

Master Hakuin's

## YASENKANNA

Here are 2 translations by Norman Waddell and Trevor Leggett of one or two versions of a text probably published during Hakuin's life.

An other version of the same text was published posthumously and translated by the same persons. It includes a preface by "*Hunger and Cold, the Master of Poverty Hermitage.*"

If you are interested in the Therapeutic methods described by Hakuin, you should also study his **Orategama**.



## Master HAKUIN's YASEN KANNA

<b>Norman Waddell's translation (in Wild Ivy)</b>	<b>Trevor Legett's translation (in Second Zen reader)</b>	<b>I Ching ref.</b>
<b>Idle Talk on a Night Boat</b>	<b>YASENKANNA By Hakuin</b>	
<p>Long ago, Wu Ch'i-ch'u told master Shih-t'ai: In order to refine the elixir, it is necessary to gather the vital energy. To gather the vital energy, it is necessary to focus the mind. When the mind focuses in the ocean of vital energy or field of elixir located one inch below the navel, the vital energy gathers there. When the vital energy gathers in the elixir field, the elixir is produced. When the elixir is produced, the physical frame is strong and firm. When the physical frame is strong and firm, the spirit is full and replete. When the spirit is full and replete, long life is assured.</p> <p>These are words of true wisdom.</p> <p>The layman came again the next morning and repeated the request he had made the previous day. "Very well" I said, "I will explain to you the essentials of Introspective Meditation."</p>		
<p>On the day I first committed myself to a life of Zen practice, I pledged to summon all the faith and courage at my command and dedicate myself with steadfast resolve to the pursuit of the Buddha Way, I embarked on a regimen of rigorous austerities, which I continued for several years, pushing myself relentlessly.</p>	<p>WHEN as a beginner I entered on the Way, I vowed to practice with heroic faith and indomitable spirit.</p>	
<p>Then one night, everything suddenly fell away, and I crossed the threshold into enlightenment. All the doubts and uncertainties that had burdened me all those years suddenly vanished, roots and all - just melted like ice.</p>	<p>After a mere three years of strenuous effort, suddenly one night the moment came, when all my old doubts melted away down to their very roots.</p>	
<p>Deep - rooted karma that had bound me for endless kalpas to the cycle of birth-and-death vanished like foam on the water.</p>	<p>The age-old Karma-root of birth-and-death was erased utterly.</p>	
<p>It's true I thought to myself: the Way is not far</p>	<p>I thought to myself: 'The way is never</p>	

from man.	distant.	
Those stories about the ancient masters taking twenty or even thirty years to attain it - someone must have made them all up. For the next several months, I was waltzing on air, flagging my arms and stamping my feet in a kind of witless rapture.	Strange that the ancients spoke of twenty or thirty years," whereas I..." After some months lost in dancing joy, I looked at my life.	
Afterwards, however, as I began reflecting upon y everyday behavior, I could see that the two aspects of my life - the active and the meditative - were totally out of balance. No matter what I was doing, I never felt free or completely at ease.	The spheres of activity and stillness were not at all in harmony; I found I was not free to either take up a thing or. leave it.	
I realized I would have to rekindle a fearless resolve and once again throw myself life and limb together into the Dharma struggle. With my teeth clenched tightly and eyes focused straight ahead, I began devoting myself single-mindedly to my practice, forsaking food and sleep altogether.	I thought: 'Let me boldly plunge again into spiritual practice and once more throw away my life in it.' Teeth clenched and eyes a glare, I sought to free myself from food and sleep.	
Before the month was out, my heart fire began to raise against the natural course, parching my lungs of their essential fluids. My feet and legs were always ice-cold: they felt as though they were immersed in tubs of snow.	Before a month had passed the heart-fire mounted to my head, my lungs were burning but my legs felt as if freezing in ice and snow.	
There was a constant buzzing in my ears, as if I was walking beside a raging mountain torrent.	In my ears was a rushing sound as of a stream in a valley.	
I became abnormally weak and timid, shrinking and fearful in whatever I did.	My courage failed and I was in an attitude of constant fear.	
I felt totally drained, physically and mentally exhausted. Strange vision appeared to me during waking and sleeping hours alike.	I felt spiritually exhausted, night and day seeing dreams,my armpits always wet with sweat and my eyes full of tears.	
My armpits were always wet with perspiration. My eyes were watered constantly.		
I traveled far and wide, visiting wise Zen teachers, seeking out noted physicians. But none of the remedies they offered brought any relief.	I cast about in every direction, consulting famous teachers and doctors, but all their devices availed nothing at all.	
<b><u>MASTER HAKUYŪ</u></b>		
Then I happened to meet someone who told me about a hermit named Master Hakuyū, who lived inside a cave high in the mountains of the Shirakawa district of Kyoto.	Someone told me: 'In the mountains of the place called White-River, beyond the capital, there is one who dwells in the heights, known to the people as Master Hakuyū.	

He was reputed to be three hundred and seventy years old.	He is believed to be over two hundred years old,	
His cave dwelling was two or three leagues from any human habitation. He didn't like seeing people, and whenever someone approached, he would run off and hide.	and he lives there several miles from human habitation. He does not like to see people, and if they go he will run away and conceal himself.	
From the look of him, it was hard to tell whether he was a man of great wisdom or merely a fool, but the people in the surrounding villages venerated him as a sage.	Men do not know whether to think him a sage or a madman, but the villagers believe him to be a Sennin, one of the mountain immortals.	
Rumor had it he had been the teacher of Ishikawa Jōzan and that he was well versed in astrology and deeply learned in the medical arts as well.	They say he was once the teacher of Ishikawa Jozan, deeply versed in the science of the stars and the lore of medicine.	
People who had approached him and requested his teaching in the proper manner, observing the proprieties, had on rare occasions been known to elicit a remark or two of enigmatic import from him. After leaving and giving the words deeper thought, the people would generally discover them to be very beneficial.	Occasionally to a seeker who went in true reverence he has vouchsafed a word, which when pondered afterwards was of great benefit,	
In the middle of the first month of the seventh year of the Hōei era [1710], I shouldered my travel pack, slipped quietly out of the temple in eastern Mino where I was staying, and headed for Kyoto. On reaching the capital, I bent my steps northward, crossing over the hills of the Black Valley [Kurodani] and making my way to the smaller hamlet at White River [Shirakawa].	So in the middle of January 1710, I quietly put together some traveling tilings, left Mino and crossed Black-Valley, finally coming to the village of White-River.	
I dropped my pack off at a teahouse and went to make inquiries about Master Hakuyū's cave. One of the villagers pointed his fingers toward a thin thread of rushing water high above on the hills.	Putting down my bundle in a teashop, I asked the whereabouts of the hermitage of Hakuyu. A villager directed me to a mountain stream in the far distance.	
Using the sound of the water as my guide, I struck up into the mountains, hiking on until I came to the stream.	I followed the rushing water, which took me to a remote mountain valley.	
I made my way along the bank for another league or so until the stream and the trail both petered out.	Following straight up for a couple of miles, I found that it suddenly disappeared.	
There was not so much as a woodcutter's trail to indicate the way. At this point, I lost my	There was no path and I was at a loss; unable to go on, I stood in dismay.	

