

Introductory Word by Engo

Introducing Engo said, "Obtaining the sole existing independent body, the total free activity takes place." (When you become one with an object, your activity is omnipresent, the activity of one existence.) "On each occasion, an enlightened mind is quite free from intercourse with the world." (This is called intuitive free activity.) "Only because he has no idea of self are his words powerful enough to put an end to ordinary mind." (Baso's powerful way in this main-subject.) Think for a while. After all, from what place did the ancients get the ultimate restfulness. Ponder about the following subject.

Main Subject

Attention! Once, when Baso was walking with his disciple Hyakujo, wild ducks were flying over them. Baso, the great teacher, said, "What are they?" Kyakujo said, "They are wild ducks." Baso said, "Where are they going?" Hyakujo said, "They are flying away."

Baso gave Hyakujo's nose a great tweak. Hyakujo cried out with pain. Baso said, "Did they indeed fly off?"

Note by Reverend Suzuki

Baso Doitsu (709-788) was a man of mighty physique. It is said that his eyes were like a tiger's eyes, that he walked like a bull, and that his tongue reached to his nose when he talked. He was the chief disciple of Nan-gaku Ejo (?-755) and spiritual grandson of the Sixth Patriarch, Daikan Eno (638-713). During his life under the patronage of the Tang emperors, Buddhism in China was spreading rapidly.

His posthumous name was Daijaku Zenji. (Zenji means Zen Master). One hundred and thirty nine disciples attained enlightenment under him. Hyakujo Ekai was one of his five most outstanding disciples. (Banzan Hoshaku, Model No. 37; Mayoku Hotetsu, No. 31, Nansen Fugan, No. 28, 31, 40, 63, 64, 69; Taibai Hojo). It has been 1050 years since Hyakujo Ekai Zenji passed away. In Japan this year they held big memorial services for him in many Zen temples.

Hyakujo established for the first time monastic rules and a special monastery for Zen monks in a more suitable and advanced understanding of Vinaya. Before Hyakujo almost all Zen monks

practiced zazen at temples of the Vinaya school.

Hyakujo's way of Buddhist life is not altogether the same as the Indian way of devotional life. In China, one of the most important practices for a Zen student was physical labor or to work on building a temple. This kind of work was thought to be wrong activity for monks in India. These Chinese monks must have appreciated a cup of tea after their hard work. It was from this practice and the certain deep way in which their appreciation was expressed that the tea ceremony developed.

Buddhism became more a part of practical life and was expressed as near-at-hand truth in such ways as "have a cup of tea" or "if I do not work one day, I do not eat one day."

Hyakujo had practiced Zen under Baso for 20 years. there is no break in Zen practice. Who but alert Zen Masters, would know that by these wild ducks was meant Buddhathata. Hyakujo was too truthful to his teacher's question to realize the secret point, and he said, "They are wild ducks." Baso was pleased with his disciple's usual innocent answer; but as an efficient teacher of a good student, he had to be a poison oak. So Baso said, "Where are they going?" This is a so-called old woman's kindness or to go into a donkey's belly. In the realm of Buddhathata (reality), there is no where to come from for the ducks; but from the standpoint of the relative there are ducks flying away over their heads. For a good Zen Master like Hyakujo, his way should always be free, sometimes relative, sometimes absolute. But instead he always remained in the relative way of observance. Baso wanted him to get over the relative by himself. That is why Baso put to Hyakujo a strong relative question expecting a kind of strong absolute answer. But Hyakujo remained in his pure complete innocence and presented a relative answer, "They have flown away." So at last Baso gave Hyakujo's nose a sharp tweak with his big hand and Hyakujo cured out with pain.

Thereupon Baso said, "Have they indeed flown off?" and enlightened Hyakujo (who acquired the free activity of Baso--see Introductory Word).

Baso and Hyakujo, a teacher and a disciple, had practiced together for twenty years. It was sincere Hyakujo who fulfilled the absolute request of his teacher Baso. It was kind Baso who recognized his disciple's train of relative effort and helped to switch him over to the full awakening of relative and absolute. They are good example of the relationship between a teacher and a disciple.

When we come to a thorough understanding of the oneness of the relative and the absolute, we will realize that what Baso said was right because of Hyakujo's enlightenment. Or it may be said that the wild

ducks did not fly away because Hyakujo's true practice. In short, Hyakujo completed this relative conversation provided by Baso. Here is the true sense of the oneness of practice and enlightenment.

Appreciatory Word by Setcho

Oh wild ducks! How many of you understand them? Baso saw them and started the conversation with Hyakujo. His great tongue covers the mountains' clouds and the moon above the vast ocean with a lofty sentiment. But Hyakujo remained unaware of his true nature and said the wild ducks were flying away. Indeed! Except for the tweak and the pain, their true nature would have flown off. What else would you say bit to cry out: Say! Say something!

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).