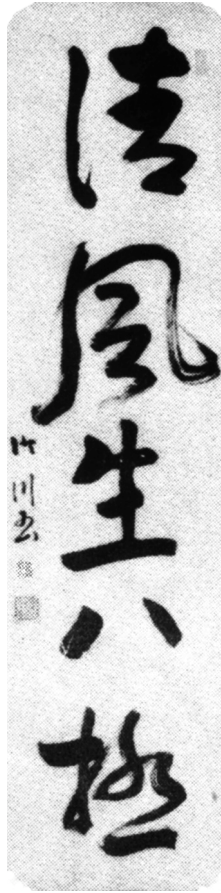


ZEN notes



Imakita Kosen

*A pure wind comes from
every direction...*

Three-Hundred-Mile-Tiger

Sokei-an's commentary on

The Record of Lin Chi

Discourse X, Lecture 3

“Noble Zen students, do not be deceived! Unless you meet [the Buddha] in this life, you will transmigrate through the three worlds for kalpas of time and innumerable lives. Carried along by the circumstances to which you cling, you will be born in the bosom of an ass or cow.”

The three worlds are the worlds of desire, (*kamadhatu*), form (*rupadhatu*), and formlessness (*arupadhatu*). The human being transmigrates through, as I've said many times, the six labyrinthine ways in the worlds of desire and form. We go along according to the circumstances with which we are stitched together, for if we are not free from the outside, not emancipated from attachment, we get carried away with our circumstances, just as a small boat is carried along with the waves and is broken on the rocks. Of course, the bosom of a cow or ass mentioned by Lin-chi is not an actual place but the mind of man.

I am always repeating that the outside does not really exist, that our desire comes from ignorance, that is, our attachment to circumstances. Ordinarily we are just carried along, but if we know *all of this* is only phenomena, if we have proved the state of non-existence, we can be free from these surroundings. When what ropes us to phenomena is cut, we are freed from bondage. Whatever we wish to “take” is our own choice. To attach or not to attach is our own choice as well. In this way, we are not carried along by karma. We are the masters of karma, not its slaves. This is the emancipation spoken of by the Buddha.

However, carried along by the karma you made in the past, you make karma in your own mind, not outside. With it you travel through the three worlds. But if you attain the highest understanding, if you destroy the stage of *arupadhatu*, the world of formlessness, and attain the stage above this notion of nothingness, you can come into any state as you wish. In *arupadhatu*, however, you think that you are in a formless world, but that is really just “big ego,” and you will still receive karma. So the stage of *arupadhatu* is not really the highest stage.

There is a *koan*: The tea-dipper goes into burning water and into icy water but feels no pain because it has no soul, no ego. In

this *koan* you have to prove why the dipper has no soul (the dipper is yourself). The tea-dipper does not go through these stages and is never born in the bosom of anything.

In Lin-chi's time there was once an artist who so marvelously painted horses that a Zen master of the time said to him, "You must stop making such paintings or you will be born in the bosom of a horse. Your face already resembles one and your manner also." The painter changed his subject to Avalokiteshvara, the *bodhisattva* of compassion.

Then there was the poet who made wonderful poems, sort of erotic love songs. The poems were so bewitching they influenced people to take up the romantic life. The master said to him, "You must stop making such enchanting love songs." The poet laughed and said, "So you think I will also be born in the bosom of a horse?" The master said, "No, you will be born in the mind of a flea."

The belief in transmigration was in existence before the time of the Buddha. He took this hypothesis into Buddhism and used it as a tool to help one wake up from illusion and come to true understanding. Knowing the real point of Buddhism, I don't think the Buddha really believed the hypothesis of transmigration. But if you do not grasp the Buddha's point, you are transmigrating every moment—you will never find yourself, never come back to yourself.

In Buddhism, you do not try to be wise. Buddhism is not a theory to make you wise. It is a religion that makes you very plain and simple. A Zen master once said to become wise is easy, but to become an idiot is hard. Of course, a common, garden-variety idiot is nothing. The soul of a great idiot must look something like a huge stone top. A top made of wood is not a great enough symbol for the heart of an idiot.

So Lin-chi says you must meet the Buddha in this lifetime. Meet what? Meet the vital point, the Buddha in yourself.

