From the online library at www.worldwisdom.com

4

NISHITANI KEIJI

The I-Thou Relation in Zen Buddhism*

This essay, which in my opinion contains not only the very quintessence of Zen but also insights into the unplumbed depths of interhuman relationships, seems particularly characteristic of the workings of Nishitani's creative thought processes. Similar characteristics in structure may be discerned in other essays of this series, and perhaps even in oriental ways of thinking as such. They seem, for instance, clearly discernible in those of Nishida Kitarō and Soga Ryōjin.

But especially in Nishitani's essay which we present here, I am constantly reminded of its almost musical, even fugal structure. For a fugue is a composition in counterpoint based on a general theme, in which different voices enter successively in "imitation," as if in pursuit of one another, yet preserving a clear unity of form. Fugues of two or three voices are most frequent. Here the subject or theme, stated by the first voice alone, then taken up by the others, will in the course of the fugue's development appear and reappear in different form, slightly modified or even inverted. It is as if the voices answer one another's questionings, but in such a way that tonal unity is preserved, and hence the answers have to undergo mutations. The part of the fugue which includes the successive entrance of the voices in subject-answer alternation is known as the "exposition." It is the progressive enrichment of the polyphonic web so characteristic of the fugue that carries us along and enchants us.

I hope that this musical digression may add to the reader's delight in the essay that follows, in which one may listen to the *mondō* as if it were the fugue's subject stated by the first voice, and to the countersubject as sounded by Daitō's stirring poem, followed by the involved mutations and enrichments of the essay's development until it reaches a majestic resolution in "Kyōzan's roar of laughter."

* "The I-Thou Relation in Zen Buddhism," trans. N. A. Waddell, *The Eastern Buddhist* II/2 (1969): 71-87.

I

Kyōzan Ejaku asked Sanshō Enen, "What is your name?"
Sanshō said, "Ejaku!"
"Ejaku!" replied Kyōzan, "that's *my* name."
"Well then," said Sanshō, "my name is Enen."
Kyōzan roared with laughter.

Daitō Kokushi comments on the passage: Where does it go?

The sun shines warmly, the spring snow clears;
The jaws of the plum and the face of the willow vie
with their fragrant freshness.
The occasion for poetry and spiritual divertissement
holds boundless meaning.
Permitted only to the man who wanders in the fields
and arduously composes poetry.[1]

This encounter between Kyōzan and Sanshō is an old and well-known Zen kōan included in the collection entitled the "Blue Cliff Records" (Jap.: *Hekiganroku*; Chin.: *Pi-yen-lu*),[2] where it bears the title "Kyōzan Roars with Laughter." It shows the true significance contained in the encounter of one man with another.

We are constantly meeting others—wives, children, family, colleagues at work, people in the street and in buses, total strangers. Reading history we encounter people who lived hundreds of thousands of years ago. Oddly enough, we see nothing extraordinary in these encounters, or even question what makes these contacts possible, what infinite beauty, what boundless terror may be hidden below the surface of all such confrontations.

This question cannot be answered at a distance, from somewhere outside of the encounter itself. Nor can it be answered with the tools of biology, anthropology, sociology, or ethics, which cannot fathom its depth dimension. One can argue about human rights in such terms *ad infinitum* without ever facing the problem of what might be involved in meeting another being, and so end up as defenseless as ever against images like Hobbes's *homo homini lupus*, or the German mystic Heinrich Seuse's "manwolf." Nor is Kant's approach of the mutual affirmation of men as persons much help in solving the riddlesome, mysterious depths of the human encounter. Philosophical and theological probings seem wont to

recoil from looking into this bottomless pit. I cannot help feeling that looking at the relationship of man to man from within, let us say, the *communia sanctorum* of the church is—as the Chinese saying has it—like scratching an itchy foot without taking off one's shoe: a rather inefficient solution, given those layers of leather in the way. . . .

