

Zen Buddhist Attitudes to War

HIRATA Seikō

IN ORDER FULLY TO UNDERSTAND the standpoint of Zen on the question of nationalism, one must first consider the Indian Buddhist context out of which the Zen tradition arose. How were matters of ethnic and national identity dealt with in the Buddhist sūtras?

ANTIWAR VIEWS IN THE BUDDHIST SŪTRAS

There is a story in the Buddhist sūtras that directly speaks to this question, a story based on the historical events relating to the destruction of the Śākya clan—the clan of which Śākyamuni was a member—by King Virudhaka of Kośāla, the powerful country that bordered the Śākya kingdom. These events, said to have taken place when the Buddha was about fifty years old, are described in a number of different sūtras.¹ The general outline of the story as related in the texts is as follows.

Virudhaka, infuriated by a racist insult at the hands of the Śākyas, sent a large army to destroy Kapilavastu, the capital of the Śākya kingdom. Hearing of this, the Buddha set himself down under a dead tree in the path of the army, knowing that Indian custom at the time required an invading army to give up its attack if it encountered a holy man in the course of its advance. Coming upon the seated Buddha, King Virudhaka ordered his troops to halt and asked him, “Why do you sit under this dead tree rather than in the shade of a living one?” The Buddha replied calmly, “My clan the Śākya is like this dead tree,” alluding to the impending destruction that awaited his people. At this King Virudhaka, obedient to the ancient custom, ordered his army back to Kośāla.

Still bristling from the insult, Virudhaka invaded a second time, but found the Buddha seated under the same tree. Once again the King ordered

¹ The story can be found in the *Ekottarāgama Sūtra* 增一阿含經卷 26 (T. 2.549, No. 125); *Vaidūryarāja Sūtra* 瑠璃王經 (T. 14.783, No. 513); and *Arthavargiya Sūtra* 義足經 (T. 4.174, No. 198).

a retreat. He invaded a third time, only to have to retreat yet a third time, his way blocked by the holy man. When word reached the Buddha that preparations were under way for yet a fourth invasion, however, he ignored the pleas of his disciples and refused to intervene. As a result the entire Śākya clan was slaughtered and the city of Kapilavastu destroyed.

Śākyamuni was born the crown prince of the Śākya clan, and if events had run their ordinary course would have been king at the time of attack and thus in charge of the country's defense. As it was, he had renounced his claim to worldly authority and taken up the life of a homeless religious mendicant. Realizing that the forces of karma cannot be thwarted by human design, he was convinced that the Śākya people would inevitably be destroyed for having insulted Kośala. Śākyamuni therefore refused in the end to oppose the advancing Kośala army, maintaining an attitude of complete and total non-belligerence, even in the full knowledge that this would mean the extinction of his clansmen and erstwhile subjects.

This story from the sūtras provides a good illustration of the absolute rejection of war in ancient Indian Buddhism. The early Buddhist posture of nonviolence was based not on humanistic ideas about the value of life, but on a religious understanding of the workings of karma. The Buddha's ultimate refusal to act for the sake of clan and country was rooted in his belief that the Buddhist dharma transcends ethnic and national concerns. The message of the story is that Buddhism is free of nationalistic concerns.

The sūtras go on to relate that, in karmic retribution for the destruction of the Śākyas and in accordance with a prophecy made by the Buddha, the people of Kośala were all drowned in a violent rainstorm, the palace was struck by lightning and burned to the ground, and King Virudhaka himself fell into the lowest realm of hell.

ZEN AND THE STATE IN TANG CHINA

Following the transmission of Buddhism from India to China, the body of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna sūtras was gradually translated into Chinese. A particularly important step in the evolution of Chinese Buddhist thought occurred when Tao-sheng 道生 (355–434) and Seng-chao 僧肇 (378–414), two disciples of the Central Asian translator-monk Kumārajīva (344–413), developed an interpretation of Buddhism based on Taoist and Confucian thought. The work of these monks in many ways laid the foundations for the subsequent development of Chinese Buddhism, one of the most influential products of which was Ch'an (Jap., Zen) Buddhism. Sectarian legend credits the actual founding of Ch'an to the First Patriarch Bodhidharma (470?–543?), who is said to have brought the teachings to China from his native

India, but the tradition can be more accurately seen as a synthesis of Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist thought.