A Zen master called to himself every morning, "Master!" and answered himself, "Yes?" One of his disciples had been with him for ten years. When the Master called "Master" one morning, the disciple answered "Yes?" The Master said, "But you are my disciple," and hit him with his stick. The disciple grasped the stick and pushed the Master over in his chair. It looks wild, but the truth of the universe must be handled vividly.

* * * * *

EARLY MEMORIES

by
Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

From an article in the Institute's archives that was reprinted from the Anniversary Issue of The Middle Way, November, 1964, by kind permission of the publishers. The article was prepared by Mihoko Okamura and Dr. Carmen Blacker from notes taken at a number of interviews with Dr. Suzuki. -ed

My family had been physicians for several generations in the town of Kanazawa.¹ My father, grandfather and great grandfather were all physicians and strangely enough they all died young. Of course, it was not a very unusual thing in those days to die young, but in the case of a physician under the old feudal regime it was doubly unfortunate, since the stipend his family received from his feudal lord was cut down. So my family, although of samurai rank, was already poverty-stricken by my father's time, and after his death when I was only six years old we became even poorer owing to all the economic troubles which befell the samurai class after the abolition of the feudal system.

To lose one's father in those days was perhaps an even greater loss than it is now, for so much depended on him as head of the family; all the important steps in life such as education and finding a position in life afterwards. All this I lost, and by the time I was about seventeen or eighteen these misfortunes made me start thinking about my karma. Why should I have these disadvantages at the very start of life?

My thoughts then started to turn to philosophy and religion, and as my family belonged to the Rinzai sect of Zen, it was natural that I should look to Zen for some of the answers to my problems. I remember going to the Rinzai temple where my family was registered - it was the smallest Rinzai temple in Kanazawa - and asking the priest there about Zen. Like many Zen priests in country temples in those days he did not know very much. In fact he had never even read the Hekiganroku,² so that my interview with him did not last very long.

1 Kanazawa is the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture in the middle of Japan's West coast. For 300 years it was under the jurisdiction of the feudal clan of Maeda, and Dr. Suzuki's ancestors were physicians to the Lord Maeda's court.

2 Hekiganroku, usually translated "The Blue Cliff Records". One of the most important textbooks of Zen. See "The Blue Cliff Records," translated by Dr.R.D.M.Shaw. Michael Joseph. 1961.

I often used to discuss questions of philosophy and religion with the other students of my own age, and I remember that something which always puzzled me was, what makes it rain? Why was it necessary for rain to fall? When I look back now I realize that there may have been in my mind something similar to the Christian teaching of the rain.

Incidentally, I had several contacts with Christian missionaries about this time. When I was about fifteen there was a missionary from the Greek Orthodox Church in Kanazawa, and I remember him giving me a copy of the Japanese translation of Genesis in a Japanese-style binding, and telling me to take it home and read it. I read it, but it seemed to make no sense at all. In the beginning there was God - but why should God create the world? That puzzled me very much.

The same year a friend of mine was converted to Protestant Christianity. He wanted me to become a Christian, too, and was urging me to be baptized, but I told him that I could not be baptized unless I was convinced of the truth of Christianity, and I was still puzzled by the question of why God should have created the world. I went to another missionary, a Protestant this time, and asked him the same question. He told me that everything must have a creator in order to come into existence, and hence the world must have a creator, too. "Then who created God?", I asked. "God created himself," he replied. He is not a creature. This was not at all a satisfactory answer to me, and always this same question has remained a stumbling block to my becoming a Christian.

I remember, too, that this missionary always carried a big bunch of keys about with him, and this struck me as very strange. In those days no one in Japan ever locked anything, so when I saw him with so many keys I wondered why he needed to lock so many things.

About that time a new teacher came to my school. He taught mathematics, and taught it so well that I began to take an interest in the subject under his guidance. But he was also very interested in Zen and had been a pupil of Kosen Roshi,³ one of the great Zen masters of that time. He did his best to make his students interested in Zen, too, and distributed printed copies of Hakuin Zenji's work Orategama⁴ among them. I could not understand much of it, but somehow it interested me so much that in order to find out more

3 Imakita Kosen Roshi was the predecessor of Soen Shaku Roshi at Engakuji, Kamakura, where he is buried. Dr. Suzuki has written a biography in Japanese.