With Martin Buber the interhuman encounter has come to be seen as a personal relationship between an "I" and a "Thou." Although the approach no doubt has its own validity, it is far from exhausting the hidden depths of the person-to-person, I-and-Thou, relationship. Where it stops is the very point at which Zen exploration begins. Two factors need to be kept firmly in mind. First, the I and the Thou are absolutes, each in its own respective subjectivity. And second, both I and Thou are, because of their relationship to one another, at the same time absolutely relative. The subject in its absolute subjectivity has been spoken of in various ways. One of these, already alluded to above, is that men are like wolves to one another. Another, the Kantian concept of personality, sees the moral will of man as autonomous and does not allow of any outside determination, not even from God. From the usual religious point of view, the I stands in relation to God as to an Absolute Thou, an Absolute Other. In all three cases, the absoluteness of individual subjectivity means that nothing can take its place. And yet in each case we see something, either in man as an individual or above him, of a universal quality, something lawlike. By means of this universal, the relationship of one individual to another is both established and at the same time partly relativized. That is, the universal acts as a kind of obstruction to absolute individuality.

This universal may take a variety of forms. Where men encounter each other as wolves, the state or its laws might serve to check their individuality. For the ethical man, this function may be performed by practical reason or by moral law. For the religious person, an Absolute Other or divine law may act as a universal ground for the relationships between human beings. But in each case, the general structure of those relationships is conditioned by the universal, and so takes on a kind of halfway quality. The problems this presents is that on the one hand the individual has an irreplaceable subjectivity and hence complete freedom, while on the other, he is simulta-

neously subordinated to some universal or other. Insofar as all individuals are so subordinated, this would seem to imply that any one individual could take the place of any other.

It is a bit like a neighborhood funeral, which the head of a household should attend to offer condolences in the name of his family. Let us assume that he is too busy and sends his wife instead, or even that they are both unable to attend and have their oldest son substitute for them. In this case, it hardly matters who represents the family. Any one of its members can take the place of any other, thereby demonstrating the principle of substitution or surrogation. Now, whereas equality implies the possibility of such substitution, freedom implies its impossibility. A mixture of equality with freedom implies that this freedom is imperfect. As soon as the individual is subject to a universal, he is relativized and loses his absoluteness. All problems concerning correlations between freedom and equality are of this sort.

Looked at from another angle, this imperfect freedom implies as well an imperfect sameness or equality. Subordination to a universal cannot totally absorb or destroy the freedom of the individual as individual. To recover that freedom, unimpeded by law, he may have to escape from the prison of the universal. The power of the state and its laws can never fully succeed in transforming the wolf into a sheep, and from time to time the wolf will act as a wolf. Usually this takes place only on a limited scale, but should an individual so act on a grand scale, he could become the very incarnation of the Will to Power. Similarly, the rigor of moral law can never extinguish completely a man's self-love. In fact, that self-love may lead him to stoop to the "radical evil" that Kant speaks of. The sanctity of divine law cannot curb a man's obstinate appetites nor prevent him from ever turning his back on God, and falling happily into Satan's blandishments. Once his duty is over, the good householder who has just represented his respectable family at the neighborhood funeral might hail a taxi and rush to his mistress. Or the son who takes his father's place may turn around later and go to the movies with the money pilfered from his mother's purse. In short, for the individual relativized by some universal, both equality and freedom are imperfect. This means that where interhuman relationships are subordinate to such universals, with the result that equality and freedom accompany one another in their incompleteness, no authentic encounter

between human beings is possible. In the "natural state" of the man-wolf, the original character of man's encounter with man is hidden by laws, be they civil, moral, or divine.

When subordination to a universal proves incapable of absorbing the totality of the freedom of the private, individual self, we may find the very breath being squeezed out of individual freedom in an irate attempt to enforce equality. This is what happens, for instance, where socialism turns into totalitarianism. Of course an equality enforced in this way cannot be genuine and absolute. To be sure, for such equality to succeed the universal must swallow both private and individual freedom totally. But then, with nothing left of the individuality of the individual, there is also nothing left to which a common sameness could relate, with the result that the concept of equality or sameness becomes meaningless. Somehow an emancipation, a reinvention of the individual with some personal freedom would become necessary, and a way would have to be found by which the absolute negation of the individual and his freedom would at the same time be an absolute affirmation, and vice versa. In other words, what is required is an equality in which the negation of the individual and his freedom would become the absolute affirmation of the individual and his freedom. This is of course quite inconceivable, unless seen from the point of view of absolute nothingness, *śūnyatā*—nonbeing in the Buddhist sense of the term.

