

Dasui's Kalpa-Ending Fire

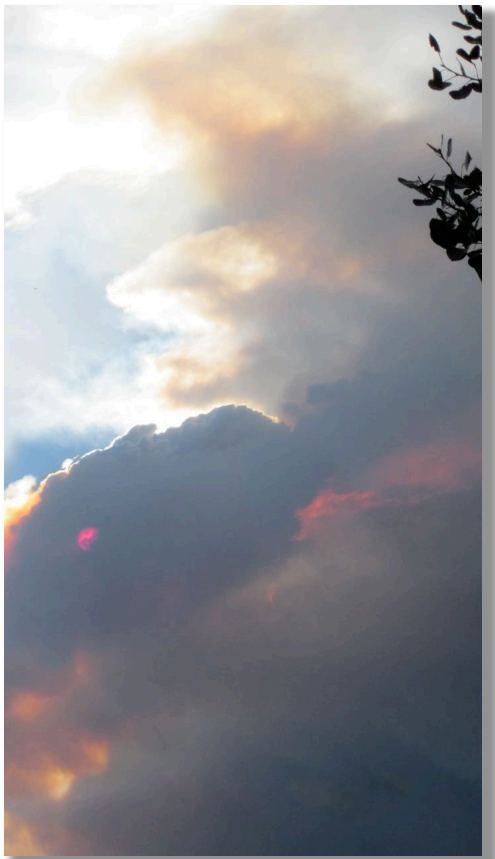
A monastic asked Dasui, "It's clear that the kalpa-ending fire will completely destroy the universe. I'm still not clear whether there is something that won't be destroyed."

Dasui said, "It will be destroyed."

"Will it be gone with the rest?"

"It will," said Dasui.

Las Conchas fire
by Ciel Bergman



The Rest of the Story

Not accepting Dasui's response, the monastic left and went to the teacher Touzi, to whom he recounted this conversation. Touzi turned to his altar, lit incense, bowed to the Buddha, and said, "The Ancient Buddha of Szechuan has appeared," referring to Dasui. Then he turned to the monastic and said, "You should go back there as fast as you can and make amends for your mistake." The monastic hurried back to Dasui, but Dasui was already dead. He returned to Touzi, but Touzi too had died.

Notes

- A kalpa is an inconceivably long age. In Chan cosmology, the universe undergoes endless cycles of emptiness, formation, existence, and destruction, called great kalpas, each of which ends in an all-consuming fire.
- In a curious rhyme, Dasui was the fire keeper at Guishan's monastery.

Xuedou's Verse

Caught between 'destroyed' and 'not destroyed',
the monastic asks his question in the light of the kalpa fire.
Touchingly, it's because of a single phrase, 'It will be destroyed',
that he travels back and forth for ten thousand miles, alone.