A brief word is in order about the relation between Zen and Tang China (618–907), the great dynasty during which the Zen tradition developed and flourished. There are many famous encounters between Zen masters and Chinese emperors, including the exchanges between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu 武, between Nan-yang Hui-chung 南陽慧忠 (d. 775) and Emperor Su-tsung 肅宗 (who regarded Nan-yang so highly that he named him a National Teacher), and between Huang-po Hsi-yün 黃檗希運 (d. 850) and Emperor Tai-tsung 代宗. In content these exchanges deal not with the secular realm and such issues as politics, economics, and the law, but with the Buddhist Dharma as a truth transcending secular concerns. The exchange between Nan-yang Hui-chung and Su-tsung, described in the ninety-ninth case of the *Blue Cliff Record*, is a good example:

Emperor Su-tsung asked National Teacher Chung, “What is the Ten-Body Controller?”

The National Teacher said, “Patron, walk on Vairocana’s head.”

The emperor said, “I don’t understand.”

The National Teacher said, “Don’t acknowledge your own pure body of reality.”²

The *ten bodies* referred to in the expression “Ten-Body Controller” are the ten forms of Buddha bodies. The *Controller* is the particular Buddha body that is able to freely control all the other Buddha bodies. Expressed in terms of the triple-body system of *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and *nirmānakāya*, the Controller represents the *dharmakāya*, the most fundamental of the bodies. *Vairocana* and *pure body of reality* are simply other names for the *dharmakāya*. The emperor is asking what the nature of this most fundamental of the Buddha bodies is. Hui-chung replies that only by stepping beyond even this pure, fundamental *dharmakāya* can he ever come to know the true *dharmakāya*.

Behind Su-tsung’s question is, no doubt, the belief that ideally the empire should be a manifestation of the Buddha realm, and that he, as its ruler, should be a manifestation of the pure *dharmakāya*. But Hui-chung’s answer rejects this view of the Buddha realm. For the Zen person, the concept of the Buddha realm is simply an *upāya*, an expedient device for leading a person to the truth, and nothing more. The true land of the Buddha is a state in which one is unfettered even by ideas like “the Buddha realm.” In his response Hui-chung tries to transcend the limitations of the Buddha-land *upāya* and thereby to lead the emperor to an understanding of the true

² Thomas and J. C. Cleary, *The Blue Cliff Record* (London: Shambhala, 1977), 3:628.

Buddha Dharma. Hui-chung's Zen teaching, according to which the Dharma can manifest itself only when conventional, secular truth has been overcome, eliminates all possibility of seeing the nation as an expression of the Buddha realm.

Hui-chung's standpoint is already present in traditional Indian Buddhism, where the Buddha Dharma is held to be beyond the worldly truths that govern the ruling of nations. But the idea is not an abstraction that itself transcends the things of earth. It is a way of seeing that can be expressed convincingly only by someone like Hui-chung, who spent forty years in seclusion on Mount Pai-ya deepening his practice before reluctantly accepting the emperor's summons to the capital. There were other monks like him, of course—most notably Hui-yüan 慧遠 (334–416), who spent the latter half of his life on Mt. Lu and who espoused the doctrine that monks were not obliged to honor the sovereign—but the majority of the Buddhist clergy lived in quite different circumstances. The harsh reality at the time was that Buddhism could not have survived without the protection and support of the government authorities. This became painfully apparent during the persecution of Buddhism that took place from 843 to 845 under Emperor Wu-tsung 太武 (r. 840–847), during which approximately 40,000 temples were closed, 260,000 monks and nuns returned to lay life, and vast acreages of temple land confiscated and sold. Even in more peaceful times the monks and nuns, while freed of the duty to pay taxes and enlist in the military, remained under the strict control of the Tang government. Even ordination was impossible without express permission from the authorities. For secular reasons such as these, the monastic community was compelled to recognize the rule of the emperor and the authority of the nation. As a result, along with the doctrines that monks were exempted from reverencing the sovereign there emerged a doctrine of the identity of the Buddhist law and the imperial law, and, related to this, the doctrine that truth is identical with *upāya*.