For a universal to posit itself in relation to the individual and thus become a universal that actually *exists*—whether as state, as practical reason, as God, or whatever—it has to mediate, one way or another, between individual and individual, and thereby bring them to unity. It is within this unity through law that the universal manifests itself as *being*, as something with self-identity, as "substance." The relation between man and man is then such that the individual forfeits half of itself in the relation. It is no longer an absolute individuality, standing as an independent totality. Meanwhile the universal remains to a certain extent inherent in individuals and radiates their capacity for relationship. Because of this immanence the universal cannot, however, completely pass over the individual and, as it were, deprive him of his roots. Therefore, as subsequently the freedom of the individual becomes more and more emphasized, unity through law is gradually weakened and in the end dissolves altogether. This tendency is demonstrated in the lapse from liberalism into anarchy. Anarchy might be called a "natural state" raised to

a higher plane, though no true freedom can ever be achieved through it. There is only one situation in which complete freedom can be attained without falling into anarchy, namely, the situation in which freedom and equality—which are essentially contradictory—can coexist in a paradoxical way. And this can only take place where the locus of *śūnyatā* becomes the locus of freedom. This locus of *śūnyatā* is attained when equality, which tends to negate freedom, is broken through to its unmoving ground of absolute negation or nothingness. True freedom can only be consummated where its absolute negation is absolute affirmation. Anything else would only mean a wobbling between the poles of totalitarianism and anarchy. I am not using totalitarianism and anarchy only in a political sense here, but as means to extend them to all categories of human relations. Totalitarianism is always capable of changing into anarchy and vice versa. The road to anarchy and the road to totalitarianism often run parallel.

II

The reader may have wondered what this long discourse on reality that belongs to our everyday experience might have to do with the strange Zen *mondō* between two ancient Chinese Zen monks we started with. The fact is, this *mondō* encompasses everything we have been dealing with. Let us go back to that original problem then, to face squarely, without compromise, the twofold conditions that affect I and Thou as subjects: namely, that they are each absolutes and at the same time absolutely relative. Unless we go back to this point we will be unable to realize either true individual freedom or true universal equality.

The fact that I and Thou are both thoroughly and absolutely absolute means that both of them in relation to one another are absolutely relative. This sounds like pure nonsense, an outright contradiction. It would imply a total hostility, an absolute animosity of one to the other, where each one would find it impossible to live under the same sky with the other, to use a Chinese expression. And where two cannot share the same sky, the one must kill the other. This is precisely the relationship of *homo homini lupus*—eat or be eaten. In such conditions, relativity would be eliminated altogether. (That is, we should have to refuse to allow for relative, respective

absolutes. Moreover, no basis would exist for accepting one and rejecting another; both are entirely equal.) For this reason, archenemies unable to live under the same sky nevertheless coexist quite efficiently. Should this be out of the question, they will have to resign themselves to a compromise by means of a universal and its law. This compromise will always be full of contradictions and conflicts and ever in danger of collapse, as is confirmed by events throughout history. It is that boundless suffering that, according to the Buddha, marks the way of the world. The ground of this suffering can be located in the relation of human beings one to another, in the simple fact that human beings do exist side by side, notwithstanding the theoretical impossibility of two absolutes coexisting alongside one another. That impossibility—which from time immemorial has proven to be possible and is still our day-to-day reality—has been the source of innumerable entanglements and boundless suffering. How does Zen see this situation? How does it succeed in proving the possibility of the absurd notion that absolute enmity is at the same time absolute harmony?

Kyōzan asked Sanshō, "What is your name?" Going back into the history of mankind we find that at one time the name had profound significance. It symbolized the bearer of the name, it revealed who he was, it became one with him. This view played an important role in magic, religion, and social life itself. If a woman disclosed her name to a man, it meant that she had disclosed herself to him, had already given herself to him. Later in history, expressions like "the name of Amida" and "in the name of Jesus Christ" implied that Buddha and God had revealed and proclaimed themselves and had given themselves to mankind. As we approach our own time, the name becomes ever more "just a name." Here we arrive at the point where man begins to boast about his own awakening intellect; here is the beginning of the modern scientific spirit and the appearance of nominalism and empiricism. It remains to be seen, however, whether considering the name as one with existence can simply be shrugged off as belonging to some mythological age prior to the emancipation of the intellect.

