



寒雲抱幽石

霜月照清池

Cold clouds embrace
lonely rocks,

Kan'un yōseki o idaki,

寒雲抱幽石

The frosty moon shines
upon the clear pond.

Sōgetsu seichi o terasu.

霜月照清池

These lines are from the sixth section of the *Kaian Kokugo* by Hakuin Eikaku

In the severe chill of winter, the cold clouds embrace the exposed rocky tops of the mountains. The scenery appears so cold, it seems everything will freeze. Into the frozen garden pond, the moon sets. That cold moon makes the whole world transparent with its light. The chill's severity is felt there too.

Nansen Fugan Zenji did sanzen with Hyakujo Ekai Zenji, his older Dharma brother under Baso.

Hyakujo asked, "Was there something that the Buddha and all of the Patriarchs could not express?"

This is a terrifying question. It is asking about that truth which cannot be expressed, which can only be realized through experience. Yet as soon as the experience is spoken of, it is no longer the pure experience. In this unanswerable question Hyakujo was asking about the very experience of the Buddha.

Nansen answered, "There is."

Nansen recognized that essence and taught it. When the Buddha was dying, he said that even though he had taught for forty-nine years, he had never taught a single word. Even though the Buddha taught always, and his words became the 5,048 sutras, the enormous quantity of words in those 5,048 sutras can't express it. So what is it?

Nansen answered with this essence itself.

Hyakujo was also direct and tenacious. He asked further, "Then what is that which cannot be spoken?"

That which cannot be taught in the sutras, how have you understood it? He was gouging out that mind of deep awakening.

Nansen then answered, "It is not mind, it is not Buddha, it is not a thing."

It is just this as it is.

Here is the experience expressed exactly as it is. Vertically it extends through the three realms of time; horizontally it extends into the ten directions. That which surges and fills the great heavens and the great earth is not mind, not a physical body, and not a mental understanding, only the thing exactly as it is.

Later it was said, "No body, no words." In the experience exactly as it is, even while the words are being spoken, there is no one saying them. Do we receive this as words or as experience? If we have not realized this experience, there is nothing that can be done or said about it!

Hyakujo said, "There! It is said!"

Of course Hyakujo understood, and while understanding he heard those words clearly.

Nansen said, "Whether it was said or not, I don't know. Only 'this!'"

In this way he answered. That unmoved essence, the experience exactly as is, is what must be seen here.

Then Nansen asked, "How about you?"

Hyakujo answered, "I have no such great wisdom as those historical Patriarchs, to say it or not say it. I don't know about anything as difficult as that."

Although Hyakujo was using words, the experience that is absorbed into those words, manifested exactly as is, is what has to be read here. We have to look closely at the essence of Master Hyakujo Ekai. It may look as if he is running away, but he's not. He is expressing what is beyond words, saying what cannot be put into words.

Nansen digs in further and says, "What do you mean? I don't get it."

He is saying that not about the words of Hyakujo but about his own experience and state of mind. He is not saying that without knowing the essence itself; rather he is experiencing this essence that cannot be expressed and responding to the words of Hyakujo. Nansen said, "I don't get it at all," but it is not that he doesn't understand. Both Hyakujo and Nansen are expressing the same experience. They have died and know completely, yet they say they don't know at all. The Dharma that can't be spoken is thus expressed thoroughly and completely. This essence has to be seen.

Finally Hyakujo responds, "It seems like I have talked too much."

This is the truth that cannot be spoken, that which is taught without being taught. While one who knows this experience can't describe it, the experience is manifested in the words that are spoken. Can the truth of deep mind be spoken or not? It was the Buddha who taught what cannot be spoken of. Those who have experienced it can perceive it surging through his words, while those who do not know the experience cannot perceive it there. There is nothing that can be done about this. For people who do not know the experience, it has not been taught.

In this same way, for one who has realized the marrow of Zen, in each footfall and in each hand movement the mind of enlightenment is fully realized. In everything, we know a deepening of the ultimate realization of the truth, while at the same time we do everything possible to liberate all people. This honest state of mind is our home.

We cut the roots of *mozo* and also of all life energy and at the same time enlighten others, bringing them back to life. To do that and only that, in one straight line, wholeheartedly, with our whole being, is the true center of Zen.

"*Cold clouds embrace the wondrous rock*" is this state of mind. "*The frosty moon shines on the clear pond*" is the state of mind of Hyakujo Ekai. To know the profound truth of Nansen and Hyakujo we have to become those cold clouds ourselves. *We* have to become that wondrous rock. *We* have to become that frosty moon, reflected in that pure clear water without the slightest speck of anything else there. If you try to understand it with words and judge it with your head, the experience is impossible to realize.

When Hakuin Zenji was in his forty-second year, he picked up the *Lotus Sutra*. Because he had never been very fond of this sutra, he hadn't looked at it for years and didn't know it well. As he started to read, from under the porch the very faint, fragile cry of a cricket could be heard. Hakuin was suddenly awakened to the deepest teaching of the Lotus Sutra. In his diary he wrote

that with this experience at the age of forty-two, for the first time he understood the free, everyday state of mind of his teacher Shōju Rōjin, and understood directly that the Buddha had not deceived anyone.

Although Shōju Rōjin lived in silence in the mountains, in his solitude he was not just doing zazen in samadhi. While living in the mountains he was every single day liberating all people all over the globe. That this actuality was being manifested was what Hakuin was finally able to realize.

The Buddha did not deceive people with words and phrases but lived with firm determination to liberate all beings no matter what. This deep determination gave birth to the words of the sutra, which Hakuin finally saw clearly.

The sutras tell about various kinds of karmic affiliation with the Dharma. Some encounter it by hearing about it, and others by meeting someone of practice. There are many such divisions in the sutras, and in Buddhism there are divisions into groups such as the Theravada and the Mahayana, but above that, beyond any word or half a word, was the Buddha's actual liberation of all people, his immovable determination to not quit until all people are liberated, no matter what. Hakuin was now able to see clearly that there is nothing of greater importance than this passion, this deep mind, this awakening, and that the essence of the Mahayana is in just that. Hakuin said that for the first time his eyes of the Dharma were opened.

"Right now I have realized that all of the people in these three realms are all my children and everywhere in these three realms is my home." From these words we see clearly the Buddha's great compassion and understand how all beings are from the origin Buddhas. We know that the Buddha came into this world in order to realize and teach this true-seeing eye of wisdom to all people.

This great compassion has been compared to a mother chewing the food for her children to eat. All people must be liberated, no matter what has to be done. Hakuin realized this and wrote, "This endlessly chirping cricket under the porch, the tears that it has brought forth, these are the burning compassion of the Buddha's vow of liberation of all beings." This is what he realized at that time.