of the highest techniques of the
Buddha-dharma however, concentrating one's mind below the navel and preventing it from being moved by distractions is an inferior method, not the highest. It corresponds to a beginner's level of training, or to what Confucians refer to as reverent seriousness (kei) of purpose. It is no more than what Mencius [6A.11] called "finding the lost mind" [of humanity]. It is not a method that leads to the highest realization. . . . If you strive to concentrate the mind below the navel and to prevent it from being moved by distractions elsewhere, then that very striving will restrict your mind, you will lose your ability to lead the encounter, and consequently you will have even less freedom of action than in other cases.

Reverent Seriousness in Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism

Neo-Confucian texts explain the word "seriousness" (Ch. jing/J. kei) as concentrating on one task without wavering (shuichí muteki).¹ It means that your mind is devoted to one object without other diversions. The essence of seriousness lies in being able to unsheathe your sword and to cut without disturbing your mental composure. When you receive an order from your lord, it is especially important to serve him with this serious composure. The Buddha-dharma also includes this serious composure. For example, Buddhists sound the bell of devotion, when we strike a gong three times, place the palms of our hands together before addressing the Buddha. The serious composure in Buddhist chanting is the same whether explained in Buddhist terms as being single-minded without disturbance (isshin furan) or in Confucian terms as concentrating on one task without wavering.

¹ In Zhu Xi's concept of the "method of the mind" (xinfa), self-cultivation involved attending to "oneness." For the Cheng-Zhu school this cryptic "oneness" generally referred to one's unity with Heaven-and-earth and the myriad things, but some thinkers took it to mean focusing on one thing at a time.
In Buddhism, however, this sense of seriousness is not the highest teaching. Controlling one's own mind and preventing it from becoming disturbed is the practice of a beginner. Buddhists continue in this kind of training only for as many months or years as is needed to attain imperturbability so that even when the mind is allowed to wander, it retains full freedom. This is what I referred to elsewhere as the free-flowing mind, which is the highest level. According to the Confucian teaching of seriousness, the mind must be kept in check. Because mental wandering is seen as a disturbance, the mind must not be given free reign even for an instant. While this practice is useful as a short-term technique for developing unflappability, if one trains in this way constantly, then it results in a loss of mental freedom. For example, it resembles pulling back on a cat's leash to prevent it from pouncing on a baby sparrow. When one's mind lacks freedom like a cat tied to a leash, then it cannot function freely in accordance with its needs. But if a cat is well trained, then it can be released from the leash to go where it may, even right next to the sparrow without pouncing on it. When the free-flowing mind is released and abandoned, like the cat off the leash, then it can wander everywhere without distraction and without becoming harried.

Stated in terms of your swordsmanship, you should not think about techniques for striking with a sword. Forget all striking techniques and strike. Cut the other person, but do not dwell on the other person. Both self and other are emptiness. The striking sword is also emptiness. But, do not let your mind be restricted by emptiness.

Personal Advice

Because you have mastered swordsmanship to a degree unequalled in the past or present, you now enjoy an attractive rank, stipend and reputation. You must not be ungrateful for this good fortune even while sleeping, but must always strive totally to requite this benefaction with the finest
loyal service to your lord. The finest loyal service requires first that you think correctly, maintain your health, and be single-minded in your devotion to your lord. You must never resent nor criticize others, nor neglect your daily duties. In your own family, you should be exceedingly filial toward your father and mother, avoid even the slightest hint of infidelity in your marriage, observe correct ritual decorum, and not love a mistress or practice pederasty. Do not presume upon your father or mother, but always observe social norms. In employing underlings, do not be guided by personal feelings. Merely promote good men so that they might admonish you for your shortcomings and correctly implement the government's policies, and demote bad men. When bad men see good men progress day by day, the bad men will naturally be influenced by your delight in the good, and they will abandon the bad and return to being good. In this way, lord and samurai (ruler and minister), superior and inferior, will become good men, their desires will weaken, and they will end their extravagant waste. Then the country's treasury will become full, the people will grow wealthy, children will care for their parents, the strong will be charitable toward the elderly, and the country will rule itself. This is how to practice the finest loyalty.

[Takuan oshō zenshū, v. 5, pp. 12-27;WB]

33C: Bankei: The Teaching of the Unborn Buddha Nature

Bankei (1622-1693) was the son of a masterless samurai (rōnin) who, in the early years of the Tokugawa peace, had turned from the arts of war to the art of medicine. When sent to a local Confucian school, Bankei showed his independence early. He left school, dissatisfied with this teacher's explanation of the Great Learning's "luminous virtue" (in Neo-Confucian terms generally equated with the moral nature), and struck out on his own. Although he went on to study briefly with Esoteric and Zen Buddhist teachers, from two of whom he received their "seal" (certification), Bankei considered himself essentially self-taught and made no secret of his conviction that what he had discovered for himself went beyond anything he had learned from others.

After a succession of intensive efforts at solitary meditation, which included extreme hardships and
severe illness, he emerged self-enlightened and ready to teach his doctrine of the Unborn Buddha Nature. For Bankei this was an extremely simple and direct teaching, involving a complete and radical de-conditioning from all received influences, a stripping away of all parental influences and worldly culture to reveal one's original nature. The excerpts below explain how he taught this to increasingly large audiences, and how he related it to other contemporary trends. His teachings have mostly to do with the spiritual life and the direct response to daily experience, and very little to do with contemporary, political, social or educational issues of a secular kind. Though Bankei sometimes used language which suggested that, as Shōsan argued, enlightenment could be attained in the context of everyday life, unlike Shōsan, Bankei retained close ties to Zen monastic institutions.

