

A messenger of love that destroys coincidences and bleaches the world

About Takami Sakurai

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唐 In the To-Dai period of China, there was an unconventional Zen master named Tanka. One extremely cold day, he took a wooden statue of Buddha out of the main hall of a temple he visited in Kyoraku and set it on fire. When the astonished Abbot criticized him for his rudeness, he said, "You know, I was thinking of burning this Buddha and taking its remains. The monk became even more furious. What are you talking about? How can there be remains in a wooden Buddha statue?" Tanka replied with a cool face. What, no remains? Isn't it just a piece of wood?

This is a story from a book written by Zenkei Shibayama, the former head priest of Nanzenji Temple who left behind many legends.

It would be a problem if they were forced to burn the Buddha statues. However, as Master Shibayama said, "This kind of perspicacity to break through idolatry leads directly to unhindered creativity.

When I was thinking about Takami Sakurai, a man of whom I have fond memories, I suddenly remembered this story. Of course, this story has nothing to do with Sakurai. However, I feel as if we are somehow connected. Come to think of it, in recent years Sakurai has been giving off an atmosphere that I would like to call ZEN AVANT-GARDE. However, Sakurai might scold me for being wrong about that. 36,7 years ago, I had the impression that Takami Sakurai was a vacuum-car kind of guy with long hair and bloodshot eyes, drinking shochu. Later, he lived in San Francisco. In those days, when the hippie culture filled Haight-Ashbury with the scent of drugs, he nurtured the gentle flower of Eros and transformed it into a compassionate Buddha-like gaze. Sakurai, the master of the anti-Tokyo extremist group Kyushu-Ha, was incarnated as a swaying bodhisattva. This tremendous gentleness is Takami Sakurai's love for the universe, which has made his own eros correspond to the cosmos, and the symbols of this love are his eyes and wings. According to Greek mythology, Perseus conquers the white wavy-headed demon by taking the eyes and teeth of Graiai, who was born with white hair and meant to be an old woman. And when he paints a lot of eyes, the painter has the inner power to see deep into all

things, and at the same time, the fear of always being seen. By seeing, he paints, and by being painted, he continues to be seen. And above all, the wings, as a symbol of the flight of the soul continue to flap in space. Moreover, the wings are not attached to the body, but to nothingness, or the hole as the body of emptiness.

Here, the contradictory and conflicting elements of reality and desire, Erōs and Thanatos, transcend dichotomous ideas, and appear with a rich affinity that, in Zen terms, could be called the root of their respective manifestations.

By destroying the idols, we revive the Buddha within ourselves. By finding in all beings the body of the Buddha who has enjoyed the compassion of the sun, we share the world and at the same time make it nothing. Takamimi Sakurai, who declares that existence is a state with a hole in it, seems to emerge from this.

The material status quo of art as an objectification of oneself is bleached out. I can't help but think that Sakurai is trying to revive the animistic ecstasy felt by those who have tried to find the spirit in all existence, which is a huge hole that has been expanding enormously since the Big Bang.