

**MODEL SUBJECT NO. 49  
FROM THE HEKIGAN ROKU  
(BLUE CLIFF RECORDS)**

**NOT VERBATIM**

**With a commentary by Engo-zenji**

**Translated by Reverend Suzuki, Master of Zen Center**

**March 1964**

**San-cho and "The Golden Scales" Escaping from the Net**

**Introductory Word:**

Engo introducing the subject said: Seven piercings and eight holes, snatching the drums and carrying off the banner (in war-time to pierce the enemy's lines in seven or eight places and to snatch the enemy's drums and banner is metaphorically compared to the great activity of San-cho in the main subject). A hundred ramparts and a thousand entrenchments, watching the front and guarding the rear (comparisons to Sep-po's way of attending to San-cho). Or sitting on the tiger's head and seizing its tail: such is not good enough to compare the great activity of skillful Zen Master (San-cho). Even though an ox-head disappears and a horse-head appears, this would not be miraculous enough (in comparison to the skill of Sep-po). So ponder what you will do, if you come across a man of such surpassingly great activity.

**Main Subject:**

Attention! San-cho asked Sep-po: "What (Why?) does a mysterious golden-scaled carp escaped from the fishing net cast?" Sep-po said, "I would like to wait for your coming out of the fishing net and then answer you." San-cho said, "You, who have fifteen hundred disciples do not understand what I say." Sep-po said: "this old monk is too busy in managing temple affairs to attend to you."

**Appreciatory Word** (by Set-cho with notes by Reverend Suzuki)

"Do not say that the golden carp which has jumped out of the fishing net is staying quietly in the water. [He is] loosening the heavens, moving the earth, shaking his fins, opening out its tail." [This refers to San-cho's statement: "You who have 1500 disciples ..." .] "Spouting water to a thousand feet, a great white whale will leap through the flood. After a great thunderstorm, a cool wind came." [This refers to Sep-po's statement: "This old monk is too busy ...".] "Oh, this wonderful pure clean wind, who knows the mystery of such tremendous cleansing power!"

**Interpretation of Main Subject** (A direct translation of Engo's remarks in the 'Hyo-sho', with some notes by Reverend Suzuki.)

Sep-po and San-cho—with questions and answers, giving and taking, crossing words with one another—neither won nor lost. Just think what kind of wisdom they have. San-cho had received Rinzai's transmission and had traveled many places. It is no wonder that he was treated as a high monk. Look at the following questions and answers made between Sep-po and him. Perhaps not many people can understand the deep meaning of this dialogue without being in the realm of radical Buddhism.

San-cho asked Sep-po: "What does the mysterious golden carp escaped from a fishing net cast?" Now ponder what he meant. What is the food for the golden-scaled fish? Sep-po, who was also a great master said to San-cho: "I would like to wait for your coming-out from the net and then answer you."

Fun-yo called the kind of question that San-cho asked, "a question presenting one's own understanding," (and in the Soto school they called this kind of question a "metaphorical question.") You may say that San-cho was a great golden-scaled carp escaped from the fishing net with a great incomparable wisdom and activity. However, Sep-po, a skillful master, did not give San-cho full play, saying: 'I will wait for your coming out of the net.'" Look! Those two masters are standing at the top of the ten thousand feet cliff!

However, but for San-cho's next instantaneous statement, the question and answer would not make full sense. San-cho said to Sep-po: "Although you are a teacher of fifteen hundred students, you do not know how to question and answer." To this Sep-po said: "I may have been mistaken to listen to you, because I am very busy in managing temple work." Look! He became very droll!

In the manner of confrontation of the two great masters' skill, there are no restrictions: sometimes grasping, sometimes granting, to the strong with the weak, to the humble with the polite. According to the circumstances, they express themselves at their own will. If you try to understand this subject with the idea of winning or losing, you will never see San-cho, even in your dreams.

"Such is the two well-trained Zen masters' way," said Engo, "at first they are tough and later droll. Do you still ask which has won or lost? The way of confrontation between other Zen masters is not always like this."

In order to make clear what a good Zen master San-cho was, Engo then said: Once San-cho was a head monk of Rin-zai's monastery. When Rin-zai was about to pass away, he gave his students the last sermon and said: "After my Nirvana, you should not destroy the

treasury of my right Dharma eye." San-cho came up to him and said: "How dare we destroy it?" Rin-zai said: "If someone asks you about my right dharma eye, what will you say?" San-cho gave a "*katsu!*" (a loud shout). Rin-zai then said: "Who would expect that my right Dharma eye is going to vanish into that donkey's belly!" Hereby San-cho made obeisance to Rin-zai (to show his utmost respect to Rin-zai). San-cho was Rin-zai's true successor, and questions and answers between them were like this.

## FROM A LECTURE

[The following is the gift of Reverend Suzuki's response to a question from one of his students during the Wednesday evening Lecture, February 26. The question refers to the lines from Engo's appreciatory Word:

"After a great thunderstorm, a cool wind came,  
Oh this wonderful pure clean wind,  
who knows the mystery of such tremendous cleansing power!"]

**QUESTION:** Is it necessary to go through thunder and storm in order to attain the clear calm healing wind?

**ANSWER:** Not always. If there is no thunderstorm, you cannot undergo it! Once when I was travelling alone in Northern Japan, I met a man accompanied by a dog held by a great dog chain. The first thing he said to me (we were on a boat going to a small island) was "Be careful, the dog is very dangerous!" We became good friends. He told me that if it was my business to save all common people, then I should know what happened to them. I had to experience what they experienced. He, for instance, had had women and had drunk *sake*. I should practice the same in order to understand him.

If the occasion comes to drink, it may be all right. If you have to do something, if it is inevitable, then there is the possibility of real training. But if I drank sake in order to train myself, then I would not be doing it in the same way as he. It would not work, he agreed.

It is dangerous to undertake something on purpose in order to yourself. We monks go to Eihei-ji monastery for training but it is not always successful! If you go of your own will, often there is wrong motivation. You expect something when you have completed it; you expect to gain enlightenment or improve your character or something.

It is quite dangerous. You must be very careful on your motivation when you do something on purpose. If we have had wrong motivation, then when we come out of the monastery, we become arrogant or conceited. We have spiritual pride in what we have done.

That is very dangerous.

There are many ways to train. The monastery is a good one. While you are there, you have to do many things. You know, if you walk through the fog, your garments will become wet, without any effort or being conscious of it, they quite naturally become wet.

That is why we begin training with the basic teaching of transiency: There is no self and all things are changing. If you really understand these two points, and if you just remain faithful to the truth, you will be rid of useless ambitions and one day acquire good character.

Sometimes we want hard training. If you are in discomfort or pain then it might be quite difficult to accept the fact of no self. If your legs hurt you want you want to have the stick on your shoulders. It takes your mind off your legs; it is a very kind thing that stick. Thus, sometimes we want hard training; but if you have the right attitude in all you do, you will be successful in your training of yourself.

But I do not ignore the thunder or the rainstorm. It is quite interesting to walk in the storm and rain.

---

This transcript is a retyping of the existing City Center transcript (thought to be based on notes by Baker-rōshi). It is not verbatim. No tape is available. The City Center transcript was entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. It was reformatted by Bill Redican (10/27/01).