Bankei was obviously a self-made character, a rugged individualist who exerted a powerful charismatic influence on his hearers. In his own time he had a wide reputation as a popular lecturer to crowds of people. This stands in some contrast to the kind of spiritual direction between master and disciple, one on one, that is more typical of Zen training. But it fits with the trend in this period to popular lecturing by Confucians and Shinto preachers as well. Taken together, these cases may help explain the strong rise in popular education in the Edo period, drawing on religious evangelism as well as secular developments. Also, it may be worth noting that Bankei's emphasis on simplicity, directness and spontaneity resonates with the concept of makoto in other popular lecturers of the time.

Bankei's great reputation as a teacher in his own day eventually brought him Imperial recognition as a "national teacher" (kokushi). However, this achievement was quite individual; he left no significant school or movement that outlasted his own personal charisma. Only in the twentieth century was he resurrected from comparative obscurity.

Bankei: Opening of the Sermons

The following are extracts from sermons given in 1690 at the Ryōmonji Temple, Bankei's home temple in Hyōgo prefecture.

When the Zen Master Bankei Butchi Kōsai, founder of the Ryōmonji at Aboshi in Banshū, was at the Great Training Period [held] at the Ryōmonji in the winter of the third year of Genroku, there were 1,683 monks listed in the temple register. Those who attended included not only Sōtō and Rinzai followers but members of the Ritsu, Shingon, Tendai, Pure Land, True Pure Land and Nichiren Schools, with laymen and monks mingled together, thronging round the lecture seat. One sensed the Master was truly the Teacher of Men and Devas for the present age. . . .

The Master addressed the assembly: "Among all you people here today there's not a single
one who's an unenlightened being. Everyone here is a Buddha. So listen carefully! What you all have from your parents innately is the Unborn Buddha Mind alone. There's nothing else you have innately. This Buddha Mind you have from your parents innately is truly unborn and marvelously illuminating. . . and, what's more, with this Unborn, everything is perfectly managed. The actual proof of this Unborn which perfectly manages [everything] is that, as you're all turned this way listening to me talk, if out back there's the cawing of crows, the chirping of sparrows or the rustling of the wind, even though you're not deliberately trying to hear each of these sounds, you recognize and distinguish each one. The voices of the crows and sparrows, the rustling of the wind—you hear them without making any mistake about them, and that's what 's called hearing with the Unborn. In this way, all things are perfectly managed with the Unborn. . .

"Well, then, while you're all turned this way listening to me talk, you don't mistake the chirp of a sparrow out back for the caw of a crow, the sound of a gong for that of a drum, a man's voice for a woman's, an adults's voice for a child's—you clearly recognize and distinguish each sound you hear without making any mistake. That's the marvelously illuminating dynamic function. It's none other than the Buddha Mind, . . . the actual proof of the marvelously illuminating [nature of the Buddha Mind]. [Bankei, 4-5]

Precepts

What is usually translated as "precepts" in Buddhism, might more accurately be rendered "admonitions" since they mainly have to with things prohibited (no killing, no lying, no adultery etc.). This clarification is needed to understand why Bankei speaks of this as "all for wicked monks who broke the rule; not for buddhas."

A certain master of the Precepts School asked: Doesn't your Reverence observe the precepts?"
The Master said: "Originally, what people call the precepts were all for wicked monks who broke rules; for the man who abides in the Unborn Buddha Mind, there's no need for precepts. The precepts were taught to help sentient beings—they weren't taught to help buddhas! What everyone has from his parents innately is the Unborn Buddha Mind alone, so abide in the Unborn Buddha Mind. When you abide in the Unborn Buddha Mind, you're a living Buddha here today, and that living Buddha certainly isn't going to concoct anything like taking precepts, so there aren't any precepts for him to take. To concoct anything like taking the precepts is not what's meant by the Unborn Buddha Mind. When you abide in the Unborn Buddha Mind, there's no way you can violate the precepts. From the standpoint of the Unborn, the precepts too are secondary, peripheral concerns; in the place of the Unborn, there's really no such thing as precepts. . . ." [7]

Growing Up Deluded

"What everyone has from his parents innately is the Buddha Mind alone. But since your parents themselves fail to realize this, you become deluded too, and then display this delusion in raising your own children. Even the nursemaids and baby-sitters lose their temper, so that the people involved in bringing up children display every sort of deluded behavior, including stupidity, selfish desire and the [anger of] fighting demons. Growing up with deluded people surrounding them, children develop a first-rate set of bad habits, becoming quite proficient at being deluded themselves, and turning into unenlightened beings. Originally, when you're born, you're without delusion. But on account of the faults of the people who raise you, someone abiding in the Buddha Mind is turned into a first-rate unenlightened being. This is something I'm sure you all know from your own experience. . . .

"That which you didn't pick up outside is the Unborn Buddha Mind, and here no delusions
exist. Since the Buddha Mind is marvelously illuminating, you're able to learn things, even to the point of thoroughly learning all sorts of deluded behavior. [At the same time,] since it's marvelously illuminating, when you hear this, you'll resolve not to be deluded and from today on cease creating delusion abiding in the Unborn Buddha Mind as it is. Just as before you applied yourself skillfully to picking up delusions and made yourself deluded, now you'll use the same skill to listen to this and stop being deluded—that's what a splendid thing the Buddha Mind is . . .