The opposite might well prove to be true: that men were once, long ago, in contact with reality in a very real way, and indeed experienced themselves as having their being within that reality. Perhaps the name was perceived *realiter* because reality was intimately felt,

concretely lived, directly realized. This would indicate that the interpretation of the name as being "just a name" shows up the intellect in its isolation from reality. Might not, then, the "awakened intellect" conceal a fall into a greater blindness? Might not our pride in the so-called scientific age be an expression of folly, of our lack of awareness of our own utter blindness?

Be this as it may, Kyōzan and Sanshō are not men of some mythological age. Zen is a radically demythologized religion, as typified in its injunction to "kill the Buddha and the Patriarchs." In our *mondō*, we might assume at first that it is a question about "just a name." But since Sanshō was a great Zen master and Kyōzan no doubt knew his name, it should be clear that Kyōzan's question is not simply an inquiry in Sanshō's name on the level of intellect. The question is, on the contrary, the opening gambit of a Zen happening—that of a simple encounter between two people—in order to penetrate, and to explore at its depths what happens every day between ordinary human beings. Sanshō and Kyōzan are here acting out the situation of two men whose natures make it impossible for them to live under the same sky, and who nevertheless must live under the same sky: the impossibility that we spoke of as becoming a possibility, or rather a fact, in our everyday reality. For here the exploration of reality in our everyday reality begins.

Commenting on Kyōzan's query, "What is your name?" Engo (Chin.: Yüan-wu, 1062-1135) says: "He robs at one time the name and the being." To ask someone for his name means also to take over his being. The eighteenth-century Zen master Hakuin remarked of this question that "it is like a policeman interrogating some suspicious fellow he has found loitering in the dark."

This does not necessarily mean that Kyōzan himself would so express the meaning of his question; it only points to the tone of the question. When that which has the nature of an absolute operates in the relative world, its operation, of itself, shuts out all relativity. That which opposes the self as "other" must be stopped short in its tracks, pulled over alongside the self, and swallowed up by it. Insofar as the self is its own master and maintains its full subjectivity—which is to say, insofar as it is in a true sense a "self"—this will take place naturally. This means that Kyōzan is Kyōzan. But now, from the standpoint of the Thou as subject, the same could be said to hold true. The essence of the I-Thou relationship is still characterized by

the problem of eating or being eaten. Engo adds a further comment to this dialogue: "Kyōzan had trapped him. He thought he had Sanshō firmly, but then to his astonishment discovered that he had caught a thief, a thief who turned the tables on him and robbed him of everything he owned."

When asked his name, Sanshō answered that it was Ejaku, which was in fact Kyōzan's own name: with that answer, therefore, Sanshō actually took over for himself, as it were, Kyōzan's absolute nature—the nature of Kyōzan as Kyōzan himself, the one who will not allow any Thou to stand in opposition to him, and who would take all others to himself. Skirting Kyōzan's defenses and attacking him from behind under the banner of his own self, Sanshō pulls the rug from under Kyōzan's feet, and seizes his very existence.

Besides, since it is all done in terms of Sanshō's genuine self, Engo observes that by his answer Sanshō cuts off Kyōzan's tongue: "He snatches flag and drum away from him." He also cuts short the contest and cuts off the self that put the question to him, snatching away the signs of victory. Sanshō is revealed as Sanshō.

Turning now to that aspect of Kyōzan's self that asked the question in the first place, we note that it arose from the same elemental ground. Kyōzan tries to rob Sanshō of his name and being, to steal Sanshō's self. This means that they remain in a relation of absolute enmity to one another. But the essential point is that the subjective relation of man to man is no longer that of I and Thou in the universal sense. When Sanshō calls himself by Kyōzan's name (Ejaku) Sanshō *is* Kyōzan and the I *is* the Thou, even as the Thou *is* the I. It is precisely the same from Kyōzan's standpoint. The I is no longer an ordinary I, it is the I (Sanshō) that is at the same time the Thou (Kyōzan). The Thou, too, is no simple Thou. It is now the Thou that is simultaneously I, so that I and Thou blend completely into one another.