BUDDHIST AND IMPERIAL LAW IN SUNG CHINA

During the Sung dynasty (960–1280) the doctrine of the identity of Buddhist law and the imperial law came to play a more prominent role in Zen Buddhist thought. There was a scriptural basis for this in the apocryphal *Jen wang [hu kuo] pan jo po lo mi [to]ching* 仁王[護國]般若波羅蜜[多]經,³ according to which the Buddha provides the “secret jewel” of protection for all countries by using his *prajñā* wisdom to instruct the kings of all nations pre-

³ T. 8.825, No. 245 and 246.

sent and future. The Buddha Dharma, in other words, is the jewel (i.e., the sovereign), while the imperial law is the manifestation (i.e., the subject) of this secret jewel.

As mentioned above, in the time of the Sung dynasty these two aspects came to stand as equals. In the *Ch'an-yüan ching-kuei* 禪苑清規, a Sung text published in 1103 that listed the regulations of the Zen community, one finds the statement, "Contempt for the imperial law and disregard for the monastic community is of no benefit for the operation of the temple." Already at this time we see a clear regulation that not even monks are to slight the law of the land.

During the Southern Sung dynasty the system known as the "Five Mountains and Ten Temples" came into being. In the context of this strong social institutionalization, Sung dynasty Zen developed a new relationship with the state. First, the temples initiated the *chu-sheng* 祝聖 rite, a ceremony held on the first and fifteenth of every month to pray for the health and long life of the emperor. Second, when a new head priest assumed office, a special ritual was held by the temple to pray for the peace of the nation.

Implicit in the introduction of these ceremonies was the view that the state is indeed a manifestation of the Buddha realm and the emperor the embodiment of the pure *dharmakāya* who rules it. In other words, the Buddhist law (religion) and the imperial law (the state) are one. Absent is the earlier doctrine of clerical exemption from reverence for the sovereign. On the contrary, Zen monks began at this time to comment on public ethics, and the Buddhist Dharma came to be thought of as something one could pursue without distancing oneself from the imperial law of the land. This shift of direction was argued in the context of the teaching in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* that enlightenment (*bodhi*) is attained without cutting off delusion.

Zen Master Ta-hui Tsung-kao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163), who counted a number of government officials among his disciples, openly taught the unity of Buddha law and imperial law. When he was thirty-seven years old the Sung was invaded by the northern Juchen, forcing it to relocate south of the Yangtze and establish a new capital at Lin-an. There was considerable debate at the time over whether armed resistance was the proper course of action or whether it was better to sue for peace. Ta-hui urged a number of the Sung officials to engage in combat with the invading Juchen, even if only for the honor of the dynasty. As it turned out, those arguing for a more conciliatory policy won the day, and they succeeded in having Ta-hui and the officials associated with him exiled to the outlying regions of Heng-chou and Mei-chou. Unruffled by this unhappy turn of events, Ta-hui wrote numerous letters of encouragement to exiled officials, stressing the benefits of adverse circumstances for practicing the Buddha Dharma.

Ta-hui's Zen stands very much in the tradition that sees the Buddhist Dharma as sympathetic to the secular law of the nation. The nonbelligerence of the Buddha as illustrated in the Indian sūtra on the destruction of the Śākya clan is nowhere to be seen. The cornerstone of this identification of Buddhist law and imperial law was the belief that the nation is a manifestation of the Buddha realm. According to this idea of the state, the destruction of the nation is tantamount to the destruction of the Buddha realm, which means that resistance by the state against invasion from a neighboring country is, religiously speaking, fully justified as an act of self-defense.

Views similar to those of Ta-hui were held by the Sung Zen master Wu-hsüeh Tsu-yüan 無学祖元 (1226–1286),⁴ who journeyed to Japan in 1279 at the invitation of the Kamakura shogunate. When the Mongol forces launched their second invasion of Japan in 1281, the regent Hōjō Tokimune sought his advice. Wu-hsüeh, who had once given Tokimune a scroll inscribed with the phrase 莫妄想, “Dispel all illusion,” advised armed repulsion of the attack. Once again we see a deliberate refusal to oppose a strategy of military defense against an invading army bent on the destruction of what was seen as the “Buddha realm.”