"When you hear this, I want you all from today on to abide in the Unborn Buddha Mind just as it is—the Unborn Buddha Mind you have from your parents innately. Then, you won't create delusions about anything, and, since no delusions will remain, you'll be living buddhas from today forever after. Nothing could be more direct! You've all got to realize this conclusively." [17-19]

Everybody Has the Buddha Mind

"When your parents gave you life, there wasn't a trace of selfish desire, bad habits or self-centeredness. But from the age of four or five you picked up the mean things you saw other people do and the bad things you heard them say, so that gradually as you matured, growing up badly, you developed selfish desire, which in turn produced self-centeredness. Deluded by this self-centeredness, you then proceeded to create every sort of evil. If it weren't for being centered on yourself, delusions wouldn't arise. When they don't arise, that's none other than abiding in the Unborn Buddha Mind. [31-32]

Samurai

"Nowadays there are lots of people who own high-priced ceramics—flower vases and Korean tea bowls. I don't own anything of this sort myself, but when I see the people who do, they take the ceramics and wrap them round and round with soft cotton and crepe and stick them in a box, which
makes good sense. If a costly ceramic strikes against something hard, it's sure to break, so to keep these ceramics from breaking by wrapping them in cotton and crepe is surely a judicious measure. The samurai's mind is just like this. To begin with, samurai always place honor above all else. If there's even a single word of disagreement between them, they can't let it pass without calling it to account—such is the way of the samurai. Once a single word is challenged, there's no going back. So a samurai always keeps the 'hard' parts of his mind under wraps, swathed in cotton and crepe, and from the start takes the greatest care to avoid 'striking against' abrasive people. Everyone would do well to always be careful about this. Once anyone has challenged his words, the samurai is bound to kill him. You'd better grasp this clearly.

"Then there's the sort of killing that occurs when a samurai throws himself before his lord and cuts down an attacker. This serves to destroy evil doers and pacify the realm and constitutes the regular vocation of the samurai, so for a warrior this sort of thing is not considered to be murder. But to kill another simply scheming for your own personal ends, stirring up selfish desires as a result of self-centeredness—this is murder indeed. It shows disloyalty to your lord, unfiliality to your parents, and changes the Buddha Mind for a fighting demon. On the other hand, in circumstances when one must die for one's lord, to fail to die, to run away and behave like a coward, is switching the Buddha Mind for an animal. Birds and beasts don't have the sort of intelligence people do, so they can't understand the proper way to act; they don't know the meaning of honor and simply flee from place to place trying to stay alive. But when a samurai, similarly, fails to understand the meaning of honor and runs away, not even showing shame before his fellow warriors, that's just like being an animal. . . . [41-42]

Nothing to do with Rules
"In my place, I'm always telling everyone, 'Abide in the Unborn Buddha Mind and nothing else!' Other than that, I'm not setting up any special rules and making them practice. All the same, since everyone got together and decided to practice for [a period of] twelve sticks of incense every day, I told them, 'Go ahead, do whatever you like'; so I'm letting them practice every day for [a period of] twelve sticks of incense. But the Unborn Buddha Mind isn't a matter of sticks of incense! When you abide in the Buddha Mind and don't become deluded, then, without looking for enlightenment outside, you'll just sit in the Buddha Mind, just stand in the Buddha Mind, just sleep in the Buddha Mind, just get up in the Buddha Mind—just abide in the Buddha Mind, so that in all your ordinary activities you function as a living Buddha. There's really nothing to it.

"As for zazen, since za (sitting) is the Buddha Mind's sitting at ease, while zen (meditation) is another name for Buddha Mind, the Buddha Mind's sitting at ease is what's meant by zazen. So when you're abiding in the Unborn, all the time is zazen; zazen isn't just the time when you're practicing formal meditation. Even when you're sitting in meditation, if there's something you've got to do, it's quite all right to get up and leave. So, in my group, everyone is free to do as he likes. Just always abide at ease in the Buddha Mind. . . . [58-9]

Plain Speaking

"As you can see in the records that have been brought to Japan, the true teaching of the Unborn long ago ceased to exist there, so that nowadays, even in China, men of the Unborn are not to be found, and that's why no records that speak of the Unborn Buddha Mind have come to Japan.

"When I was young and trying to uncover the Buddha Mind, I even made a serious effort at taking part in questions-and-answers (mondo) [using Chinese expressions]. But later on, having come to a real understanding of things, I gave it up. Japanese are better off asking about things in
a manner that's suitable to Japanese, using their ordinary language. Japanese are poor at Chinese, so in dialogues using Chinese [terms], they can't question [teachers] about things as thoroughly as they might wish. When you put your questions in ordinary Japanese, there's no matter you can't ask about. So, instead of taking a roundabout way and knocking yourselves out trying to pose your question in Chinese words, you're better off freely putting them in easy Japanese, without exhausting yourselves. . . .

"The reason Japanese monks are teaching laymen inept at Chinese using Chinese words that are hard for the latter to use, is that they themselves haven't settled the matter of the Unborn Buddha Mind, and evade people's questions by using Chinese words that are hard for ordinary folk to grasp. On top of which, these [difficult expressions] are nothing but the dregs and slobber of the Chinese patriarchs! . . . [60-1]

The Proof

Once I asked the Master: "Is it helpful in studying the Way to read through the Buddhist sutras and the records of the old masters?"