Here one might think of absolute nondifferentiation, absolute oneness, absolute sameness. We find this expressed in Western thought, in such things as the Oneness of Plotinus and the Absolute Identity of Schelling. It is the point at which all relationship ceases to exist, with nothing to call it back. *There is neither self nor other; hence there is no person and no personal relationship left.*

Our *mondō* would seem to imply that the reality of the I-Thou relationship is simply a return to the problem of nondiscrimination, but in fact it demonstrates just the opposite. Although every simple

nondiscrimination is separated from reality, the problem here is surely one that actually involves the reality of I and Thou, and actually includes the reality of the encounter between man and man and the absolute opposition that belongs to it. Only in this case the I and the Thou are not simply I and Thou. Since the I is the Thou, and the Thou is the I, both are absolutely nondifferentiated. For the I, this absolute nondifferentiation belongs to the I itself, and it is the same for the Thou. In this way the I is a true I, and the Thou a true Thou. This is the genuine I-Thou relation.

We might formulate this paradox after the manner of the *Diamond Sutra* as follows: "The I-Thou relation is an I-Thou relation because it is not an I-Thou relation." This brings out the necessity for an absolute opposition as well. The I and the Thou that contend with one another for the ground of absolute nondifferentiation—each asserting that it belongs to itself (which it essentially does)—are thus really absolutely related to one another and therefore relative. They are an I and a Thou that, as genuine subjects, are absolutely different from each other. Here there is no relationship at all between I and Thou, and yet it is not a nonrelation as a mere nondifferentiation. *It is nonrelation as absolute opposition, and as a relative on the plane where all relations have been utterly transcended.* In fact, the reality of the I-Thou encounter in everyday life is one in which just such an absolute relativity and just such an absolute opposition exist. At the ground of such an encounter there lies unbounded horror.

Looked at from the other side, the absoluteness in absolute relativity is due to the fact that the absolute nondiscrimination belongs to both the I and the Thou; I can be I, and Thou can be Thou as absolute individuals because each of them is grounded on the absolute identity in which I am Thou and Thou are I, and every form of relation and relativity is superseded. Here, I *am* with you in no way discriminated from you, and you *are* with me, equally undiscriminated from me.

Sanshō's calling himself by Kyōzan's name means, then, that he is emptying himself and putting Kyōzan in his place. Where the other is at the center of the individual, and where the existence of each one is "other-centered," absolute harmony reigns. This might be called "love" in the religious sense. I stress "in a religious sense," because it is a case of "void" or "*muga*" (non-self) that has absolutely severed self-and-other from self-and-other in their relative sense.

Thus, absolute opposition is at the same time absolute harmony. Both are the same. Here, absolute opposition is, as it is, a sport, and absolute harmony is not simply nondifferentiation. *Self and other are not one, and not two.* To be not one and not two means that each self retains its absoluteness while still being relative, and that in this relativity the two are never for a moment separated. While the I to be the I acknowledges the Thou in relation to the Thou's own absolute non-differentiation, and thus permits itself to become absolutely the Thou, at the same time it takes the Thou to itself. Situated within this absolute nondifferentiation which opens up in the I, the I is the I itself—I am I. Even if we refer to the harmony of this absolute nonrelation as love, it is still different from love in the sense of *eros*, or in the sense of *agape*.

In any case, when Sanshō said he was Ejaku, Kyōzan answered, "Ejaku, that's my name!" whereupon Sanshō gave his own name, Enen. Commenting on this answer Hakuin says: "He has changed himself from head to foot. The old fox, with advanced age grown more and more cunning, has various tricks of transformation up his sleeve." And Engo notes: "They are both back to holding their original positions. After several changes of form, each has returned to his home ground."