Most of the twenty-four lines of Zen succession that were eventually transmitted to Japan were from Sung China. The Rinzai lines in particular attracted the majority of their followers from among the warrior class, a group of people who in those unsettled times had to live constantly faced with the possibility of death on the battlefield. What they sought from the Zen masters, whose practice dealt directly with the question of life and death, was how to prepare themselves for this possibility. What Zen offered to the warriors was a philosophy (or ethic) of life and death. The saying, “Death is the way of the samurai—Seek it out!” aptly expresses the spirit of the *bagakure* warrior. In other words, it was precisely in the law of the sovereign that the law of the Buddha was to be found. The philosophy (or religion) of “transcending life and death” was the samurai's sole support in a feudal society so severe and unforgiving that he might be called on to commit *seppuku* for even a minor slip of protocol. For such persons, with death ever before their eyes, there was no falsehood. Such was the foundation of the warrior ethic.

ZEN IN MODERN JAPAN

In the mid-nineteenth century Japan stepped out of its isolation and took its place in the international community as a modern independent nation. What

⁴ Jap., Mugaku Sogen, also known as 仏光国師 Bukkō Kokushi. He was the founder of Engaku-ji in Kamakura.

sort of situation did it find itself in at that time? This is a question that historians have examined from many different perspectives, but there is general agreement that in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries the world was under the sway, both politically and ideologically, of Europe and the United States. Unless one takes this fundamental historical fact into consideration, there is no way to understand the history of modern Japan or the policies adopted by its leaders, which were in large part shaped by the posture of the Western powers towards the rest of the world and in particular towards the East. The progress of the natural sciences had given the nations of the West industrial and military strengths far beyond those of any country in Asia. Western thought and culture also had an enormous impact on the Eastern peoples. Even in my own youth we were educated in the writings of German idealism, in the literature of Goethe, in the economic ideas of Marx, and in theories of Western art and music.

From this position of strength, the Western powers gradually expanded their influence in the East, particularly in China, whose vast expanse of land and rich natural resources made it particularly attractive. The year 1852 marked the visit of Commodore Perry to Uraga and the subsequent opening of Japan. The following decades saw a steady increase of Western control in the East. In 1858, following the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, Great Britain imposed direct Crown government on the Indian subcontinent. In 1863 France forced Cambodia to become a French protectorate; ten years later it took Hanoi and acquired protector status over Vietnam as well. In 1886 all of Burma became a British colony, and in 1887 France colonized the region of Indochina. The Germans, meanwhile, had been expanding their influence in China, where they seized Chiao-chou Bay in Shantung in 1897. The Russians subsequently occupied Port Arthur and Dairen on the Liao-tung Peninsula and secured from China the rights to build the eastern section of the Trans-Siberian Railway across Manchuria to Vladivostok. Around this time England procured a lease on the Kowloon Peninsula opposite Hong Kong.

All of these events took place almost immediately after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. Set against this background, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 can be seen as a defensive strategy by Japan to halt the southward advance of the Russian Empire. In any case, following Japan's victory in this conflict, a change occurred in the outlook of the Japanese people. In the negotiated settlement that ended the war, Japan was given southern Sakhalin, control over the Liao-tung Peninsula and the Southern Manchurian Railroad, and protector status over the Korean Peninsula. These gains at the expense of a large European nation brought about a swelling of national pride in Japan, and the idea quickly took root that the country had become one of the world's "first-class nations" (一等国). In the decades ahead, these sentiments would lend their weight to such expansionist moves as the Manchurian

Incident in 1931, the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, and the invasion of China in 1937. This complex interaction of events on the stage of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century world history led to the formation of the militarist government and ultimately to the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941.

In hindsight, the historical situation that faced Japan as it stepped out of its long period of seclusion from the rest of the world may be said to have provoked two quite different reactions in the hearts of the Japanese. On the one hand, there was a feeling of indignation at the strategy of the Western powers' aimed at subjugating the countries of the East, and with it a sense that as the leading power of Asia it was incumbent on Japan to stand up to the colonizers. But this sense of an affront to justice is only half of the picture. Along with it went a self-serving attempt on the part of certain Japanese political and economic leaders to jump onto the imperialist bandwagon and carve out a piece of the Asian mainland for themselves. The influence of those who espoused the cause "for peace in the East" was rechanneled to justify the activities of those who held to this latter position, and their view gradually came to central stage in the prewar educational philosophy of Japan.