The Master said: "It all depends. If you rely on the principles contained in the sutras and records, when you read them, you'll be blinding your own eyes. On the other hand, when the time comes that you can dismiss principles, if you read [such things], you'll find the proof of your own realization."[114]

[Bankei zenji zenshū, pp. 3, 6, 21-2, 37-42, 50-7, 34-5, 72-3, 144; Haskell, tr. Bankei, 4-5, 7, 17, 31-2, 41-2, 58-9, 60-1, 114]

33D: Hakuin Eikaku: Father of Modern Rinzai Zen

All present-day masters of the Rinzai sect claim descent from Hakuin Eikaku (1686-1790),
an extraordinary man, who gave all his efforts to the revival of Zen Buddhism in eighteenth century Japan. He rejected formalistic and intellectual Zen, as well as the Nenbutsu chanting which was popular among some Zen practitioners at the time. Among his followers were all classes of people—farmers, samurai, daimyo, both women as well as men. Like Takuan he taught those who seriously sought after Zen for its own sake, regardless of their social background.

Hakuin is unusual among Zen masters in that he left many writings in colloquial Japanese, as well as in the literary language and in Kambun. These are often in the form of letters or essays written to his followers. He was a versatile master who excelled not only in writing but also in painting, calligraphy, and sculpture. We find in Hakuin's writings a most detailed account of his Zen experience; similar descriptions are seldom to be found in other Zen literature.

In his system of Zen training Hakuin emphasized focusing all one's energy on penetrating kōan stories until the mental exhaustion induced by the conflict between one's great determination and one's great doubt would lead to Zen awakening (satori) or seeing true nature (kenshō). Zen practitioners must penetrate several series of kōans, inducing repeated awakenings. Hakuin rejected formalistic and intellectual Zen, as well as other practices, such as invoking the Name of Amida Buddha (nenbutsu) or Silent Reflection (mokushō) meditation, which he probably identified with Ōbaku as well as with Sōtō and Genjū (i.e., Rinzai) Rinka lineages. Hakuin also wrote numerous letters to lay people, encouraging them to practice Zen at home and at work, composing folk songs, and giving away numerous works of Zen calligraphy and drawings.

My Old Tea Kettle (Orategama)

The text excerpted below consists of letters that Hakuin sent to different lay people in 1748 when he was sixty-three years old and that are representative of how he actively sought to popularize Zen practice among lay people. The first excerpt, addressed to the feudal lord Nabeshima Naotsune
(1701-1749), describes how the meditation practice of holding one's vital energy in the lower abdomen—what Hakuin calls the true practice of introspection (naikan)—not only nurtures health, maintains youth and vitality, but also is essential for success in kōan meditation. The second excerpt, addressed to an elderly nun in the Nichiren school, describes a Zen approach to the Nichiren practice of chanting the title of the *Lotus Sutra*. Finally an excerpt from the supplement to this work similarly provides Hakuin's Zen interpretation of the Pure Land practice of chanting the Name of the Buddha Amida (nenbutsu). While Hakuin seems somewhat accepting of these other forms of Buddhism, ultimately he insists that they can be religiously meaningful only if performed as a type of Zen practice, directed toward the goal of seeing true nature (kenshō i.e., Zen awakening).

If their motivation is bad, virtually all Zen practitioners find themselves blocked in both the active and quietistic approaches to the practice of kōan meditation. They fall into a state of severe depression and distraction; the fire-elemental phase mounts to the heart, the metal-elemental phase in the lungs shrinks painfully, the health generally declines, and quite frequently they develop an illness most difficult to cure. Yet if they polish and perfect themselves in the true practice of introspection (naikan), they will conform to the secret methods for the ultimate nourishment, their bodies and minds will become strong, their vitality great, and they will readily attain to awakening in all things.

Śākyamuni Buddha taught this point in detail in the Āgama Sutras. Master Zhiyi has culled the import of these teachings, whether examining the principles of the Dharma, whether sitting for long periods without lying down or whether engaged in walking practices throughout the six divisions of the day, the vital breath (ki) must always be made to fill the cakra sphere (seirin), the lower field of cinnabar (tanden), between the navel and the loins. Even though one may be hemmed in by worldly cares or tied down by guests who require elaborate attention, the source of strength two inches below the navel must naturally be filled with the vital breath, and at no time may it be allowed to disperse. This area should be pendulous and well rounded, somewhat like a new ball that has yet to be used. If a person is able to acquire this kind of breath concentration he can sit in meditation
all day long without it ever tiring him; he can recite the scriptures from morning to night without becoming worn out; he can write all day long without any trouble; he can talk all day without collapsing from fatigue. Even if he practices good works day after day, there will still be no indications of flagging; in fact the capacity of his mind will gradually grow larger and his vitality will always be strong. On the hottest day of summer he will not perspire nor need he use a fan; on the snowiest night of deepest winter he need not wear socks nor warm himself. Should he live to be a hundred years old his teeth will remain firm. Provided he does not become lax in his practices, he should attain to a great age. If a man becomes accomplished in this method, what Way cannot be perfected, what precepts cannot be maintained, what samādhi cannot be practiced, what virtue cannot be fulfilled!

If, however, you do not become proficient in these ancient techniques, if you have not made the essentials of the true practice your own, if by yourself you recklessly seek for your own brand of awakening, you will engage in excessive study and become entangled in inappropriate thoughts. At this time the chest and breathing mechanism become stopped up, a fire rises in the heart, the legs feel as though they were immersed in ice and snow, the ears are filled with a roaring sound like a torrent sounding in a deep valley. The lungs shrink, the fluids in the body dry up, and in the end you are afflicted with a disease most difficult to cure. Indeed you will hardly be able to keep yourself alive. All this is only because you do not know the correct road of true practice. A most regrettable thing indeed!