<p>bearings completely and was unable to proceed another step.</p>		
<p>Not knowing what else to do, I sat in a nearby rock, closed y eyes, placed my palms before me in Gassho, and began chanting a sutra.</p>	<p>Helplessly I sat down on a stone to one side, and with closed eyes and joined palms repeated a Sutra.</p>	
<p>Presently , as if by magic, I heard in the distance the faint sounds of someone chopping at a tree. After pushing my way deeper through the forest trees in the direction of the sound, I spotted a woodcutter.</p>	<p>As if by a miracle there came to my ears a distant sound of blows of an axe; pursuing the sound deeply into the trees, I came upon a woodcutter.</p>	
<p>He directed my gaze far above to a distant site among the swirling clouds and mist at the crest of the mountains. I could just make out a small yellowish patch, not more than an inch square, appearing and disappearing in the eddying mountain vapors. He told me it was a brushwork blind that hung over the entrance to Master Hakuyū's cave. Hitching the bottom of my robe up into my sash, I began the final ascent to Hakuyū's dwelling. Clambering over jagged rocks, pushing through heavy vines and clinging underbrush, the snow and frost gnawed into my straw sandals, the damp clouds thrust against my robe. It was very hard going, and by the time I reached the spot where I had seen the blind, I was covered with a thick, oily sweat.</p>	<p>The old man pointed towards the far-off mountain mists, and I made out a tiny patch of yellowish white, now concealed and now revealed by the movement of the haze—'that is the reed curtain which hangs before the mouth of the cave of Master Hakuyu'. At once I tucked in my clothes and began to climb, now over steep rocks, now pushing through mountain grasses; my sandals soaked with snow arid ice were freezing, and my clothes wet through with mist and dew. As I toiled on the sweat poured down, but gradually I came up to the place of the reed curtain.</p>	
<p>I now stood at the entrance of the cave. It commanded a prospect of unsurpassed beauty, completely above the vulgar dust of the world. My heart trembling with fear, my skin prickling with gooseflesh, I leaned against some rocks for a while and counted out several hundred breaths.</p>	<p>The exquisite purity of the landscape made me feel I had left the world of men, A dread shook my heart and soul, and I was shivering as if stripped naked. I seated myself on a rock for a while and counted my breath up to some hundreds.</p>	
<p>After shaking off the dirt and dust and straightening my robe to make myself presentable, I bowed down, hesitantly pushed the blind aside, and peered into the cave</p>	<p>Then I straightened and tidied my dress and went forward with reverent awe.</p>	
<p>I could make out the figure of Master Hakuyū in the darkness. He was sitting perfectly erect, his eyes shut. A wonderful head of black hair flecked with bits of white reached down over his knees. he had a fine, youthful complexion,</p>	<p>Peering through the reed curtain, I dimly made out the form of Master Hakuyu, seated in meditation posture with his eyes closed. His hair streaked with white fell to his knees, his beautiful complexion was full and clear. A</p>	

<p>ruddy in hue like a Chinese date. He was seated on a soft mat made of grasses and wore a large jacket of coarsely woven cloth. The interior of the cave was small, not more than five feet square, and except for a small desk, there was no sign of household articles or other furnishings of any kind. On the top of the desk, I could see three scrolls of writing - <i>The Doctrine of the mean, Lao Tzu</i>, and the <i>Diamond Sutra</i>.</p>	<p>quilted cloth was thrown round him and his seat was a bed of soft grass. The cave was small, barely six foot square. There were no provisions of any kind, but on a low table three books: the <i>Doctrine of the Mean</i>, the classic of Lao Tzu, and the <i>Diamond Sutra</i>.</p>	
<p>I introduced myself as politely as I could, explained the symptoms and causes of my illness in some detail. and appealed to the master for his help.</p>	<p>After making many salutations, I quietly related the course of my illness and asked for help.</p>	
<p><b><u>CURE</u></b></p>		
<p>After a while, Hakyū opened his eyes and gave me a good hard look. Then, speaking slowly and deliberately, he explained that he was only a useless, worn-out old man - "More dead than alive." He dwelled among these mountains living on such nuts and wild mountain fruits as he could gather. He passed the nights together with the mountain deer and other wild creatures.</p>	<p>In a little he opened his eyes and looked at me keenly. He said slowly: 'I am just an ordinary man living out the rest of life in the mountains. I gather chestnuts for food and sleep in company with the tame deer.</p>	
<p>He professed to be completely ignorant of anything else and said he was acutely embarrassed that such an important Buddhist priest had made a long trip expressly to see him.</p>	<p>What do I know about anything else? I am only sorry that the journey in expectation of a holy man should have been in vain. . . .'</p>	
<p>But I persisted, begging repeatedly for his help. At last, he reached out with an easy, almost offhand gesture and grasped my hand. He proceeded to examine my five bodily organs, taking my pulse at nin vital points. His fingernails I noticed, where almost an inch long.</p>	<p>I again and again repeated my reverences and my request. Then he quietly took my hand, made a careful examination of my condition and inspected the bodily openings.</p>	
<p>Furrowing his brow, he said with a voice tinged with pity, "Not much can be done. You have developed a serious illness.</p>	<p>His long-nailed fingers smoothed his forehead in a gesture of sympathy: 'Your condition is pitiable.</p>	
<p>By pushing yourself too hard, you forgot the cardinal rule of religious training. You are suffering from meditation sickness, which is extremely difficult to cure by medical means.</p>	<p>By contemplating on truth too strenuously, you have lost the rhythm of spiritual advance, and that has finally brought on a grievous malady. And it is something very hard to cure, this Zen illness of yours.</p>	

<p>If you attempt to threat it by using acupuncture, moxacautery or medicines, you will find they have no effect - not even if they were administered by a P'ien Ch'iao, Ts'ang Kung, or Hua T'o. You came to this grievous pass as a result of meditation. You will never regain your health unless you are able to master the techniques of Introspective Meditation.</p>	<p>Though the sages of medicine frown over your case and put forth all their skill with needle and cautery and drugs, yet would they be helpless. You have been broken by your contemplation on truth (<b>Ri-kan</b>), and unless you devote yourself to inner contemplation (<b>Nai-kan</b>) you can never recover.</p>	
<p>Just as the old saying goes , "When a person falls to earth, it is from the earth that he must raise himself up".</p>	<p>There is a saying that you rise by means of that same ground on which you fell, and the Naikan method is an example of that principle.'</p>	
<p>"Please," I said, "teach me the secret technique of Introspective Meditation, I want to begin practicing it, and learn how it's done."</p>	<p>I said: 'Be gracious enough to tell me the secret of the Naikan, and I will practice it in the temple.'</p>	
<p>With a demeanor that was now solemn and majestic, Master Hakuyū softly and quietly replied, "Ah, you are determined to find an answer to your problem, aren't you, young man? All right, I suppose I can tell you a few things about Introspective Meditation that I learned many years ago. It is a secret method for sustaining life known to very few people. Practiced diligently, it is sure to yield remarkable results. It will enable you to look forward to a long life as well.</p>	<p>His face became solemn, his appearance changed and he began to speak slowly: 'So. You are a real seeker. Shall I pass on to you a little of what I heard long ago? It is the secret of replenishing life, and those who know it are few. If you practice it without falling away, you will surely see a marvelous effect in yourself, and it may well be that you will never close your eyes in death.</p>	
<p>"The Great Way is divided into the two instruments of yin and yang. Combining, they produce human beings and all other things. A primal inborn energy circulates silently through the body, moving along channels or conduits from one to another of the five great organs. Defensive energy and nutritive blood, which circulate together, ascend and descend throughout the body, making fifty complete circulations in each twenty-four-hour period.</p>	<p>"The great Way (Tao) dividing itself, there are the two principles Yin and Yang, by whose mingling in harmony are born men and things. In man the primal Ki-energy moves silently in the centre, and the five organs range themselves and the pulse moves. The supporting Ki-energy and the nourishing blood move in a circulation, rising and falling, about fifty cycles in the course of one day and night.</p>	
<p>"The lungs, manifesting the metal principle, are a female organ located above the diaphragm.</p>	<p>The lungs, under the metal sign, are feminine and float above the diaphragm;</p>	
<p>The liver, manifesting the' wood principle, is a male organ located beneath the diaphragm.</p>	<p>the liver, under the wood sign, is masculine and is sunk below the diaphragm.</p>	
<p>The heart, manifesting the fire principle, is the</p>	<p>The heart—fire is the sun, the great Yang,</p>	