4 Orategama, "my little iron kettle," is a collection of letters written by Hakuin Zenji (1685-1769) to his disciples. See The Embossed Teakettle trans. Dr. R.D.M.Shaw. Allen and Unwin. 1961

about it I decided to visit a Zen master, Setsumon Roshi, who lived in a temple called Kokutai-ji near Takaoka in the province of Etchu. I set off from home not really knowing how to get to the temple at all, except that it was somewhere near Takaoka. I remember traveling in an old horse-drawn omnibus, only big enough to hold five or six people, over the Kurikara Pass through the mountains. Both the road and the carriage were terrible, and my head was always bumping against the ceiling. From Takaoka I suppose I must have walked the rest of the way to the temple.

I arrived without any introduction, but the monks were quite willing to take me in. They told me the Roshi⁵ was away, but that I could do zazen in a room in the temple if I liked. They told me how to sit and how to breathe and then left me alone in a little room telling me to go on like that. After a day or two of this the Roshi came back and I was taken to see him. Of course at that time I really knew nothing of Zen and had no idea of the correct etiquette in sanzen. I was just told to come and see the Roshi, so I went, holding my copy of the *Orategama*.

Most of the *Orategama* is written in fairly easy language, but there are some difficult Zen terms in it which I could not understand, so I asked the Roshi the meaning of these words. He turned on me angrily and said, "Why do you ask me a stupid question like that?" I was sent back to my room without any instruction and simply told to go on sitting cross-legged. I was left quite alone. No one told me anything. Even the monks who brought me my meals never spoke to me. It was the first time I had ever been away from home and soon I grew very lonely and homesick, and missed my mother very much. So after four or five days I left the temple and went back to my mother again. I remember nothing about my leave-taking with the Roshi, but I do remember how glad I was to be home again. A most ignoble retreat.

Then I started teaching English in a little village called Takojima on the Noto peninsula -- that peninsula protruding into the Japan Sea. There was a Shin temple there with a learned priest who showed me a text book of the Yuishiki school called Hyappo Mondo, "Questions and Answers about the Hundred Dharmas". But it was so remote and abstruse that, though I was eager to learn, I could not understand it at all well.

Then I got another position, teaching in Mikawa, a town about 15 miles from our home in Kanazawa. Again I missed my mother very much and every weekend I used to walk all the way back to

⁵ The Roshi is the master of the Zen monastery who takes pupils in sanzen - personal interviews - and supervises their meditation.

see her. It took about five hours, and it meant my leaving the house at about 1 a.m. on Monday morning in order to be at the school on time. But I always stayed at home until the last minute as I wanted to see my mother as much as possible.

I might add, by the way, that the English I was taught in those days was very strange - so strange that later when I first went to America nobody understood anything I said. We always translated everything absolutely literally, and I remember being very puzzled by the way one says in English "a dog has four legs", "a cat has a tail". In Japanese the verb to have is not used in this way. If you said "I have two hands" it would sound as though you were holding two extra hands in your own. Sometime afterwards I developed the idea that this stress in western thought on possession means a stress on power, dualism, rivalry which is lacking in eastern thought.

During the six months I spent in Mikawa my Zen study stopped. But then I moved to Kobe, where my brother was working as a lawyer, and soon afterwards he sent me to Tokyo to study, with an allowance of six yen a month. In those days a student's board and lodging for a month cost about three yen fifty sen. The university I chose to study at was Waseda, but one of the first things I did on arriving in Tokyo was to walk down to Kamakura to study Zen under Kosen Roshi, who was abbot of Engakuji at that time. I remember that I walked thirty miles from Tokyo to Kamakura, leaving Tokyo in the evening and arriving in Kamakura early the next morning.

The *shika* monk, the guestmaster, took me to have my first introduction to the Roshi with ten *sen* "incense money" wrapped in paper and offered to him on a tray. The guestmaster impressed me very much. He looked just like the pictures of Daruma⁶ I had seen, and had very much a Zen air. The Roshi was 76 years old when I first met him. He was a very big man, both in stature and personality, but owing to a recent stroke he had difficulty in walking. He asked me where I came from, and when I told him that I was born in Kanazawa he was pleased and encouraged me to go on with my Zen practice. This was probably because people from the Hokuriku district round Kanazawa were supposed to be particularly patient and steady.

The second time I met him, in a special interview, he gave me the koan ⁷: *Sekishu*, "the sound of one hand". I was not at all

6 Daruma is the Japanese name for Bodhidharma (Sk.) or Tamo (Chin.), the first Patriarch of Ch'an or Zen Buddhism who arrived in China from India in 520 A.D.