The *Cessation and Insight* speaks of cessation in relation to phenomena (*ke’enshi*) and of cessation in relation to true emptiness (*taishinshi*). The method of introspection that I describe here represents the essential of this cessation in relation to phenomena. When I was young the content
of my kōan meditation was poor. I was convinced that absolute tranquility of the source of mind was the Buddha Way. Thus I despised activity and was fond of quietude. I would always seek out some dark and gloomy place and engage in dead sitting. Trivial and mundane matters pressed against my chest and a fire mounted in my heart. I was unable to enter wholeheartedly into the active practice of Zen. My manner became irascible and fears assailed me. Both my mind and body felt continually weak, sweat poured ceaselessly from my armpits, and my eyes constantly filled with tears. My mind was in a continual state of depression and I made not the slightest advance toward gaining the benefits that result from the study of Buddhism.

But later I was most fortunate in receiving the instruction of a good teacher. The secret methods of introspection were handed down to me and for three years I devoted myself to an assiduous practice of them. The serious disease from which I suffered, that up until then I had found so difficult to cure, gradually cleared up like frost and snow melting beneath the rays of the morning sun. The problems with those vile kōans—difficult to believe, difficult to penetrate, difficult to unravel, difficult to enter—kōans that up to then had been impossible for me to sink my teeth into, now faded away with the passing of my disease.

Even though I am past sixty now my vitality is ten times as great as it was when I was thirty or forty. My mind and body are strong and I never have the feeling that I absolutely must lie down to rest. Should I want to I find no difficulty in refraining from sleep for two, three, or even seven days, without suffering any decline in my mental powers. I am surrounded by three to five hundred demanding students, and even though I lecture on the scriptures or on the collections of the Zen ancestors' sayings for thirty to fifty days in a row, it does not exhaust me. I am quite convinced that all this is owing to the power gained from practicing this method of introspection.
Initially emphasis must be placed on the care of the body. Then, during your practice of introspection, without your seeking it and quite unconsciously, you will attain, how many times I cannot tell, the power of awakening. It is essential that you neither despise nor grasp for either the realm of activity or that of quietude, and that you continue your practice assiduously.

Frequently you may feel that you are getting nowhere with practice in the midst of activity, whereas the quietistic approach brings unexpected results. Yet rest assured that those who use the quietistic approach can never hope to enter into meditation in the midst of activity. Should by chance a person who uses this approach enter into the dusts and confusions of the world of activity, even the power of ordinary understanding which he had seemingly attained will be entirely lost. Drained of all vitality, he will be inferior to any mediocre, talentless person. The most trivial matters will upset him, an inordinate cowardice will afflict his mind and he will frequently behave in a mean and base manner. What can you call accomplished about a man like this?

[Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin*, pp. 29-33]

Outside the Mind There is No Lotus Sutra

Outside the mind there is no *Lotus Sutra* and outside the *Lotus Sutra* there is no Mind. Outside the ten realms of existence there is no mind and outside the ten realms of existence there is no *Lotus Sutra*. This is the ultimate teaching. It is not limited to me, but all the Tathāgatas of the past, present, and future, and all learned sages everywhere, when they have reached the ultimate understanding, have all preached in the same way. The essential purport of the text of the *Lotus Sutra* speaks gloriously to this effect. There are eighty-four thousand ways of practicing Buddhism, but they are all provisional teachings and cannot be regarded as other than expediencies. When this ultimate is reached, all living beings and all Tathāgatas of the past, present, and future, mountains,
rivers, the great earth, and the *Lotus Sutra* itself, all bespeak the Dharma principle that all things are a non-dual unity representing the true appearance of all things. This is the fundamental principle of Buddhism.

We have indeed the 5,418 scriptures of the Buddhist canon, that detail the limitless mysterious meaning preached by Shākyamuni Buddha. We have the sudden, gradual, esoteric, and indeterminate methods. But their ultimate principle is reduced to the eight fascicles of the *Lotus Sutra*. The ultimate meaning of the 64,360 odd written words of the *Lotus Sutra* is reduced to the five words in its title: *Lotus Sutra of the Wondrous Law* (*Myōhō renge kyō*). These five words are reduced to the two words *Wondrous Law* (*Myōhō*) and the two words *Myōhō* return to one word: *mind*. If one asks to where this one word, *mind*, returns: The horned rabbit and the furry turtle cross the nowhere mountain." What is the ultimate meaning? "If you wish to know the mind of a wife who laments in the midst of spring, it is at the time when her sewing needle is stopped and words cannot be spoken."

This One Mind, derived from the two words *Myōhō* mentioned above, when spread out includes all the Dharma worlds of the ten directions, and when contracted returns to the no-thought and no-mind of self-nature. Therefore the Buddha preached such things as "outside the mind nothing exists," "in the triple world there is One Mind alone," and "the true appearance of all things." Reaching this ultimate place is called the *Lotus Sutra*, or Amida Buddha of Infinite Life; in Zen it is called the Original Face; in Shingon the Sun Disc of Inherent Nature of the Syllable *A*; in terms of Buddhist morality it is Basic, Unconditioned Essence of the Precepts. Everyone must realize that these are all different names for the One Mind. . . .