major yang organ; it is located in the upper body.	with its place above,	
The kidneys, manifesting the water principle, are the major yin organ; they are located in the lower body. Contained within the five internal organs are seven marvelous powers, with the spleen and kidneys having two each.	and the kidneys—water are the great Yin, occupying the lower place. In the five organs are seven divinities, the spleen and the kidneys having each two.	
"The exhaled breath issues from the heart and the lungs; the inhaled breath enters through the kidneys and liver.	The outbreath goes from the heart and lungs, the inbreath comes to the kidneys and liver.	
With each exhalation of breath, the defensive energy and nutritive blood move-forward three inches in their conduits; they also advance three inches with each inhalation of breath. Every twenty-four hours, the defensive energy and nutritive blood make fifty complete circulations of the body.	With each outbreath the pulse current advances three inches, and at each inbreath another three. In a day and night there are 13,500 breaths and the pulse makes the circuit of the body fifty times.	
"Fire is by nature light and unsteady and always wants to mount upward, whereas water is by nature heavy and settled and always wants to sink downward.	Fire is light and buoyant, ever inclined to ascend; water is heavy and always tends downwards.	
If a person ignorant of this principle strives too hard in his meditative practices, the fire in his heart will rush violently upward, scorching his lungs and impairing their function.	'If you do not know these things, your efforts at contemplation lose the rhythm and the will becomes over-extended; then the heart-fire blazing up strikes the metal of the lungs which is scorched and impaired.	
"Since a mother-and-child relationship obtains between the lungs, representing the metal principle, and the kidneys, representing the water principle, when the lungs are afflicted and distressed, the kidneys are also weakened and debilitated. Debilitation of the lungs and kidneys saps and enfeebles the other organs and disrupts the proper balance within the six viscera. This results in an imbalance in the function of the body's four constituent-elements (earth, water, fire, wind), some of which grow too strong and some too weak.	As the metal mother (lungs) suffers, the water child (kidneys) decays and dies. Parent and child are injured, all five organs are afflicted and the six auxiliaries" oppressed.	
This leads, in turn, to a great variety of ailments and disorders in each of the four elements. Medicines have no effect in treating them. Physicians can only look on with folded arms."	The elements losing their harmony produce a hundred and one diseases. Against this condition all remedies lose their power, and though every art of medicine be enlisted, in the end they can claim no success.	

**SUSTAINING LIFE**

[Master Hakuyū continued] "Sustaining life is much like protecting a country. Whereas a wise lord ,and sage ruler always thinks of the common people under him, a foolish lord and mediocre ruler concerns himself exclusively with the pastimes of the upper classes. When a ruler becomes engrossed in his own self interests, his nine ministers vaunt their power and authority, the officials under them seek special favors, and none of them gives a thought to the poverty and suffering of the people below them. The countryside is filled with pale, gaunt faces; famine stalks the land, leaving the streets of the towns and cities littered with corpses. The wise and the good retreat into hiding, the common people burn with resentment and anger, the provincial lords grow rebellious, and the enemies on the borders rise to the attack. The people are plunged into an agony of grief and suffering until, finally, the nation itself ceases to exist.

'Replenishing the life is in fact like looking after a kingdom. The bright lord, the sage ruler, always concentrates his heart on those below; the dull lord, the ordinary ruler, is always letting his heart go upward as it wills. And when it flies up at its own will, the great nobles become overbearing and the minor officials rely on special favors, and no one of them ever looks down at the misery of the masses. In the country the peasants are emaciated, the land starves, the people die. Wisdom and virtue hide themselves and the masses are full of resentment and hate. The nobles become independent and rebellious, and strife arises with barbarian enemies. The people are reduced to the last extremity; the life-pulse of the country becomes sluggish and finally extinct.

"On the other hand, when the ruler turns his attention below, focusing on the common people, his ministers and officials perform their duties simply and frugally, the hardships and suffering of the common people always in their thoughts:

As a result, the farmers produce an abundance of food, their wives an abundance of cloth. The good and the wise gather to the ruler to render him service, the provincial lords are respectful and submissive, the common people prosper, and the country grows strong. Each person is obedient to his superior, no enemies threaten the borders, and the sounds of battle are no longer heard in the land. The names of the weapons of war themselves come to be forgotten.

'But when the ruler concentrates his heart downwards, the great nobles check their ostentation, the minor officials carry out their duties, and the labor of the people never goes unrewarded. The farmers have abundant crops and their women clothes; many wise men are attracted into service with the ruler, the retainers are respectful and obedient, the people prosperous and the country strong. None within conspires to defeat the law, and no enemy attacks the frontiers. The country does not hear the sound of war and the people need know nothing of weapons.

"It is the same with the human body. The person who has arrived at attainment always keeps the heart's vital energy below, filling the lower body. When the lower body is filled with the heart's vital energy, there is nowhere within for the seven misfortunes to operate and nowhere without for the four evils to gain an entrance. The defensive energy and nutritive blood are replete, the heart and mind vigorous

'It is just so with the human body. The perfect man always keeps the lower regions filled with his heart-energy; when the heart energy is thus made full downwards, the seven ills find no place within and assaults from without find no weak point. The body is vigorous and robust and the heart-spirit sound. So the mouth never knows the taste of medicines, sweet or bitter, the body never

and healthy. The lips never know the bitterness of medical potions; the body never feels the discomfort of the acupuncture needle or moxa treatments.	has to undergo the pains of cautery and needle.	
"An average or mediocre person always allows the heart's vital energy to rise up unchecked so it does throughout the upper body. When the heart's vital energy is allowed to rise unchecked, the heat emanating from the heart on the left side damages the lungs on the right. This puts a strain on the five senses, diminishing their working, and causes harmful disturbances in the six roots.	But the ordinary man takes the heart-energy always freely upwards, and when it thus mounts as it likes, the (heart) fire on the left overcomes the (lung) metal on the right, the senses dwindle and fail and the six auxiliaries are oppressed and lose their harmony.	
"Because of this, Chuang Tzu said, 'The True Person breathes from his heels. The ordinary person breathes from his throat.'	So it is that Shitsuen says: "The true man breathes his breath from the heels, the ordinary man breathes his breath from, the throat."	
"Hsii Chun said, 'When the vital energy is in the lower heater, the breaths are long, when the vital energy is in the upper heater, the breaths are short.'	Kyoshun says: "When the Ki is in the lower region, the breath is long; when it is in the upper region, the breath is contracted."	
"Master Shang Yang said, 'There is a single genuine vital energy in man. Its descent into the lower heater signifies the return of the single yang. If a person wants to experience the occasion when the yin reaches completion and yields to returning yang, his proof will be found in the warmth that is generated when the vital energy is concentrated in the lower body.'	Joyoshi says: "In man the energy is verily one alone. When it goes down to the Tanden, the Yang reacts, and the beginning of the reaction in the form of Yang can be confirmed by a feeling of warmth."	
"The golden rule in the art of sustaining life is always to keep the upper body cool and the lower body warm.	The general rule for replenishing the life is that the upper regions should be always cool and the lower regions warm.	
"There are twelve conduits along which the defensive energy and nutritive blood circulate through the body. These conduits correspond to the twelve horary signs or stems, to the twelve months of the year, and to the twelve hours of the day.	"The pulses of the body are twelve-branched, corresponding to the twelve months of the year and the twelve periods of the day.	
They also correspond to the various permutations the hexagrams or divination signs in the Book of Changes undergo in the course of their yearly cycle.	So also the Book of Change has its six seasons, whose cycle of change makes up the year.	

