

# ZEN NOTES



## SOKEI-AN SAYS

**IRREGULARITY** Everything is irregular in my country. Our idea of beauty is one stone in water, one pine tree, a bridge, and a lantern. We just cut off a corner of nature from somewhere and say, "This is beauty!" Landscape exists for beauty, so we show it. Tree leaves, for instance, are all unsymmetrical and partly bitten by worms, yet we think them beautiful, not as something carved by a sculptor is beautiful, but they have their beauty.

A tea master once asked his disciple to sweep the garden. The disciple watered the garden first, then swept it very clean. It was autumn, and the leaves were falling. The disciple swept everything away--all the tree leaves, all the pine needles--and even washed the pebbles. When the tea master came back and saw the garden, he said, "Did you sweep the garden?" "Yes." "You don't know how to sweep a garden. Look at it!" cried the master. Think about it. What was the disciple to do? He was a wise disciple. He went to the garden and shook the maple tree. Two or three yellow leaves fell down, and some pine needles. "You are a good pupil," said the master. "You understand."

This irregularity makes beauty. Our idea of completeness may be likened to the moon reflecting upon the waves. In the sky the moon is perfect, round, and full, but in the water it stretches out and comes back, breaks into ten thousand pieces like the scales of fishes, changes its appearance in a million different ways.

### TEIWA SHŪ, 2

*Yoshi hakuun kōji no uchi ni jū shite  
Kimi to tomo ni onajiku utau taihei no uta*

Let us live  
Among the white clouds and scarlet woodlands,  
Singing together  
Songs of the Great Peace.

與好  
君住  
同白  
唱雲  
太平紅  
歌樹  
裏裏

## THE FIVE SCHOOLS OF ZEN

**HÖGEN** Of course even in Zen there are different schools. In Högen's school--one of the "Five Schools" of Zen, emphasis is placed on the bare, flat, circumstance. Högen did not try to put any interpretation on anything, or twist one thing into another meaning, or use one thing as the symbol of another. No, Högen's school is one of just bare, flat, circumstance; its foundation is just the bare, flat, ground. When a monk asked Högen, "What is this?" Högen answered, "This is this." When he was asked, "What is Buddha?" his answer was: "Buddha is Buddha."

Other teachers answered quite differently. For instance, when the monk Ejaku asked his teacher, who was a Zen master, this same question, "What is Buddha?" the teacher answered, "You are Ejaku." This teacher's mind is more complicated than Högen's.

From Högen's view we don't need to analyze *this* and make Dharmakaya out of it, nor do we need to turn it back to this existence and call it Nirmanakaya. We don't need to do anything. This world is like this from the beginning and will be to the end. No need to think from where this has come and where it will go. *This* is IT, in Sanskrit *Tatha*, in English "Reality." Now Reality is described as something which our five senses cannot reach. We know that it exists, but we cannot demonstrate or prove how it exists. It is something we cannot look at or do anything with. But to Högen, Reality is not such a complicated thing. *This* is Reality from beginning to end. When you look at *this* with your eye, this is IT. When you hear *this* with your ear, this is IT. Thus Högen accepts this world exactly as it is and doesn't change it at all.

**UMMON** Ummon always placed emphasis upon his speech. When a monk asked him, "What is Buddha?" Ummon answered, "A muck-rake." His school always preferred to speak the vital point of their view of the world in one word, in one term.

**RINZAI** Rinzai emphasized a queer point of view. When someone asked him, "What is Buddha?" Rinzai answered, "HO-O-O!" And when he was asked "What is the Buddhism which was transmitted from India to China?" he also answered "HO-O-O!"

**TŌSAN** Tōsan said nothing.

When Tōsan visited Ummon, Ummon asked him, "Where have you been recently?"

Now this is not a mere question of fact. It means: Recently where have you been in the sphere of Buddhism, in the realm of your enlightened world? For instance, were you in rupadhatu? If you were in rupadhatu, were you in the first dhyana, or in the second dhyana, or in the third, or in the fourth? If you were practicing meditation, where were you? Were you meditating, using your mind to reason logically, exercising the logical process to find a definition of something? Or, perhaps you had prog-

ressed a little more and were simply meditating negatively, while all the work of thinking was being done naturally, without using mental thought or will power. If you are in this state, you are not using any human effort to think, but are exploiting the power of nature, letting nature think for you. You repeat your problem three times before you go to bed, and in the morning there is the answer. The answer is given to you by nature in the night. Sometimes Zen students, hearing a statement like this, repeat their koan-- "Before father and mother"--three times and go to bed, expecting to find the answer in the morning! Of course it is not so easy as that. But you do think intuitively without using reasoning.