This happening is indeed harmony and concord alluded to earlier—a harmony possessed of infinite beauty. Hakuin compares this encounter to the fight between a dragon and an elephant "stepping on and kicking each other," and says that "this is no place for lame horses and blind asses." But then he adds, "Their singing together and handclapping, their drumming and dancing—it is as if the spring blossoms had their reds and purples competing against one another in the new warmth." Here each self returns to its original position, where each is itself. Although each of us needs, in the midst of everyday encounters, to find a place where we can maintain our original position in spite of ourselves, we do not in fact explore and realize such a place thoroughly. The only way this can be done is to break through to the ground of the encounter. It is there that the condition of eat or be eaten is penetrated to the condition of at once eating *and* being eaten, until the little self of each one dissolves. It is the point where self and other are not two different things, where strife is transformed into sport. There it is like flowers competing with their reds and purples in the spring warmth. Unless the relations between individual and individual,

between nation and nation, between all factions, all groups, return to this condition, there remains only the battle between wolves in the wild.

III

In the light of what has been said, let us once more return to the poem by the Japanese Zen master Daitō Kokushi (1282-1337) written as a commentary on our *mondō*. It is included together with the *mondō* in the *Kwaiankoku-go*, a work in which Hakuin (1685-1768) comments upon Daitō's sayings and poems.

Of the first two lines Hakuin says: "If you trample on and kick over the dark valley of the eighth consciousness, the sun of the Great Mirror Wisdom will suddenly flash and immediately dissolve the piled-up snow drifts of the abiding aspect of all phenomena." And "He breaks away the solid-frozen all-sameness of the *Tathatā*, he melts away the ice of the one Dharma nature."

We might simply call this the transcendence of attachment, the attachment to self and all other attachments, including attachment to the dharma. The standpoint of the "man-wolf," as well as the source of the conflicts that cut mankind in two, will be found to have their roots in self-attachment which puts one's "self" at the center and so discriminates between "self" and "other."

Ultimately, however, this self-attachment itself is rooted in that *Ignorance* (*avidyā*), to be found in the eighth, or "store" consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), the foundation on which all human consciousness is based. I was referring to this Ignorance when I said previously that there is a layer of profound blindness at the very root of the human intellect. Illusion and suffering have their sources there. To master them, all kinds of theories and ideologies have been contrived, and numberless "laws"—civil, moral, and divine—have been formulated. But all these laws are incapable of cutting through the powerful roots of self-attachment; self-attachment continues under the very cover of these laws. One falls into pride in one's country, into moral pride, pride in one's gods or buddhas. To justify these "attachments to law" is merely self-attachment on a higher plane. The same is true for theories and ideologies.

Not that law is bad. What is bad is to fix one's self on some universal as "being," to become attached to law—in its heteronomous,

autonomous, or "theonomous" form. The mode of all such law attachments is precisely the "abiding aspect of all phenomena." All the laws involved in these attachments are the snowpile that hides them. Transcend the plane of the universal, as the nonduality of self and other, the void, or *muga* (non-self), and for the first time the sunlight of the Great Mirror Wisdom will shine on ignorance and break it asunder. It is the Light of Great Wisdom, the Light of Mahāprajñā. But if this nonduality of self and other were taken simply as nondiscrimination, it would become the *concept* of nondiscrimination, which is just another attachment to law. The "solid-frozen all-sameness of the *Tatahatā,"* the "ice of the one Dharma nature," the "ice-covered absolute one or absolute identity," etc. refer to those higher attachments to self and law that lie hidden at a level beyond ordinary attachments to self and law. When this place too is broken through, true reality is attained for the first time, where a contest of "fragrant freshness" goes on between the self as the self, the other as the other, and the law as the law. There the everyday encounters between all men are something of infinite freshness, pervaded with an infinite fragrance.

In the third line we meet the words *poetry* and *spiritual divertissement*. Here, of course, the encounter between man and man, just as the fine scenery with its plums and willows, becomes an occasion for poetry. This "poetry" does not consist in images imagined by human consciousness, nor is it composition made up of human language. Here the poem uses as its images actual things themselves; it is composed of the words that all things themselves recite.