<p>"Five yin lines above and one yang line below-the hexagram known as 'Ground Thunder Returns' corresponds seasonally to the winter solstice. It is perhaps this Chuang Tzu refers to when he speaks of 'the True Person breathing from his heels.'</p>	<p>In this system, when five Yins are above and one Yang is held below, the omen is Thunder in the earth returning. The reference is to the depth of winter, and this is what is meant by the true man's breathing from the heels.</p>	 Hex #24
<p>"Three yang lines below and three yin lines above-the hexagram 'Earth and Heaven at Peace' corresponds seasonally to the first month, when the ten thousand things are pregnant with the vital energy of generation and the myriad buds and flowers, receiving the beneficial moisture, burst into blossom. It is the configuration of the True Person, whose lower body is filled with primal energy. When a person achieves this stage, his defensive energy and nutritive blood are replenished and his spirit is full of vigor and courage.</p>	<p>When three Yangs are in the lower position and three Yins above, it is Earth and Heaven in harmony, the season of the new year when everything is imbued with life-bearing energy and the plants receive the abundance for the spring blossoming. This represents the perfect man's taking; down his energy to fill the lower regions, and when a man attains it he is filled with heroic vigour.</p>	
<p>"Five yin lines below and one yang line above -the hexagram known as 'Splitting Apart'-corresponds seasonally to the ninth month. When the heavens are at this point, foliage in the garden and forest drains of color, flowers droop and wither. It is the configuration of the 'ordinary man breathing from his throat.' When a person reaches this stage, he is thin and haggard in appearance; his teeth grow loose and fall.</p>	<p>But when five Yins are below and one Yang remains above, it is Mountain and Earth stripped, the season of September.</p>	 Hex #23
<p>"Because of this, the <i>Treatise on Prolonging Life</i> states: 'When all six yang lines are exhausted and man is wholly yin, death may easily occur.'</p>	<p>When it manifests in nature, forest and garden lose their colors and all the plants fade and fall. The ordinary man's breathing from the throat is a symbol of it. In the human body it is a drying and stiffening of the frame, with the teeth becoming loose and falling. Of this condition the books on prolonging life say that the six Yangs are all exhausted—in other words the man who is only Yin is near death.</p>	 Hex #2
<p>What you must know is that, for sustaining life, the key is, to have primal energy constantly filling the lower body."</p>	<p>What has to be known is just this: the central principle is to take the life energy down to fill the lower regions.</p>	
<p><b><u>REMEDIES POR SUSTAINING LIFE AND ACHIEVING IMMORTALITY</u></b></p>		
<p>[Master Hakuyū continued:] "Before Wu Ch'i-</p>	<p>'In olden times Tokeisho purified himself</p>	

<p>ch'u visited Master Shih-t'ai long ago, he prepared himself by performing ritual purifications. Then he went and inquired about the art of refining the elixir. Master Shih-t'ai told him, 'I possess a marvelous secret for producing the genuine and profound elixir, but only a person of superior capacity would be able to receive and transmit it.'</p>	<p>before appearing in front of the teacher Sekidai to ask about the secret of distilling the Tan-elixir. The teacher said: "I have the secret of the great mystic elixir, but there is no transmission except to one of superior merit."</p>	
<p>This is the very same secret the Yellow Emperor was given by Master Kuang Ch'eng. The Yellow Emperor received it only after he had completed a retirement and abstinence of twenty-one days.</p>	<p>Again in antiquity, when Koseishi transmitted it to the Yellow Emperor, the Emperor had to perform purification for twenty-one days in order to be fit to receive it.</p>	
<p>'The genuine elixir does not exist apart from the Great Way, the Great Way does not exist apart from the genuine elixir. You Buddhists have a teaching known as the five nonleakages. Once the six desires are dispelled and the working of the five senses is forgotten, the primal, undifferentiated energy will gather to repletion under your very eyes.</p>	<p>Apart from the great Tao there is no elixir, and apart from the elixir no great Tao. Now there is a method of fivefold purification: when the six cravings are abandoned, and the five senses have forgotten their operation, you will dimly perceive filling you the life-energy, hard to distinguish.</p>	
<p>This is what T'ai-pai Tao-jen meant when he spoke about 'combining one's vital inborn energy with the primal energy of heaven and earth whence it derives.'</p>	<p>This is what the Taoist Taihaku meant when he said: "Through the divine energy in me to unite with the primal divine energy."</p>	
<p>"You should draw what Mencius called the 'vast, expansive energy' down and store it in the elixir field-the reservoir of vital energy located below the navel." Hold it there over the months and years, preserving it single-mindedly, sustaining it without wavering. One morning, you will suddenly overturn the elixir furnace, and then everywhere, within and without the entire universe, will become a single immense piece of pure elixir ."</p>	<p>'Mencius speaks of the free energy in man. This is to be led to the Tanden in the energy-sea at the navel wheel and concentrated there; for months and years protect it and maintain the unity, nourish it and make it perfect. One morning that alchemist's crucible will suddenly be transcended, and within and without and hi the middle, in all directions and in everything, there will be the one great elixir circulating.</p>	
<p>When that happens, you will realize for the first time that you yourself are a genuine sage, as unborn as heaven and earth, as undying as empty space. At that moment, your efforts to refine the elixir will attain <b>fruition</b>.</p>	<p>Then at last you awaken and attain to the self, the true immortality of the great spiritual Sennin, which was not born even before heaven and earth were, which does not die even after space itself has ceased to exist.</p>	 Hex #63
<p>This is not a superficial feat such as raising winds or riding mists, shrinking space, or walking over water, the kind of thing that can be performed by lesser sages. For you, the object is to churn the great sea into finest</p>	<p>In the alchemy of the Tan-elixir this is the season of <b>Fulfilment</b>. Why do they cling to little psychic powers like riding on the wind and bestriding the mists, crushing the earth and walking on water, churning the ocean to</p>	