7 A koan is a word or phrase which cannot be "solved" by the intellect. It is given by a Roshi to his pupil to help him gain insight into reality, which lies beyond the reach of dualistic thought.

prepared to receive a koan at that time. In fact as regards Zen my mind was like a piece of blank paper. Anything could be written on it. Each time I went to sanzen he just put out his left hand towards me without speaking, which puzzled me very much. I remember trying to find reasonable answers to the koan of the sound of one hand, but all these Kosen Roshi naturally rejected, and after going to sanzen a few times I got into a kind of blind alley.

One interview with him impressed me particularly. He was having breakfast on a verandah overlooking a pond, sitting at a table on a rather rough little chair and eating rice gruel which he kept ladling out of an, earthenware pot into his bowl. After I had made my three bows to him he told me to sit opposite him in another chair. I remember nothing that was said at that time, but every movement he made -- the way he motioned me to sit on the chair, and the way he helped himself to the rice gruel from the pot -- struck me with great force. Yes, that is exactly the way a Zen monk must behave, I thought. Everything about him had a directness and simplicity and sincerity and, of course, something more which cannot be specifically described.

The first time I attended his teisho lecture was also unforgettable. It was a solemn business, starting with the monks reciting the Heart Sutra and Muso Kokushi's last words - "*I have three kinds of disciples*" and so on - while the Roshi prostrated himself in front of the statue of the Buddha, and then got up on his chair facing the altar, as though he were addressing the Buddha himself rather than the audience. His attendant brought him the reading stand, and by the time the chanting was finished he was about ready to start his lecture.

It was on the 42nd chapter of the *Hekiganroku*, the one where Hokoji visits Yakusan, and after the interview Yakusan tells ten monks to see him off down the mountain to the temple gate. On the way the following conversation takes place:

"Fine snow falling flake by flake. Each flake falls in its own proper place."

This struck me as a strange subject for Zen monks to talk about, but the Roshi just read the passage without a word of explanation, reading as though he were entranced and absorbed by the words of the text. I was so impressed by this reading, even though I did not understand a word, that I can still see him sitting in his chair with the text in front of him reading "Fine snow failing flake by flake."

(to be continued)

Recollections of Kosen

In an article on Shaku Soen in the current issue of *Zen Culture* (*Zen Bunka*), Igami Zenchu, a ninety-one-year-old Kamakura Zen priest who is the disciple of one of Soen's heirs, writes about Soen's teacher, Kosen. Married and living in Osaka during the last years of the Tokugawa shogunate, Kosen was a lecturer on Confucianism. One day, lecturing on the "greatness of spirit" that, according to Mencius was the aim of the sage's self-cultivation, someone in the audience observed that Mencius' actual greatness of spirit could be realized through the practice of Zen. Thereupon, filled with resolve, Kosen left his wife and entered the Kyoto Zen temple Shokokuji, where he began practice under the master "Demon" Daisetsu.

Igami's father studied under Kosen as a novice, and told his son how he noticed that each day, as the master would recite sutras before the altar, he would take something from inside his robe, then hold it up and bow, before placing it back in the robe. This seemed strange to the young novice, who asked Kosen, "Master,



Imakita Kosen

what is that?" Kosen told him, "Well, it's a secret, but I guess I can tell you: It's a piece of my wife's hair." "Every day," Igami' father said, "the Master bowed and apologized to his wife for leaving her to study Buddhism." "My father told me this," Igami writes, "and this is the first time I have revealed it."

Regarding Kosen's death, Igami reports that D.T. Suzuki had taken time off from his studies at the university to do zazen at Kosen's temple in Kamakura. It was group begging day, and all the monks were out doing *takuhatsu*. Only Suzuki and the *inji* of the temple were present when Kosen, returning from the toilet, suddenly collapsed and died.

THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

THIRTY SECOND LECTURE

Saturday, March 4th, 1939

"Thus they practice gradually.

They realize that everything is pure;

*That the immobile nature of awakening pervades the
Dharmadhatu;*

*That there is nothing to do nor to desist from doing in
samsara and in Nirvana,*

*And that there is no state in which they reside or from
which they vanish.*

*Thus there is neither he who proves realization nor the
realization which is proven.*

*All the worlds of the Buddhas are like the blossoms which
bloom in the empty sky.*

*Through the past, present and future all the phases of
existence are equal in nature.*

There is nothing which appears and disappears.