The "spiritual divertissement" spoken of is not a spiritual divertissement staged in our consciousness, but one that arises from the very depths of our being and the being of all things. This is not a poetry of Romanticism, but of radical realism. By radically penetrating into reality as it actually is, reality itself becomes sheer poetry. It is the same as when the struggles in the ultimate ground of hostility become sport or play. The "poetry" that appears in the place that transcends what is ordinarily referred to as the realm of poetry—*that poetry not created by man, but in which man participates and which becomes part of man himself as well*—to what realm would that belong? When man casts off his small self and devoutly enters reality, the Great Wisdom (*prajñā*) opens up as the native place of all things, as the place where they emerge and realize themselves as they are—the place of reality itself. This opening up is indeed the

realization of reality in its suchness. The light of Wisdom, in which reality shines and is seen in its suchness, is reality's own light. The light of this "Sun of Wisdom" as it is, is also the insight in which man sees his "primary and original face." The poetry that arises spontaneously from *prajñā* is what we here call poetry. In this *prajñā* the reality of each and every real thing becomes, as it is, the "occasion for poetry and spiritual divertissement," which contains "boundless meaning."

Hakuin uses the following well-known passage from the *Analects* to comment on the third line:

> At the end of spring, when the making of the spring clothes has been completed, I go with five times six newly-capped youths and six times seven uncapped boys, perform the lustration in the river, I take the air at the Rain Dance altars, and then go home singing.[3]

Prajñā is the place where not only poetry, but also religion, philosophy, and morality originate—the place where all of these are perhaps united in such a way as makes it difficult to separate them, since it is prior to them all. If this is so, the poetry I refer to here may well be the realm from which all man-made poetry originates, and to where it returns as to its own wellspring. It is almost impossible to speak about such secret areas of our existence. We must be satisfied simply to raise the questions.

The tale of this encounter, which comes to a close with Kyōzan giving his name and Sanshō giving his, ends with Kyōzan's roaring laughter. The sound of this laughter is the essence of the whole tale. It is at this point that the struggle—which is really a "sportive *samādhi*"—and with it all the singing and clapping, drumming and dancing, comes to an end. What was both battleground and the place where men sang in unison has now turned back to the place of origin. It is like the ancient battlefield spoken of by the haiku poet Bashō:

> Ah! Summer grasses!
> All that remains
> Of the warriors' dreams.[4]

The men who fought here, the men who sang together here, the men who stood face to face, have long since vanished. Kyōzan and Sanshō, too, are gone. But Kyōzan's roaring laughter still resounds

in the air. Daitō Kokushi "caps" this with "where does it go?" Of course, he is not merely after information. He is pointing to the place where Kyōzan hides in laughter. In this "place of laughter" the reality of the encounter between one man and another may be transformed *as it is* into a superreality. That is to say, here reality manifests itself in its original aspect of superreality. Such is the implication of the words "the occasion for poetry and spiritual divertissement holds boundless meaning." More about it we cannot say. To understand the boundless meaning here is possible only for "the man who wanders in the fields and arduously composes poetry." The figure of the poet struggling to write poetry in order to transmit to others this meaning—which he has understood—suggests the conjunction of *Mahāprajñā* and *Mahākarunā* contained in Kyōzan's great laughter. This third line, together with the comment "Where does it go?" may be said to be the *ecce homo* of Daitō Kokushi himself.

NOTES

1. *Daitō-roku* ("The Sayings of Daitō Kokushi"), Book 3, fasc. 11, under "Juko"; also *Kwaiankoku-go*, Book 5, under "Juko."

2. A somewhat different translation appears in Katsuki Sekida, *Two Zen Classics* (New York: Weatherhill, 1977), p. 328.

3. The *Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley (New York: Random House, 1938), XI. 25, p. 160.

4. Translation by R. H. Blyth.

Qeb ^oqf`ib ^_lsb ^mmb^oba ^p @e^mqbo 1 fk qeb _llh
Qeb ?raae^ Bvb7 >k >kqelildv lc qeb Hvlql P`elli
*^ka Fqp @lkqb j mlo^ofbp %*T loia Tfpal j) /--1&)
bafqba _v Cobabof`h Co^k`h+ ã /--1 T loia Tfpal j +
>ii Ofdeqp Obpbosba+ Clo Mbopl k^i Rp^db L kiv+
t t t+t loia tfpal j +`l j