butter, to transform the great earth into purest gold.	produce the celestial So cream and transmuting clay into yellow gold?	
"In explaining the phrase 'the metal liquid returns to the elixir,' a wise man of the past said, "'Elixir" refers to the elixir field, and "liquid" refers to the blood fluid in the lungs, so the phrase means that the blood in the lungs returns to the elixir field located below the navel.'	A sage has said: "The Tan-elixir is the Tanden, just below the navel. The secret alchemical liquid is that from the lungs, which is to be taken and returned to the Tanden." So the teaching is, the metal liquid is the circulation of the Tan.'	
<b><u>DRAWING THE MIND INTO THE LOWER BODY</u></b>		
At this point, I [Hakuin] said to Master Hakuyū: "I am deeply grateful for your instruction. I'm going to discontinue my Zen study for a while so that I can concentrate my efforts on Introspective Meditation and cure my illness.	I said: 'With reverence I hear. I am to drop my Zen contemplation for a while, and cure myself by devoting my time to these new practices.	
There is something that still bothers me, however. Wouldn't the method you teach be an example of 'overly emphasizing tooling remedies in order to bring the heart-fire down,' which the great physician Li Shih-ts'ai warned against? And if I concentrated my mind in a single place, wouldn't that impede the movement of defensive energy and nutritive blood and make them stagnate?"	I have one misgiving: may this not be what Rishisai condemns as falling into pure inertia? If the heart is held to one place, will not the Ki and the blood become stagnant?'	
A flicker of a smile crossed Master Hakuyū's face. "Not at all," he replied. "You mustn't forget that Master Li also said the nature of fire is to flame upward, so it must be made to descend; the nature of water is to flow downward, so it must be made to rise.	Hakuyu smiled a little and replied: 'Not so. Does not Rishisai say that the nature of fire is to blaze up and therefore it should be taken down, whereas the nature of water is to sink and therefore it should be made to rise?	 Fire  water
This condition of fire descending and water ascending is called intermingling.	Water ascending and fire descending, that is what he calls the mixing.	 #63
The time when intermingling is taking place is called <b>Already Completed</b> ; the time when it is not taking place is called <b>Before Completion</b> .	When they are mixed the omen is <b>Fulfilled</b> ; when they are unmixed the omen is <b>Unfulfilled</b> .	 # 64
"Intermingling is a configuration of life. Not intermingling is a configuration of death. When Master Li and those of his school speak of	The former is the sign of life, the latter the sign of death. The school of Rishisai condemns the so-called sinking into pure	

<p>'overly emphasizing cooling remedies to bring down the heart-fire,' they do so in order to save people who study the teachings of the Tan-hsi school from the harm that could result from over-emphasizing such remedies.</p>	<p>inertia in order to save students from falling into the error of Tankei (who cultivates only the Yin).</p>	
<p>"Fire functions in two ways: as prince and as minister. The princely fire is found in the upper body; it presides in tranquility. The ministerial fire is found in the lower body; it presides in activity.</p>	<p>'An ancient says:"The minister-fire tends to rise and oppress the body; remedy this with water which by nature controls fire." The fire indeed is of dual nature, the prince-fire which is above and has charge of stillness, and the minister-fire which is below and has charge of activity.</p>	 fire
<p>Princely fire is master of the heart. Ministerial fire works as its subordinate.</p>	<p>The prince-fire is the lord of the heart, the minister-fire is its servant.</p>	
<p>"Ministerial fire is of two kinds, one of which is found in the kidneys, the other in the liver. The kidneys correspond to the dragon, the liver to thunder. There is a saying: 'The crash of thunder is never heard as long as the dragon stays hidden in the depths of the sea. The dragon never soars in the skies as long as thunder remains confined to the marshes and bogs.'</p>	<p>The minister-fire itself is dual, namely kidneys and liver. The liver is compared to thunder and the kidneys to dragons. So it is said, <b>when the dragons are taken back to the bottom of the sea, thunder will not break forth, and when the thunder is taken into concealment in the depths of the lake, the dragons will not soar aloft.</b></p>	
<p>Assuming that is true, and in view of the fact that the composition of both seas and marshes is water, doesn't the saying signify that the ministerial fire's tendency to rise is suppressed?</p>	<p>Sea and lake are both of watery nature; this is the secret of preventing the tendency of the minister-fire to mount.</p>	 Lake
<p>"It is also said that the heart becomes exhausted [of energy] when it tires and thus overheats. When the heart is exhausted, it can be replenished by making it descend below and intermingle with the kidneys. This is known as replenishing. It corresponds to the principle of <b>After Completion</b> mentioned before.</p>	<p>Again it is said:"When the heart is exhausted, in the vacuity fire blazes up; therefore at the time when there is vacuity, take the fiery energy downwards and mingle it with the kidneys—that is the remedy." It is the way of <b>Fulfilment.</b></p>	 # 63
<p>"You, young man, developed this grave illness because the fire in your heart was allowed to rush upward against the natural flow. Unless you succeed in bringing your heart down into your lower body, you will never regain your health, not even if you master all the secret practices the three worlds have to offer.</p>	<p>From the mounting of the heart-fire your grievous illness has arisen. If you do not take it down you will never recover, though you learn and practice all the healing remedies human and divine.</p>	
<p>"You probably regard me as some kind of Taoist. You probably think what I've been telling you has no relation to Buddhism at all. But</p>	<p>Now it may be that as my outward appearance is that of a Taoist, you fancy that my teaching is far from Buddhism. But this is</p>	

that's mistaken. What I'm teaching you is Zen. If, in the future, you get a glimpse of true awakening, you will smile as you recall these words of mine."	Zen. One day, when you break through, you will see how laughable were your former ideas.	
<b><u>NON-CONTEMPLATION</u></b>		
[Master Hakuyū continued:] "As for the practice of contemplation, true contemplation is non-contemplation. False contemplation is contemplation that is diverse and unfocused. You contracted this grave illness by engaging in diverse contemplation. Don't you think that now you should save yourself by means of non-contemplation? If you take the heat in your heart, the fire in your mind, and draw it down into the region of the elixir field and the soles of the feet, you will feel naturally cool and refreshed. All discrimination will cease. Not the slightest conscious thought will occur to raise the waves of emotion. This is true meditation - pure and undefiled meditation.	"This contemplation attains right contemplation by no- contemplation. Many-pointed contemplation is wrong contemplation. Hitherto your contemplation has been many- pointed and so you have contracted this grave malady. Is it not then proper to cure it by no-contemplation? If you now control the fire of heart and will and put it in the Tanden and right down to the soles of the feet, your breast will of itself become cool, without a thought of calculation, without a ripple of passion. This is true contemplation, pure contemplation.	
"So don't talk about discontinuing your study of Zen. The Buddha himself taught that we should 'cure all kinds of illness by putting the heart down into the soles of the feet.'	Do not call it dropping your Zen contemplation, for the Buddha himself says: "Hold your heart down in the soles of the feet and you heal a hundred and one ills."	
The Agama sutras teach a method in which butter is used. It is unexcelled for treating debilitation of the heart.	Further the Agama scriptures speak of the use of the So cream in curing mental exhaustion.	
"In the Tendai sect's <i>Great Concentration and Insight</i> , the fundamental causes of illness as well as the methods of treating them are set forth in minute detail.	The Tendai meditation classic called "Stopping and Contemplating" deals in detail with illnesses and their causes, and describes the methods of treatment.	
Twelve breathing techniques are given that are effective in curing a wide range of ailments. There is another technique of visualizing the heart as a bean resting on the navel. Ultimately, the essence in all these methods is to bring the heart-fire down and gather it in the elixir field and the soles of the feet. It is not only effective for curing illness, it is extremely beneficial for Zen meditation as well.	It gives twelve different ways of breathing to cure various forms of illness, and it prescribes the method of visualizing a bean at the navel. The main point is always that the heart- fire must be taken down and kept at the Tanden and down to the soles, and this not only cures illness but very much helps Zen contemplation.	
"There are, I believe, two kinds of concentration: concentration on ultimate truth and concentration on temporary truth.	'In the Tendai system there are in fact two forms of Stopping: one is by controlling the associations, and the other is clearness of	