Hard-line elements in the Imperial Army, meanwhile, pressed ahead with the overseas military operations—the Manchurian and China incidents, for example—that later escalated into the Pacific War. This is not to say that there was no domestic criticism of the trend toward militarism. One example I am personally familiar with was an effort by members of the Kansai area business elite to influence the government by enlisting the aid of my teacher, Seki Seisetsu. In 1936, the year before the outbreak of hostilities with China, some 1,400 troops of the Japanese army stationed in Tokyo attempted a coup d'état (the so-called February 26th Incident). The Kansai business leaders, concerned about the rise of militarism and fearful that Japan might be cut off from the rest of the world, contacted Seisetsu Rōshi with a request that he write to the Minister of the Army, Terauchi Hisaichi, a frequent visitor of the rōshi, and urge him to take what action he could to check the reactionary elements in the officer corps. I know this because it was my father, Hirata Dōzen, who carried the rōshi's letter to Tokyo, which was still under martial law, and delivered it to Terauchi. I can still see him on the day of his departure, tying his straw sandals for the trip to the capital.

Unfortunately, the effort bore no fruit, for whatever reason, and Japan continued its downslide into military rule. Intimidation tactics were employed to assure that no opposition to the military's activities was voiced. Untoward censure of the government soon reached the ears of the authorities and could literally endanger the life of the critic. Viewed from the present, the Pacific War can only be seen as a reckless undertaking that simply reflected the military leaders' ignorance of the international situation. The

small handful of internationally-minded intellectuals who did understand the true state of affairs kept silent for reasons of personal safety. It was only with the fall of Okinawa in April 1945 that the Japanese people began their slow but rude awakening to the folly of the war effort. In an effort to bring the war to a speedy conclusion, many military cadets sacrificed their lives in the “special attack” kamikaze squads. The poignant letters these young men left behind bear witness to the hopes for an early peace that spurred them on.

SECULAR FREEDOM AND DESECULARIZED FREEDOM

Having considered the way in which the Indian Buddhist ideal of nonbelligerence was transformed as Buddhism spread west to China and Japan, and after a brief look at some of the developments in world history that led to the Pacific War, we are still left with the question: What positive contribution did Zen and the Zen sect have to make at this time of world crisis? In all honesty, I must admit that it was very meager. The Zen priesthood is made up of individuals, and as in any religion during times of war, there were among them many who appear to have abandoned the ideals of their faith to embrace the narrower ideals of their country. Not a few Zen priests joined hands with State Shinto and its imperialist view of history in order to promote the war. None of the historical arguments brought forth in their defense (for example, the indignation at the West’s colonization of the East referred to earlier) can justify their simple failure to speak out on the Buddhist ideal of nonbelligerence, much less their active support of the war effort. As their successors, we have no choice but humbly to accept the criticism their actions have brought upon Zen, and to recognize that the problem was due in part to the ignorance of international affairs among Zen monks at the time.

In the years following the Second World War, Japanese Buddhism was sharply censured by various progressive Japanese intellectuals for its cooperation in the war effort. Zen in particular was the target of the scholar Ichikawa Hakugen, in whose critique I find much of interest. I would mention, for instance, the distinction he draws between “deseccularized freedom” (脱俗の自由) and “secular freedom” (世俗の自由).⁵ When Zen speaks of freedom, it is usually in the sense of deseccularized freedom, as in the famous line in the *Record of Lin-chi*: “Become a master of your circumstances; wherever you stand is the right place” (隨處作主, 立處皆真). This kind of freedom is attained when one is able to accept life just as it is, when one is able to say, like the Sōtō master Ryōkan, “In times of misfortune, misfortune is fine.” Such freedom persists even in the midst of suffering.

⁵ See IHC 3:60–99.