*The Bodhisattvas who have been initiated into awakening
for the first time*

*And the sentient beings of the future world who desire to
follow the Buddha-dharma*

*Must practice their discipline in accordance with this
teaching."*

SOKEI-AN SAYS:

This is the end of the gatha which was recited by the Buddha in the previous lecture. The Buddha, desiring to reaffirm his previous words, recited this gatha, repeating the meaning of his sermon to Samantanetra.

Originally these lines were in poetic form -- not following any particular meter, but translated in that form by the Chinese. In the original Sanskrit they must be written in pure poetical form.

This is the last part of the sermon which the Buddha preached

to Samantanetra Bodhisattva. The sermon preached to Vajragarbhā Bodhisattva will begin next Saturday.

"Thus they practice gradually." -- In the foregoing lines -- this physical body consists of the four great elements and our sense perceptions. This is the organized consciousness which is in twelve different natures. In such analysis, the Bodhisattva slowly realized his own nature -- his original being -- and at last he comes to the great realization of Dharma. In such usage the term "Dharma" can be rendered as "the realization of the law of God." The word "God" applies especially to the state of mind of Samantanetra, it being the outward function of the consciousness of Samantabhadra (the radiating consciousness). This consciousness radiates in multifold directions.

But this Samantanetra is part of the nature of Samantabhadra; he is the representative of the eye of Samantabhadra, because he is the All-seeing Eye.

In Buddhism there are two types of realization: First, you do not analyze -- you realize the original Nature of all existence. In Sanskrit, this original nature is called "Bhutathata;" in English, we say "Reality by itself." Speaking allegorically, this Reality by itself is like the empty, bottomless ocean.

There is a poem about this:

*The man in the bottomless, empty ocean
Shines in the endless kalpa.
Scooping many times in your palm
Finally you realize -- this moon!*

Through the first, second, third and fourth -- at last you realize what this moon is that is floating in your palm! Then -- all of a sudden -- you realize the manifestation of all appearances. This is the second type of realization.

Samantanetra is the representative of all manifestations; his function is to realize through the eye. There is no pain or joy -- when you see this color, it is red -- that is all. In consciousness you do not discriminate this red from pain, beauty, or ugliness. Beauty and ugliness are titles of discrimination -- more than just sensuous realization of an object.

Samantanetra's view annihilates all these feelings and discriminations; his view is just the manifestation. (I shall explain this tomorrow, Sunday, March 5th, more carefully in the lecture

on the Five Skandhas).

Now this "*Thus they practice gradually.*" When he returns to the ocean of purity, there is no moral sense in this "purity" -- it is absolutely of one nature. There is no adulteration in this nature; from corner to corner of the universe it is called purity.

"*They realize that everything is pure;*" -- This Bodhisattva and all the sentient beings of the future world will realize that all is pure. And if original nature is pure, then all manifestations will be pure!

"... *that the immobile nature of awakening pervades the Dharma-dhatu, ...*" -- "Awakening nature" is intrinsic to all sentient minds. Repeating their lives -- incarnating many times -- finally they will attain awakening! The Buddha beautifully illustrated this final awakening by the story of the blind tortoise.

This tortoise had an eye in the center of his lower shell. He was swimming in the endless ocean of endless night. He wished to see the moon once in his life.

After a long, long time he came across a floating piece of wood -- the broken part of a ship -- which had a little hole in the center. The tortoise felt it with his hand and scrambled upon it for a little rest.

By his weight, the piece of wood overturned -- and the tortoise overturned with it.

Through this turn of the wood and because of the eye in his lower shell -- once in his lifetime he saw the moon in the sky -- and attained awakening!

In such a way each human being will one day attain awakening.

Well, we are making a gathering here -- those of us who have made a long, long struggle -- and we are on the verge of awakening. But if you walk on Broadway, you will meet a million people who don't know awakening and who have never thought about it -- it is rare even to have heard the word!

In ancient times a disciple of the Buddha, went West. As he passed through a desert he lost his way and came into the heart of the desert. There he found a great gap in the ground and followed it down, down, down into the heart of the earth where he found many sentient beings fighting each other in great agony. He realized that they were very thirsty, for souls under the desert

get no water. They had never heard the name of water. Then he cried out the one word "Water!" and the sentient beings answered, "Yes, yes, that is what we want -- water!"