	Truth.	
The former is a full and perfect meditation on the true aspect of all things; in the latter, primary importance is placed on focusing the heart-energy in the region of the elixir field.	The latter is full contemplation of reality, whereas the former stresses first restraining the mind and vitality in the Tanden.	
Students who practice these concentrations derive great benefit from them."	If the student practices it, he will find it most useful.	
<b><u>CULTIVATING THE MIND ENERGY</u></b>		
[Master Hakuyū continued:] "Dogen, founding patriarch of the Eihei-ji temple, traveled to China and studied with Zen master Ju-ching at T'ien-t'ung monastery.	Long ago the Zen patriarch Dogen, founder of Eihei-ji temple, crossed to China and made his reverence before the teacher Nyojo on Mount Tendo.	
One day, when he went to Ju-ching's chambers to receive his instruction, Ju-ching said, 'When you practice zazen, you should place your mind in the palm of your left hand.'	One day he entered the master's room and asked for instruction. The master said: "O Dogen, at the time of sitting in meditation, put your heart on your left palm."	
"This generally corresponds to the Tendai sect's concentration on temporary truth.	This is fundamentally what the Tendai master means by his Stopping.	
"In his <i>Smaller Concentration and Insight</i> , Chih-i relates how he first came to teach the secret technique of Introspective Meditation (concentration on temporary truth) and how by using it he saved his elder brother, gravely ill, from the brink of death.	The latter records in one of his works on the subject how he taught the secret to a sick brother, whom it saved from death.	
"The priest Po-yün said, 'I always keep my heart down filling my lower belly. I use it all the time-teaching students, guiding the assembly of monks, receiving visitors, during encounters in my chambers, while busily engaged in talks and lectures of various kinds-and I never use it up. Since reaching old age, I've found its benefits to be especially great.'	'Again, Abbot Haku-un says: "I always direct my heart so that it fills my abdomen. Helping students or receiving visitors or entertaining guests, however it may be, preaching! or teaching and all else, I have never ceased to do it. Now in my old age the virtue of the practice is clearly apparent.	
"How commendable! Don't Po-yün's words agree with the teaching found in the Su-wen?:"	This is well said indeed. It is based on the phrase in the <i>Somon</i> classic of medicine:	
'If you are tranquil and free of troubling thoughts, the primal energy will conform. As long as you preserve that energy within, there is no place for illness to enter.'	"When you are quiet and simple, and empty within, the true Ki-energy conforms to that. If the spirit is kept within, how should sickness come?"	

<p>"Moreover, the essence of preserving the energy within is to keep it replete and secure throughout the entire body-extending to all the three hundred and sixty joints and each of the eighty- four thousand pores of the skin.</p>	<p>The point is to keep the fundamental Ki within, pervading and supporting the whole body so that in the 360joints and 84,000 pores; there is not a hair's breadth without it.</p>	
<p>You must know that this is the ultimate secret of sustaining life.</p>	<p>Know this to be the secret of preserving life.</p>	
<p>"Peng Tsu said,</p>	<p>'Master Ho (who lived 800 years) speaks thus of a method of harmonizing the spirit and directing the Ki:</p>	
<p>'Close yourself up in a room where you won't be disturbed. Prepare a mat with bedding that has been warmed and a pillow about three inches high.</p>	<p>"Shut yourself away in a quiet private room, and prepare a bed level and warm, with a pillow two-and-a-half inches high.</p>	
<p>Lie face upward with your body completely straight. Close your eyes and confine the heart-energy within your breast.</p>	<p>Stretch yourself out on the back, close the eyes and confine the heart energy within the breast.</p>	
<p>Place a goose feather on your nose. When your breathing does not disturb the feather, count three hundred breaths.</p>	<p>Put a feather on the nose and make your breathing so slow that it is not moved. After three hundred breaths</p>	
<p>Once you have reached a state where your ears do not hear and your eyes do not see, cold and heat will no longer discomfort you; the poisonous stings of bees and scorpions will be unable to harm you. Upon attaining the age of three hundred and sixty, you will be very close to becoming a true person.'</p>	<p>the ears hear nothing, the eyes see nothing; in this state heat and cold cannot assail, the bee's sting cannot poison. Life will be prolonged to 360 years and you approach the state of the immortals."</p>	
<p>"Su Tung-p'o gave the following advice: 'If you are hungry, eat some food, but stop eating before you are full. Take a long, leisurely stroll, until you feel your appetite return, then enter a quiet room and</p>	<p>'The great poet-mystic Sotoba says:"Do not eat till you are hungry, and stop before you are satisfied. Go for a walk until the exertion makes the stomach empty, and when it is empty enter a quiet room.</p>	
<p>seat yourself in an upright posture. Begin exhaling and inhaling, counting your breaths- from ten to a hundred, from a hundred to a thousand. By the time you have counted a thousand breaths, your body should be as firm and steady as a rock, your heart as tranquil and motionless as the empty sky."</p>	<p>Sit silently in the meditation posture and count the outgoing and incoming breaths. Count from one to ten, from ten to a hundred, from, a hundred to a thousand, when the body will become immobile and the heart serene as the clear sky.</p>	

<p>'If you continue to sit like this for a long period, your breath will hang suspended. You will no longer inhale or exhale. Your breath will exude in clouds, rise up like mist, from the eighty-four thousand pores of your skin.</p>	<p>If this practice is prolonged, the breath will come to a stop of itself. When it neither comes in nor goes out, a vaporous exhalation will come from the 84,000 pores, rising like a mist.</p>	
<p>You will realize with perfect clarity that all the illnesses you have suffered from, each of the countless disorders you have experienced from the beginningless beginning, have all vanished of themselves. You will be like a blind man suddenly regaining his sight who no longer has need to ask others for guidance on his way.</p>	<p>You will find that all illnesses you ever had are removed, and every obstacle eliminated. Now, like a blind man whose eyes have suddenly been opened, you do not need to ask another the way."</p>	
<p>"What you must do is to cut back on words and devote yourself solely to sustaining your primal energy.</p>	<p>The only thing needed is to cut short worldly talk and build up the fundamental Ki.</p>	
<p>Hence, it is said, "Those who wish to strengthen their sight keep their eyes closed. Those who wish to strengthen their hearing avoid sounds. Those who wish to sustain their heart-energy maintain silence."</p>	<p>So it is said: He who would nourish the power of the eyes always keeps them shut, he who would nourish the power of the ears is never eager to hear, he who would nourish the heart-energy is ever silent.'</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>THE SOFT BUTTER METHOD</u></b></p>		
<p>"You mentioned a method in which butter is used," I said. "May I ask you about that?"</p>	<p>I asked: 'May I hear of the use of the So cream?'</p>	
<p>Master Hakuyū replied, "When a student engaged in meditation finds that he is exhausted in body and mind because the four constituent elements of his body are in a state of disharmony, he should gird up his spirit and perform the following visualization:</p>	<p>Hakuyu said: 'If the student finds in his meditation that the four great elements are out of harmony, and body and mind are fatigued, he should rouse himself and make this meditation.</p>	
<p><i>"Imagine that a lump of soft butter, pure in color and fragrance and the size and shape of a duck egg, is suddenly placed on the top of your head. As it begins to slowly melt, it imparts an exquisite sensation, moistening and saturating your head within and without.</i></p>	<p><i>Let him visualize placed on the crown of his head that celestial So ointment, about as much as a duck's egg, pure in color and fragrance. Let him feel its exquisite essence and flavor melting and filtering down through his head,</i></p>	
<p><i>It continues to ooze down, moistening your shoulders, elbows, and chest; permeating lungs, diaphragm, liver, stomach, and bowels; moving down the spine through the hips,</i></p>	<p><i>its flow permeating downwards, slowly laving the shoulders and elbows, the sides of the breast and within the chest, the lungs, liver, stomach and internal organs, the back and</i></p>	