After meditating in the Himalaya the Buddha discovered the nature of the mind that is
endowed from the outset. He called in his noble voice: "How marvelous! All living beings are
dowered with the wisdom and the virtuous characteristics of the Tathāgatas." He preached the
sudden and the gradual teachings and the partial and complete doctrines of the various scriptures,
and became himself the great teacher of the triple world. When he was worshiped by the gods
Brahmā and Indra, it is as though the lotus blossom had emerged from the mud and opened to its full
beauty. Just as the lotus's color and fragrance inhere in it as it lies in the mud, as it emerges, and as
it blooms above the surface, so when the Buddha preached the Dharma as numerous as the sands in
the Ganges, he referred to nothing that was brought in from the outside. In terms of the common
person, he spoke of the appearance of the Buddha-nature itself, with which all are without a doubt
dowered; in terms of living beings, once the vow to become a Buddha has been made, the Wondrous
Dharma of the One Mind does not increase nor lessen one bit. It is just the same as the lotus: at the
time that it lies amidst the mud and after its blossoms are scattered in the summer, it does not
undergo any fundamental change whatsoever. Thus he provisionally likened the lotus plant to the
Wondrous Law of the One Mind. Is this not irrefutable proof that the Buddha mind, with which all
people are endowed, was called the Lotus Sutra of the Wondrous Law?

The True Reality that is the Lotus Sutra cannot be seized by the hands or seen by the eye.
How then is one to receive and hold it? What then should one say to the practitioner of the Lotus
Sutra who wishes to take it himself? There are three types of capacity. The practitioner of inferior
capacity is captivated by the yellow scroll with its red handles, and copies, recites, and makes
explanations of it. The practitioner of average capacity illuminates his own mind and so receives
and holds to the Sutra. The person of superior capacity penetrates this Sutra with his wisdom eye,
just as though he were viewing the surface of his own mind. That is why the Nirvāṇa Sutra says:
The Tathāgata sees Buddha-nature with his wisdom eye.” The practitioner of the Lotus Sutra, if he is engaged in the true practice of the ultimate of Mahāyāna, will not find it an easy thing to do. What is simple is very much so; what is difficult is very, very difficult indeed.

[Yampolsky, the Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 87-90]

Supplement: Zen Practice and Recalling the Name Amida Buddha are the Same

Suppose one man is occupied with Zen meditation on the kōan of Zhaozhou's Mu (nothing) and another man devotes himself exclusively to the recalling of the Buddha Amida's Name (nembutsu). If the meditation of the former is not pure; if his determination is not firm, even if he devotes himself to the kōan for ten or twenty years, he will gain no benefit whatsoever. The man who recalls Amida Buddha's Name, on the other hand, should he call it with complete concentration and undiluted purity, should he neither concern himself with the filthy mundane world nor seek the Pure Land, but proceed determinedly without retrogression, he will, before ten days have passed, gain the benefits of samādhi, produce the wisdom of the Buddha, and achieve the Great Matter of deliverance in the very place he stands.

What is deliverance (ōjō)? It all comes down to one thing—seeing true nature (kenshō). The Limitless Life of Amida Buddha Sutra states Amida's vow: "Until all those who recall my name ten times in their desire for deliverance in my pure land are delivered there, I shall not accept perfect awakening." Where is "my pure land"? Is it not the innate true nature with which you yourself are endowed, standing bright and clear before your eyes? If you have not seen into your own nature it will not be easy for you to see this pure land. Yet nowadays those who practice the Pure Land teachings recite Amida's Name daily a thousand times, ten thousand times, a million times, but not one of them has determined the Great Matter of deliverance. Don't they realize that Amida Buddha
refused to accept perfect awakening? Still more, don't they realize that one instant of thought is this very Pure Land of Ultimate Happiness? Why wait then for ten repetitions of the name?

For this reason the Buddha has said that for the valiant man becoming a Buddha occurs in an instant of thought; for the indolent man, Nirvāṇa will take the incalculable long period of three \textit{as arinkkheya} kalpas. It should be known that those who think that the Mu kōan and the recalling of Amida Buddha's name are two different things are heretics. How sad it is that the Pure Land practitioners today are unaware of the basic aspiration of the many Buddhas. They believe only that the Buddha is in the Western Pure Land and they are unaware that the Western Land is the basis of their own minds. They are convinced that through the power of the recitation of Amida Buddha's name they will somehow leap through space and after they are dead be reborn in the Western Pure Land. But although they spend their whole lives in painful struggle, they will not be able to achieve their vow to attain deliverance there. Know then that the \textit{Lotus Sutra} says, "In all the Buddha lands everywhere there is the Dharma of the One Unique Vehicle." This is why the \textit{Flower Garland Sutra} says: "The Buddha body fills the Dharma realm; it appears before all living beings everywhere." If the Buddha were only in the Western Pure Land it would not be possible for him to appear before all living beings everywhere. And if he does appear before all living beings everywhere, then he cannot be only in the Western Pure Land. How sad indeed that although it is as obvious as the palms of their hands that the pure, true body of the Tathāgata stands in all its brilliance clearly before their eyes, people are all unable to see him because their eye of wisdom is blinded. Unspeakable indeed! . . .

Doesn't the \textit{Contemplation Sutra} state: Amida's brilliance illumines the world in all directions"? But do not understand this to mean that the brilliance and the world are two different
things. If you are awakened, the worlds in all directions, grass, trees, lands are perfected and at once are the true body of the pure light of the Tathāgata. If you are deluded, the true body of the pure light of the Tathāgata is perfected, but in error is made to be the world in all directions, grass, trees, and lands. That is why the Diamond Perfect Wisdom Sutra says: "If you see me as form or seek me as sound, you are practicing the ways of the heretic and will never be able to see the Tathāgata."