When your state of meditation has progressed still more, you don't think anything at all, either negatively or positively. You yourself are completely fused with the entire universe. Your consciousness is universal consciousness, your body is part of the universe. When you realize this in meditation your mind will fill with bliss and joy. This is the third state of dhyana.

This bliss will fade away. Then, there is nothing to be glad about, or sad about either. You are in the state of renunciation. You don't make any particular concept about anything. It is not necessary to make any decisive effort, either negative or positive, or feel you are part of the universe or not part of it. You have forgotten all about it, and in that great repose of mind you are bothered by nothing. Forgetting everything, you have no need to think about the universe, or God, or Buddha. You have no need to think you are Mr. So-and-so. When you reach there you are in the fourth dhyana. You are in the state of arhat.

There are so many different states. "Where have you been recently?" Tōsan's answer was, "I was in Sato." (Sato was a ferry-boat station about fifty miles from Ummon.) "I passed through Sato." Then Ummon asked, "Where were you last summer?" "I was in Konan no Hoji."

"Where were you last summer" also has a deep meaning. Then Ummon asked, "When did you leave there?" "August 25th."

Suddenly Ummon changed his face and opened his eyes and flung his stick and said, "I pardon you thirty blows of this stick. Get out of here and go into the monks' quarters!"

Tōsan went back to the monks' quarters. The next morning, when he came to Ummon's room to take sanzen, he said, "My master, I answered your question exactly, but you said you would pardon me thirty blows of your stick. Is there any fault on my side?"

Ummon said, "You rice sack! Have you spent your life in Konan eating rice? You fool! Rice-sack! Good-for-nothing!"

Tōsan all of a sudden awakened, not only awakened, but finished his Zen. "Now I understand what Zen is!"

Tōsan's Zen was always like this. Tōsan was the originator of the Sōtō School. The Sōtō practice is wonderful practice.

IKYŌ The first four schools I have spoken about. The Ikyō school--Isan and his disciple Kyōzan--handled Zen differently. Isan and Kyōzan handled Zen like a conversation between father and child. According to the customs and mind of Americans I use this Ikyo school type of teaching more or less. You must understand that my sanzen is not exactly like that of the Rinzai or Hōgen schools. I take my students as my children and I am their father, though this really should not be my attitude as a disciple of the Rinzai school.

Isan, the teacher, and Kyōzan, the disciple, were picking tea all day long in the tea garden. Isan was picking on one side of the six or seven foot tea trees, and Kyōzan was picking on the other, squatting on the ground. Isan said, "I have heard your voice all day long, but I haven't seen your body." Kyōzan became all of a sudden quiet. He didn't pick tea, he didn't speak, he just sat silent. As Isan was on one side, Kyōzan on the other, Isan didn't know what Kyōzan was doing, sheltered by the tea trees. But Isan understood what Kyōzan was doing; he understood Kyōzan's answer to his question. At that time Kyōzan's body wasn't very small; at that time Kyōzan's body was huge, exactly the same size as the universe. Isan understood. Of course Isan would understand. Isan said, "I have seen your body, but I haven't seen how you use it." Then Kyōzan shook the tea tree. That was his answer. In such a way Zen was handled between them.

**NOTE** The description of the "Five Schools" recorded here was given by Sokei-an in the course of an informal talk. Several technical terms mentioned in it are handled more fully in other articles. For a historical treatment of the subject see Chapter II of our publication *The Development of Chinese Zen*. The full names and chronology of the famous Chinese teachers and schools here referred to only by their best-known names, are given in that same work. Today only two of the "Five Schools," Rinzai and Sōtō, maintain their full vigor as living sects.

Published monthly by

THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, INC  
156 Waverly Place, New York 14, New York

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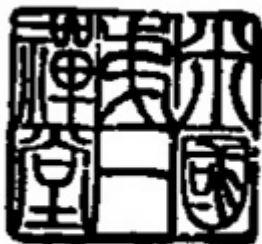
*zen notes*  
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Vol. III, No. 10, Oct.  
1 Year \$1.00  
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Founded in 1930 by  
Sokei-an Sasaki



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