<p>pelvis, and buttocks.</p>	<p>spine and hip bones.</p>	
<p>"At that point, all the congestions that have accumulated within the five organs and six viscera, all the aches and pains in the abdomen and other affected parts, will follow the heart as it sinks downward into the lower body. As it does, you will distinctly hear a sound like that of water trickling from a higher to a lower place. It will move lower down through the lower body, suffusing the legs with beneficial warmth, until it reaches the soles of the feet, where it stops.</p>	<p>All the old ailments and adhesions and pains in the five organs and six auxiliaries follow the mind downwards. There is a sound as of the trickling of water. Percolating through the whole body, the flow goes gently down the legs, stopping at the soles of the feet.</p>	
<p>"The student should then repeat the contemplation. As his vital energy flows downward, it gradually fills the lower region of the body, suffusing it with penetrating warmth, making him feel as if he were sitting up to his navel in a hot bath filled with a decoction of rare and fragrant medicinal herbs that have been gathered and infused by a skilled physician.</p>	<p>Then let him make this meditation: that the elixir having permeated and filtered down through him, its abundance fills up the lower half of his body. It becomes warm, and he is saturated in it. Just as a skillful physician collects herbs of rare fragrance and puts them in a pan to boil, so the student feels that from the navel down he is simmering in the So elixir.</p>	
<p>"Inasmuch as all things are created by the mind, when you engage in this contemplation, the nose will actually smell the marvelous scent of pure, soft butter; your body will feel the exquisite sensation of its melting touch.</p>	<p>'When this meditation is being done there will be psychological experiences, of a sudden indescribable fragrance at the nose- tip, of a gentle and exquisite sensation in the body.</p>	
<p>Your body and mind will be in perfect peace and harmony. You will feel better and enjoy greater health than you did as a youth of twenty or thirty.</p>	<p>Mind and body become harmonized and far surpass their condition at the peak of youth.</p>	
<p>At this time, all the undesirable accumulations in your vital organs and viscera will melt away. Stomach and bowels will function perfectly. Before you know it, your skin will glow with health.</p>	<p>Adhesions and obstructions are cleared away, the organs are tranquillized and insensibly the skin begins to glow.</p>	
<p>If you continue to practice the contemplation with diligence, there is no illness that cannot be cured, no virtue that cannot be acquired, no level of sagehood that cannot be reached, no religious practice that cannot be mastered. Whether such results appear swiftly or slowly depends only upon how scrupulously you apply yourself.</p>	<p>If the practice is carried on without relapse, what illness will not be healed, what power will not be acquired, what perfection will not be attained, what Way will not be fulfilled? The arrival of the result depends only on how the student performs the practices.</p>	
<p>"I was a sickly youth, in much worse shape</p>	<p>When I was a youth I was much more ill than</p>	

than you are now.'I experienced ten times the suffering you have endured.	you are now.	
The doctors finally gave up on me. I explored hundreds of cures on my own, but none of them brought me any relief. I turned to the gods for help. Prayed to the deities of both heaven and earth, begging them for their subtle, imperceptible assistance.	The doctors gave up the case, and I clutched at a hundred expedients but could find no art that would help me. I prayed to the deities of heaven and earth, and invoked the aid of the divine Sennin.	
I was marvelously blessed. They extended me their support and protection. I came upon this wonderful method of soft-butter contemplation. My joy knew no bounds. I immediately set about practicing it with total and single-minded determination.	By their grace there came to me unexpectedly the secret of the So cream. My joy was indescribable, and I practiced it continuously.	
Before even a month was out, my troubles had almost totally vanished. Since that time, I've never been the least bit bothered by any complaint, physical or mental.	Before a month had passed the greater part of the illnesses had been eliminated, and thereafter, I have felt only lightness and peace in my body and mind.	
"I became like an-ignoramus, mindless and utterly free of care. I was oblivious to the passage of time. I never knew what day or month it was, even whether it was a leap year or not. I gradually lost interest in the things the world holds dear, soon forgot completely about the hopes and desires and customs of ordinary men and women. In my middle years, I was compelled by circumstance to leave Kyoto and take refuge in the mountains of Wakasa Province.	Unmoving, unminding, I do not reckon the months nor keep track of the years; thoughts of the world have become few, old habits and desires seem forgotten. I do not know how old I may be. For a time I came to wander in solitude in the mountains of Wakasu;	
I lived there nearly thirty years, unknown to my fellow men. Looking back on that period of my life, it seems as fleeting and unreal as the dream-life that flashed through Lu-sheng's slumbering brain.	that was about thirty years. No one in the world knew me. When I look back it is just like the dream at Koryan (where a traveler dreamed the events of a lifetime in half an hour).	
"Now I live here in this solitary spot in the hills of Shirakawa, far from all human habitation. I have a layer or two of clothing to wrap around my withered old carcass. But even in midwinter, on nights when the cold bites through the thin cotton, I don't freeze.	Now, alone in these mountains, I have set free this body. There are only a couple of cloths for covering, yet in the hardest winter, when the cloth curls under the cold, my body suffers no chill.	
Even during the months when there are no mountain fruits or nuts for me to gather, and I have no grain to eat, I don't starve.	The grain comes to an end and often there is nothing to eat for several months, yet I feel neither hunger nor cold.	

It is all thanks to this contemplation.	What is this but the power of the Naikan?	
"Young man, you have just learned a secret that you could not use up in a whole lifetime. What more could I teach you?"	The secret I have given you is something whose mysteries you will never exhaust. Besides this, what have I to tell you?'	
<b><u>TAKING LEAVE OF HAKUYU</u></b>		
Master Hakuyū sat silently with his eyes closed. I thanked him profusely, my own eyes glistening with tears, and then bade him farewell.	He closed his eyes and sat in silence. My eyes were full of tears as I made my farewell salutations.	
The last vestiges of light were lingering in the topmost branches of the trees as I left the cave and made my way slowly down the mountain.	Slowly I descended from the cave mouth. The remaining sunbeams just touched the tips of the trees.	
Suddenly, I was stopped in my tracks by the clop clop of wooden clogs striking the stony ground and echoing up from the sides of the valley. Half in wonder, half in disbelief, I peered apprehensively around to see the figure of Master Hakuyū coming toward me in the distance.	I began to notice a sound of footsteps echoing in the mountain and valley. An awe and dread came over me, and fearfully I turned to look back. I saw in the distance that the Master Hakuyū had left the rock cave.	
When he was near enough to speak, he said, "No one uses these mountain trails. It's easy to lose your way. You might have trouble getting back, so I'll take you partway down."	As he came up he said: 'In these trackless mountains you can easily be lost. I will guide your steps lest you get into difficulties.'	
A skinny wooden staff grasped in his hand, high wooden clogs on his feet, he walked on ahead of me, talking and laughing. He moved nimbly and effortlessly over rugged cliffs and steep mountainside, covering the difficult terrain with the ease of someone strolling through a well-kept garden.	With his great wooden clogs and thin staff he trod the steep rocks and sheer cliffs lightly as level ground; talking and laughing he showed me the way.	
After a league or so, we came to the mountain stream. He said if I followed it I would have no trouble finding my way back to the village of Shirakawa. With what seemed a look of sadness, he then turned and began to retrace his steps.	Two or three miles down the mountain we came to the valley stream. He said: 'Follow its course and you will come safe to White-River valley,' and abruptly left me.	
Again, I pressed my palms together and bowed my head low in thanks. I stood there motionless, watching as Master Hakuyū made his way up the mountain trail, marveling at the	For some time I stood like a tree, watching the master returning, his stride like that of an ancient hero. So lightly he escaped the world, ascending the mountain as if on wings.	