The true practitioner of the Pure Land doctrine is not like this. He does not contemplate birth, he does not contemplate death; his mind does not falter or fall into error. Recalling the Name of Amida Buddha constantly he has reached the state where his mind is undisturbed. The great Matter appears suddenly before him and his salvation is determined. Such a man can be called one who has really seen true nature. His own body is the limitless body of Amida Buddha, the Pure Land's jeweled trees of seven precious gems, the pond of the eight virtues. His own mind is illumined and radiates before his eyes. He has penetrated to the understanding that mountains, rivers, the great earth, all phenomena are the rare and the mysterious Sea of Adornment. The ultimate, in which there is complete concentration, is recalling the name, in which not an instant of thought is produced, and in which the body and life are cast aside, is known as "going" (ō). The place where samādhi is perfected and true wisdom makes its appearance is known as "delivered" (jō). The welling-forth of this absolute principle in all its clarity, the immovable place in which the true practitioner stands, not one fraction of an inch apart from truth, is "the welcoming of Amida" (raigō). When the welcoming of Amida and deliverance are then and there not two things—this is the true substance of seeing true nature.

[Yampolsky, The Zen Master Hakuin, pp. 127-29]

A final note regarding the present institutionalized forms of Zen, the division of which into the two
main streams of Sōtō and Rinzai dates from the mid Tokugawa period after the 1654 arrival of Yinyuan Longqi (J. Ingen Ryūki, 1592-1673) and other Chinese monks who eventually founded the Ōbaku Zen lineage. The Ashikaga period Five Mountain and Rinka Zen networks (see Ch. 14) each had included both Sōtō and Rinzai lineages, and clerics of various Rinzai and Sōtō lineages commonly studied at each other's temples. By the time of Yinyuan's arrival, however, all the Five Mountain lineages had died out. Differences between the new Chinese-style Ōbaku Zen and Japanese Rinka traditions, however, awakened among Japanese Zen monks a new sense of anti-Ōbaku sectarian consciousness. In the Rinka lineages, Sōtō monks such as Manzan Dōhaku (1636-1714) and Menzan Zuihō (1683-1769) advocated a return to Dōgen's teachings, especially as expressed in his True Dharma Eye Treasury, while the Rinzai monk Hakuin Eikaku advocated a vigorous system of kōan study based on earlier Japanese Rinka practices, which he identified with the Song dynasty ancestor of his own Ō-Tō-Kan lineage, Zutang Zhiyu (J. Kidō Chigu, 1185-1269). Thus Japanese Rinka monks, both Sōtō and Rinzai, identified their own traditions with the heritage of the Chinese Song dynasty in opposition to Ming dynasty culture of Ōbaku. While the surviving Sōtō and Rinzai lineages share a common Rinka heritage, since the late Tokugawa period the differences between them have grown ever more pronounced.

33E: Jiun Sonja: Sermons on the Precepts and Monastic Life

Jiun Sonja was born in Osaka in 1718, the son of a rōnin and a devoutly Buddhist mother. As a boy, Jiun received a Confucian education and, for a time, exhibited a disdain for Buddhism and its clergy that reflected his early Confucian sympathies. However, after his father's death in Jiun's thirteenth year, his upbringing was entrusted to a monk affiliated with the Shingon vinaya sect (Shingon rishū), and within two years Jiun had been won over to Buddhism. In his late teens, he was sent by his teacher to Kyoto for further study of Confucianism at the Kogidō, or School of Ancient Meanings, established by Itō Jinsai (1627-1705). Immediately thereafter Jiun resumed his Buddhist training in Shingon ritsu temples in the Osaka area. Though by his early twenties, he had succeeded his teacher as abbot of Hōrakuji in Osaka, he soon gave up that post to embark upon a period of uninterrupted meditation under the direction of a Sōtō Zen monk. It was during this time

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1 The Shingon ritsu sect, which emphasizes the Buddhist precepts, was originally founded by Eison (1201-90) and Ninshō (1217-1303) and, after a period of decline, was revived in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by Shunshō Myōnin (1576-1610).
that he apparently had his first enlightenment experience.

In his late twenties, troubled by what he judged to be a lack of commitment to practice among his contemporaries, as well as by the sectarian character of Tokugawa Buddhism, Jiun commenced a movement to revive what he sometimes called "Buddhism as it was when the Buddha was alive," or, more frequently, the "True Dharma." At the heart of his movement—known as the Shōbōritsu, or "Vinaya of the True Dharma"—was an emphasis upon the fundamentals of Buddhist practice and a de-emphasis of sectarian concerns. After a long career as a Buddhist scholar, reformer and apologist, Jiun died in Kyoto in 1804.

The following three sermons date from the middle period of Jiun's life which he passed in retreat in a hut on Mt. Ikoma, east of Osaka. For nearly fourteen years prior to this, Jiun had worked in a variety of ways for the spread of the "True Dharma"; then, in 1758, he withdrew to the mountain. He spent much of his time there meditating, but he also concentrated on the study of Sanskrit during those years, completing, with the help of a handful of disciples, the bulk of his one-thousand fascicle Bongaku shinryō or "Guide to Sanskrit Studies."

The sermons translated in the following pages have been selected to illustrate the importance Jiun attached to the precepts and the monastic life. Students of Dōgen (1200-53) will notice a strong similarity between the Zen master's thought and Jiun's on these subjects; for both, the celibate, meditative way of life initiated by the Buddha and established as the norm for all later generations of monks and nuns is viewed as simultaneously a means to and a consequence of the enlightenment experience. As Jiun states in one of the sermons translated below, the way of life of one who "leaves home" is "natural to people who follow the great path to liberation from birth and death."