But desecularized freedom is not able to bring about political or social reform. Freedom of the type achieved through the American and French revolutions—freedom from political oppression—is what Ichikawa calls “secular freedom.” Desecularized freedom is vertical by nature and secular freedom is horizontal. For Ichikawa, the true freedom of Zen today lies at the point where these vertical and horizontal planes intersect.

I am basically in agreement with Ichikawa here. In fact, he is not the first to point out that the freedom espoused by Zen—and by Buddhism as a whole—is fundamentally *nonethical* (as opposed to *unethical*) in nature. This was the very position taken by Sung dynasty Confucian scholars in their attacks on Zen. As they saw it, Zen’s position that the adept’s world of satori can be reached only through a transcendence of dualistic notions of good and evil is one that leaves no grounds for distinguishing the socially beneficial from the socially harmful. Not only is it bereft of social significance, it is also incapable of providing any sort of foundation for social development. Their Zen opponents countered by saying that fixation on the dualistic dimension of good and evil merely promotes delusion and cuts off all possibility of attaining the true peace of satori.

In terms of Ichikawa’s formula, the Confucians were in effect saying that the transcendent, vertical plane can never become the social, horizontal plane, no matter how high or how deep it goes, while the Zen side was saying that the horizontal plane can never become the vertical plane, no matter how far or how wide it reaches. As human beings, each of us have both of these dimensions, and therefore there must be a point at which they intersect. The problem, as Ichikawa realized, was how to get there.

A Zen expression sums up our everyday existence this way: “Dreams, illusions, flowers in the sky—why dally to grasp at them?” (夢幻空華, なんぞ把握を弄せん). The everyday social and historical reality in which we live is in essence “dreams, illusions, flowers in the sky,” a tangle of memories, delusions, and desires. Social revolutions and political positions are no exception. When I was a lad, our teachers told us that the war going on in the Pacific was a “just war.” Then, when it had all ended, we were told that it had been an “evil war.” This simplistic shift of positions was one of the things that made me decide to become a monk. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for my final misgivings with Ichikawa’s *ex post facto* critique of Zen’s position during the war.

In the 1960s Ichikawa became involved in a somewhat radical movement in Japan against the war in Vietnam.⁶ As the protests led to violent clashes with authority, some from the Buddhist world questioned Ichikawa’s collab-

⁶ The movement was called the “Coalition for Peace in Vietnam” (ベトナム平和連合会, popularly abbreviated to べ平連).

oration in the movement on the grounds that anything that provokes violence is opposed to Buddhism. Ichikawa defended himself by turning the tables on his accusers. If they find his struggles against war in the name of peace so violent and so wrong and so anti-Buddhist, he asked, then why had they not raised a voice in the midst of the violence of the Pacific War? That exchange became the catalyst for Ichikawa's critique of "imperial Zen" and its "moral stumble" during the war.

As I think I have made clear, I do not question the need for such criticism of Zen's past. My problem is rather with the contradictions in Ichikawa's own position, particularly in its embrace of the leftist rhetoric so much in vogue among intellectuals after the war. For example, even if one goes along with his claim that class struggle is justified in the name of social justice, how does this claim hold up in the light of the post-cold-war revelations of gross inequalities and injustices in the former Communist bloc? How much did humanity really gain from the revolution that he had praised so highly, and how much did it lose? Merely to shake the dust of the old position from one's sandals and then to invest all one's moral energies in a new position is not enough. Surely there is *something* to be learned about human nature in all of this. And surely there is a need for a standpoint that tries to learn it. Otherwise, what has the war taught us other than that *we* are right to see that *they* were wrong?

The emphasis that Zen puts on the "suchness" of things in the saying "Willows are green, flowers are red" has been challenged as powerless to change the world. As the critic Maruyama Masao once put it, sometimes green willows need to be made red. There is some truth in this, but it is no longer Zen. When all is said and done, the horizontal world is always and everywhere a samsaric, impermanent world. Only by awakening to the sense in which the transient realm of samsara already *is*, just as it is, the permanent and unchanging realm, does the world that Zen is talking about open up. In terms of Ichikawa's scheme, I would say that the world of Zen is not located at the point where the horizontal and vertical dimensions of human life intersect, but at the point where both dimensions drop out of the picture. This is what Hisamatsu Shin'ichi called "the religion of awakened existence" (覚存の宗教). From this standpoint willows are, after all, green, and flowers are, after all, red; the form of the mountain is the pure body of the Tathāgata and all the hills, rivers, grasses, and trees have become Buddha. Unless this sense of absolute transcendence is clearly understood, the true significance of the Buddha's ideal of nonbelligerence can never be clear either.