strength and vigor of his step. He moved with such light, unfettered freedom, as if he were one who had transcended this world, had sprouted wings, and was flying up to join the ranks of immortal sages.		
Gazing at him, my heart was filled with respect, and with a touch of envy as well. I also felt a pang of regret, knowing that never again in this lifetime would I be able to encounter and learn from a man such as this.	A longing and an awe were on me - to the end of my days I have regretted that I could not follow such a man.	
<b><u>THE BENEFITS OF INTROSPECTIVE MEDITATION</u></b>		
I went directly back to Shoin-ji. There I devoted myself to Introspective Meditation, practicing it over and over on my own. In less than three years—without recourse to medicine, acupuncture, or moxacautery—the illnesses that had been plaguing me for years cleared up of themselves.	Slowly I went back. I absorbed myself continuously in the Naikan practices, and in barely three years all my maladies disappeared of themselves without drugs or other treatment.	
What is more, during the same period I experienced the immense joy of great satori six or seven times, boring through and penetrating to the root of all those hard- to-believe, hard-to-penetrate, hard-to-grasp, and hard-to-enter koans that I had never before been able to get my teeth into at all.	Not merely was the illness cured, but the Koan, hard to hold and hard to follow, hard to understand and hard to enter, on which before I could find no purchase for hand or foot, into which I could not bite, now I followed to the root and penetrated to the bottom.	
I attained countless small satoris as well, which sent me waltzing about waving my hands in the air in mindless dance. I then knew for the first time that Zen master Ta-hui had not been deceiving me when he had written about experiencing eighteen great satori and countless small ones.	Six or seven times I had the great bliss of that passing through, and times without counting the dancing joy of minor satori. I knew that the old master Daiye was verily not deceiving us when he spoke of eighteen great satori realizations and countless lesser ones.	
In the past, I used to wear two and even three layers of tabi, but the soles of my feet still always felt as though they were soaking in tubs of ice. Now, even in the third month, the coldest time of year, I didn't need even a single pair. I no longer required a brazier to keep myself warm.	As for myself, in the old days the soles of my feet were always freezing as if in ice, even when I wore two or three pairs of socks, but now during the three months of winter's rigor I neither put on socks nor warm my feet at the fire.	
I am more than eighty years old this year, but even now I never suffer from the slightest indisposition. Surely all of this is due to the	I have passed my seventieth year, yet there is no trace of illness to be found, and surely this is the effect of the divine secret.	

lingering benefits I enjoy from having practiced the wonderful secret technique of Introspective Meditation.

## **EPILOGUE**

Even thinking about it now, the tears trickle down my leathery old cheeks—I just can't help it. Four or five years ago, I had a dream. Master Hakuyū had come all the way from the hills of Shirakawa to visit me here at Shoin-ji.

We spent a whole night laughing and talking together. I felt so happy that the following morning I told the monks living at the temple all about it. They bowed and pressed their palms together in attitudes of worship. "Good! Good!" they said. "Maybe it will come to pass. Perhaps the dream will become reality. If Master Hakuyū did come here, it would be a great honor for the temple.

"You turned eighty this year, master, but your mind and body are both still strong and vigorous. You teach us and extend your help to other students far and wide. Isn't it all thanks to Master Hakuyū? Let one or two of us go to Kyoto and invite him to visit Shoin-ji. He could live here at the temple. We could provide for his needs through our begging."

A feeling of elation passed through the brotherhood. Plans began to be laid. Then a monk stepped forward. "Hold on," he said, laughing. "You're making the mistake of 'marking the side of a moving boat to show where the sword fell in.' I'm sorry to have to be the one to tell you this, but Master Hakuyū, the person you are talking about, is no longer alive. He died this past summer."

The monks clapped their hands in astonishment.

"You shouldn't repeat idle rumors like that!" I said, admonishing the monk. "Hakuyū is no ordinary man. He is one of the immortal sages who just happens to walk the earth. How could such a man die?"

"Unfortunately, that was his undoing. It is

Now let it not be said that the old dodderer of Shoinji has with his dying gasps chronicled a mass of drivel to bamboozle good men. For those who are already spiritual ashes, whose blow has struck through to satori, for those higher ones this was never meant; but to dullards like myself, who have been ill like me, it will undoubtedly be of help if studied. The only fear is that outsiders may clap their hands and laugh over it. When the horse is chewing up an old straw basket, one can't get a nap in peace,

because he trod the earth that he met his death. Last summer, it seems he was walking in the mountains and came to the edge of a deep ravine. It was more than a hundred yards to the other side. He tried to leap across, but he didn't make it. He fell to the rocks below. His death was lamented by villagers far and near."

The monk, his story completed, stood there with a forlorn look on his face. I found my own eyes shedding copious tears.

Don't be saying old Hakuin, half dead and gasping out his final breaths, has recklessly scribbled out a long tissue of groundless nonsense hoping to hoodwink superior students. What I've put down here is not intended for those who possess spiritual powers of the first order—the kind of superior seeker who is awakened at a single blow from his master's mallet. But if dull, plodding oafs like me—the kind of people who will suffer from illness as I did—get a look at this book, read and contemplate its meaning, they should surely be able to obtain a little help from it. In fact, after giving the matter more consideration, I think perhaps the benefit will not necessarily be small. In any event, the main thing—what we must all cherish and revere—is the secret method of Introspective Meditation.

In the spring of the seventh year of the Horeki era [1757], I composed a work in Japanese that I called *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*. In it, I set forth the essential principles of the meditation.

Ever since then, people of all kinds—monks, nuns, laymen, lay-women—have told me how, when the odds were stacked ten to one against them, they were saved from the misery of grave and incurable illnesses owing to the wonderful benefits of Introspective Meditation. They have come to me here at Shoin-ji in numbers I cannot even count to thank me in person.

Two or three years ago, a young man—he must have been about twenty-two or twenty-three—showed up at the temple asking to see me. When I stepped out to greet him, I was taken aback by the great bundle of presents—including several gold coins—he had brought for me. He bowed his head to the ground.

"I am so-and-so from Matsuzaka in Ise Province," he said. "About six years ago, I came down with a serious ailment, which I found impossible to cure. I tried all the secret remedies I knew, but none of them had any effect whatever. All the physicians I consulted wrote me off as a hopeless case. It seemed then that there was nothing left for me to do except await the end.

A wonderful thing then happened. I chanced to read *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*. As best I could with my meager abilities, I began to practice the secret technique of Introspective Meditation on my own. What a blessing it was! Little by little, my energy began to return. Today I am restored to perfect health. I can't tell you how happy and thankful I felt. I was dancing on air! Since it had all come about because I happened upon *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*, there was nowhere I could go—no physician or healer to whom I could express my gratitude. Fortunately, however, as I was mulling what I should do, I heard a vague rumor that you, Master Hakuin, were the author of *Idle Talk on a Night Boat*.

Immediately, I wanted to see your revered countenance so I could express my profound gratitude to you in person. On the pretext of transacting some business in Edo, I traveled all the way from Ise Province to see you. This is the happiest moment of my entire life. Nothing could exceed it."

As I listened to him relate the details of his story, can you imagine the happiness this old monk also felt?

I'm only afraid that other people, when they read this work, will clap their hands and break into great peals of laughter. Why is that?

*A horse calmly chewing its fodder  
Disturbs a man at his midday nap*

Written on the Buddha's birthday, the third year of Meiwa [1766]