Arouse the Thought of Enlightenment and Observe the Precepts

A wise person should earnestly arouse the thought of enlightenment. The thought of enlightenment is the thought pure in its self-nature. It naturally has no relationship to fame and profit, the desires of the five senses, to self-pride and conceit, and to much talk and many concerns. Rather, it is naturally related to gentleness and harmony, to compassion and forbearance, to loyalty,

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1 For Jiun's critique of Confucianism, see Bibliography, Paul Watt, "Jiun Sonja," pp. 188-214.
filial piety, sincerity, good faith, to humility and respect, to meditation and wisdom. From the Buddhas above to flying and creeping insects below, all are seen as the same in their self-nature, yet their distinctive attributes are not destroyed. Accordingly, one seeks enlightenment above and transforms sentient beings below; one reveres those above and loves those below.

The place where the thought of enlightenment takes form is in the practice of the precepts. That which accompanies the practice of the precepts is the mind of great compassion. Practice of the precepts without the thought of enlightenment leads to the attainment of a pleasant retribution in the conditioned world; this is the lesser karma attained by human beings and devas. A time will come when this retribution is exhausted and, as before, you will fall back into the cycle of birth and death.

Practice of the precepts with the thought of enlightenment extends infinitely into the future and in the end leads to the realization of the retribution of Buddhahood. In the sutras, it is written, “The Buddhas of the three periods of time gained the thought of enlightenment through these precepts.” All of you should believe this and receive and observe the precepts in conformity with the Dharma.

[Watt, tr., “Sermons,” p. 122.]

Leave Home for the Protection of the True Dharma (Shōbō goji no tame ni shukke seyo)

. . . The Dharma is fundamentally not something that arises and becomes extinct. Even if all sentient beings, at the same time, were to arouse the thought of enlightenment, fulfill the practice of the bodhisattva and realize unsurpassed enlightenment, as regards the Dharma, there would not be the slightest increase. . . . Corruption in the conduct of monks, however, may accurately be referred to as a sign of the Dharma's decline. . . . Seeing the corruption today in the appearance and conduct
of the five groups [within the Buddhist clergy],¹ one must arouse a [high] aspiration.

The sutras say that when Shākyamuni was a prince and went forth from the north gate [of his palace], he saw an ascetic, and for the first time, he aroused the thought of enlightenment. Thereafter, he followed a hunter and exchanged his garments for a robe, and cutting off his hair with a knife, for the first time [himself] took on the appearance of an ascetic. Then in the guise of one who had left home, he begged for food in the country of Magadha. . . .

The Buddha, the World-Honored One, was not a person who left home because the position of a Cakravartin king² or the governance of the empire had become a burden. . . . It was not that his officials and subjects had become a burden. For the Buddha, the World-Honored one, even when he was among great numbers of people, it was no different than when he was alone in a quiet place with no one around. It was not that the palaces and towers had become a burden. . . . Nor was it that he left home because his three wives . . . had become a burden. . . . Nor was it that he left home because his relatives have become a burden. . . .

Why then did he leave home? It is simply that the guise of an ascetic and of one who leaves home is natural to people who follow the great path to liberation from birth to death. Because all of the Buddhas of the three periods of time left home and realized enlightenment, Shākyamuni also, following their [example], left home and realized unsurpassed enlightenment. . . .

Therefore, when illustrious masters of ancient times discoursed on the three Treasures and spoke of the element most important for the transformation of people, [they held that] the merit of

¹ Monks, nuns, male and female novices, and siksamana, a special category of female novices between the ages of 18 and 20.

² A universal monarch; an ideal Buddhist ruler who governs through spiritual power rather than force.
the Buddha comes first. For the attainment of liberation, [however,] the merit of the Dharma comes first. Even the Buddha realized enlightenment by taking the Dharma as his teacher, and people today also practice relying upon the Dharma. [Yet] for the maintenance of the Three Treasures, the merit of the Sangha comes first. If the conduct of the Sangha is correct, then the Buddha and the Dharma will survive, and, as a consequence of that, the true Dharma will long abide. . . .

Today, a person who sees the signs of the Dharma's decline and who [still] has a [high] aspiration, can not pass the days at ease. If, arousing a [high] aspiration, a person wants to protect the Dharma, there is nothing better than leaving home in accord with the Dharma. If one's appearance is correct, the Buddha's Dharma will survive. . . .

The Merit of Leaving Home (Shukke kudoku)

The merits of a person who leaves home are innumerable and without limit.

On the one hand, one who leaves home inherits the seeds of Buddhahood and causes them to flourish.

On the other hand, one who leaves home becomes a field of blessing for all sentient beings. This is because one who has left home is the manifest form of compassion. For those human beings and devas who see him, he becomes a cause of virtue. . . .

For those human beings and devas who see him [one who has left home], he becomes a cause of virtue. Those who reverence and honor him will surely gain the retribution of being held in high esteem, and those who make offerings to him and sing his praises will surely give rise to all virtue and wisdom. . . .

When a monk walks under the moon in meditation, his mind is emptied of all conditioning. When he sits in meditation beneath a tree, all gates to the Dharma manifest themselves within his
mind, and he roams far beyond the three worlds. He is unaware that he is still on earth; yet, at ease, he moves about in one room. He is unaware that he is a person who has left home, or again, that he is a human being. Gain and loss, right and wrong—of what concern are they to him? A ruler cannot make him his subject; his father cannot again make him his child. He has no ties to wife or children; he does not compete for fame or profit. Rather . . . he is like the ruler of a country who becomes the overseer of the four classes of people, causes each to work at this task, and yet himself simply sits with folded arms, having nothing to do.

[For the monk], all sentient beings are his children. There is only compassion; there are no relative degrees of intimacy. To shave off one's hair is to discard all ornamentation. To dye one's clothes is to transcend all distinctions of noble and humble. To take the begging bowl in hand is to become a field of blessing for all sentient beings.