No doubt such a statement will invite the criticism that this standpoint itself needs to be relativized, that its "transcendence" points to an essential limitation in Zen, that so long as Zen stops at the world "just as it is," it effectively cuts itself off from the horizontal plane and forsakes any contribu-

tion to the world and its history. If I may “dally to grasp at” a counterposition here, I would say that such complaints do not bother Zen. From such a counterposition, one would have to say that Zen is not so much concerned with deciding issues of right and wrong, of war and peace, as with understanding the self that deals with these questions and makes these decisions. As Dōgen says, “To study the Buddha Way is to study one’s self.” This concern pervades the history of Buddhism from the time of Śākyamuni’s encounter with the forces of Kośala up to the present. Wherever there is a grounding in the vertical dimension, there is Zen. And where it is absent, it does not matter if one is a hawk or dove, a pacifist or militarist—there is no Zen. In the Rinzai tradition, this presence of the vertical dimension has been monitored by means of the kōan, and indeed this is said to be the true meaning of the entire kōan system.

To be sure, these very same claims can also serve as an excuse for settling into a comfortable position impervious to all criticism. In thinking about the relationship between the horizontal and the vertical planes, one can as easily end up absolutizing the vertical as absolutizing their point of intersection. When we see a Zen practitioner fall into such a trap, we are reminded how quickly one person’s nectar can become another person’s poison. I am convinced that the sectarian egoism found in all religious traditions, Zen included, stems from just this kind of “relative absolutism.” Naturally, such egoism is not limited to religion; nationalist and ethnic egoisms are cut from the same cloth. This is why Zen rejects the delusion that one becomes an enlightened Buddha merely by “passing the kōans.” The Zen practitioner needs to come to the point of liberation from the kōans, to the point where Zen is liberated from Zen and where there is no God or Buddha. This I take to be the import of Hisamatsu’s “religion of awakened existence” at which the horizontal and vertical pass out of the picture.

It is only at this standpoint of awakened existence that true compassion and *prajñā* wisdom appear. Stand anywhere else and *prajñā* wisdom is no more than ordinary discriminating insight; compassion is soon converted into a simple calculation of profit and loss based on ideas of what is right and what is wrong, what the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* calls “the compassion of deluded thoughts and feelings.” The God-less, Buddha-less standpoint of awakened existence finds a voice in the words, “Willows are green, flowers are red” and “The form of the mountain is the pure body of the Tathāgata and all the hills, rivers, grasses, and trees have become Buddha.” It is a standpoint of unbounded wisdom and unbounded compassion.

When Zen, the religion of awakened existence, steps out into the relative world with its vertical and horizontal planes, it must continue to pursue the vertical dimension expressed in kōan training. In the sense in which even Śākyamuni and Bodhidharma are in permanent training, the kōan system rep-

resents the framework and essence of Zen. At the same time, this vertical dimension must always find expression in and be transferred to the horizontal dimension. It is a question of how one understands samādhi. Generally samādhi is taken to be a state of passive acceptance of the world or one's situation just as it is. As the term is used in Zen, however, samādhi has also the sense of becoming one with change. To borrow a phrase of Nishida Kitarō, in samādhi the practitioner moves from a stance of being created by the world to one of creating the world, albeit in such a way that it neither changes nor hides from view the reality that "Willows are green, flowers are red." Zen adapts itself freely to the spirit of the times. What is called "progress" on the horizontal plane is from the Zen point of view simply change. There are no principles in Zen to improve or develop. So long as Zen is Zen, it is in every age completely open and unhidden. But in samādhi the one who practices Zen has seriously to study the things of the world *as* things of the world. In this respect, the Zen priesthood can be faulted for its ignorance of the international situation at the time of the Pacific War. In view of the results, and in view of the legacy passed down from Śākyamuni, we can only bow our heads and humbly accept our thirty blows.

[TRANSLATED BY THOMAS KIRCHNER]