

MODEL SUBJECT NO. 53 from the HEKIGAN ROKU (BLUE CLIFF RECORDS)

Introductory Word by En-go

Introducing En-go 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." (Ba-so'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, while Ba-so was walking with his disciple Hyaku-jo, wild ducks were flying over them. Ba-so, the great teacher, said, "What are they?" Hyaku-jo said, "They are wild ducks." Ba-so said, "Where are they going?" Hyaku-jo said, "They are flying away."

Ba-so gave Hyaku-jo's nose a great tweak. Hyaku-jo cried out with pain. Ba-so said, "Did they indeed fly off?"

Note by Reverend S. Suzuki

Ba-so Do-itsu (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 (?-775) and spiritual grandson of the Sixth Patriarch, Dai-kan E-no (638-713). During his life and under the patronage of the Tang emperors, Buddhism in China was spreading rapidly.

His posthumous name was Dai-jaku Zen-ji. (Zen-ji means Zen Master.) One hundred and thirty-nine disciples attained enlightenment under him. Hyaku-jo E-kai was one of his five most outstanding disciples. (Ban-zan Ho-shaku, Model Subject No. 37; Ma-yoku Ho-tetsu, No. 31; Nan-sen Fu-gan, Nos. 28, 31, 40, 63, 64, 69; Tai-bai Hojo.) It has been 1050 years since Hyaku-jo E-kai Zen-ji passed away. In Japan this year they held big memorial services for him in many Zen temples.

Hyaku-jo established for the first time monastic rules and a special monastery for Zen monks in a more suitable and advanced understanding of Vinaya. Before Hyaku-jo, almost all Zen monks practised Zazen at temples of the Vinaya school.

Hyaku-jo'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."

Hyaku-jo E-kai Zen-ji (720-814)

Posthumous name Daichizengi

Grandson of Dai-kan E-no, the 6th Chinese Patriarch, Son of Ba-so Do-itsu

Father of O-baku-Kiun (Huang Po, father of Rinzai) and I-san Rei-yu (founder of I-gyo School)

Zen Center will hold a Memorial Service for Hyaku-jo during the one-week sesshin,
August 24 - 30, 1964

Hyaku-jo had practised Zen under Ba-so for 20 years. There is no break in Zen practice. Who but alert Zen Masters, would know that by these wild ducks was meant Buddhatahata. Hyaku-jo was too truthful to his teacher's question to realize the secret point, and he said, "They are wild ducks." Ba-so 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 Ba-so 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 Buddhatahata (reality), there is no where to come from for ducks; but from the standpoint of the relative there are the ducks flying away over their heads. For a good Zen Master like Hyaku-jo, his way should always be free, sometimes relative, sometimes absolute. But instead he always remained in the relative way of observance. Ba-so wanted him to get over the relative by himself. That is why Ba-so put to Hyaku-jo a strong relative question expecting a kind of strong absolute answer. But Hyaku-jo remained in his pure complete innocence and presented a relative answer, "They have flown away." So at last Ba-so gave Hyaku-jo's nose a sharp tweak with his big hand and Hyaku-jo cried out with pain.

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

Ba-so and Hyaku-jo, a teacher and a disciple, had practised together for twenty years. It was sincere Hyaku-jo who fulfilled the absolute request of his teacher Ba-so. It was kind Ba-so 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 a 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 Ba-so said was right because of Hyaku-jo's enlightenment. Or it may be said that the wild ducks did not fly away because of Hyaku-jo's true practice. In short, Hyaku-jo completed this relative conversation provided by Ba-so. 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? Ba-so saw them and started the conversation with Hyaku-jo. His great tongue covers the mountains' clouds and the moon above the vast ocean with one lofty sentiment. But Hyaku-jo 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 but to cry out: Say! say something!