Awaking is a wonderful thing! The nature of Awakening pervades the Dharmadhatu.

"... that there is nothing to do or to desist from doing in samsara and in Nirvana." -- Everyone thinks we must attain Nirvana by going from samsara, entering Nirvana and then returning to samsara! But when you are once awakened, there is "nothing to do or to desist from doing in samsara and in Nirvana." You need not vanish from samsara to dwell in the state of Nirvana!

"... and there is no state in which they reside or from which they vanish." -- All states are equal in nature.

"Thus there is neither he who proves realization nor the realization which is proven." -- All this is just talk. Everyone thinks there is some different state -- something apart from this human life of breakfast, lunch, dinner. There must be another place! Perhaps there will be no more "Coffee-Pot" and all will go to the Ritz Carleton! No! After awakening, you will still go to the "Coffee-Pot!"

"All the worlds of the Buddhas (each world has a Buddha) are like blossoms in the empty sky." -- Like a firecracker -- a rainbow -- like lightning -- or like a dewdrop before sunrise. It appears and disappears.

This is the great view of Buddhism! We need not speak of evolution or devolution or why we human beings are living.

We know the world is imperfect, but through repetition we will make a perfect world. -- Good Idea! It originated in Greece. But in Buddhism -- appearance and disappearance. Some find this view pessimistic -- but it is great.

"Thought the past, present and future all the phases of existence are equal in nature." -- There is just one nature -- Reality, and it has the intrinsic attribute of awakening. This power of awakening is indestructible and immobile.

We worship the nature of awakening and we call it "Buddha." We call it "Buddha" in every phase of existence. We change phases constantly: Yesterday I was crying; tonight I give this talk; tomorrow I die.

There are many phases -- man, woman, the virtuous, the

criminal. This view of Buddhism is different from all other religions. Finally, we see both sides -- reality and appearance -- at the same time. Therefore, "There is nothing which appears and disappears." -- Nothing is created and nothing is destroyed. We think we have this world, but it is a vast, empty ocean!

The final view of Buddhism -- "I am living here but I died a million years ago!"

"The Bodhisattvas who have been initiated into awakening for the first time and the sentient beings of the future world who desire to follow the Buddha-dharma must practice their discipline in accordance with this teaching." -- If you follow this teaching, sooner or later you will attain Awakening.



BANKEI AND HIS WORLD

Like Bankei, many of his contemporaries in the priesthood in seventeenth-century Japan believed that the authentic transmission of Zen in Japan had been debased and finally destroyed during the preceding two or three centuries. If Zen was to continue, such reformers argued, it had to be thought through again from the beginning, not only revitalized but reinvented. The Zen of Bankei's age, the Tokugawa period, was in many ways a rejection rather than an extension of the Zen that came immediately before. To fully understand Bankei and seventeenth-century Zen it is necessary to start with a discussion of Japanese Zen in the late Middle Ages, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the latter part of what is referred to as the Muromachi period, after the Muromachi district of Kyoto where the reigning Ashikaga shoguns had their palace. Much of the information cited is drawn from the pioneering research of Tamamura Takeji, a leading scholar of medieval Japanese Zen history. The discussion here focuses on the two principal groups identified by Tamamura as dominating Muromachi Zen: the sorin, the official Gozan temples patronized by the shogunate; and the rinka, those temples like Daitokuji, Myoshinji, Sojiji and Eiheiiji that remained largely outside the official system.

ZEN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD (Part 1,#4)

(Continued from the Summer Zen Notes)

Muso Soseki and his Line

The influence of Esoteric Buddhism abated somewhat with the arrival in Kyoto in the early fourteenth century of Zen monks from the Kamakura temples. The situation, however, was only temporary, and the ensuing period saw an intensification of the syncretic elements associated with Kyoto Zen. This was due principally to the success of the Muso line and to the character of its founder, Muso Soseki (1275-1351).

Muso is a difficult figure to assess, and what we know of his approach to Zen is frequently vague or rife with contradiction. What seems certain is that Muso presented to his contemporaries a kind of compromise Zen, accentuating many of the Japanized elements of the original Kyoto Zen temples, while diluting or abandoning much of the strict Sung-style Zen of the Kamakura teachers. The emergence of this sort of syncretic teaching was, at least in part, a question of patronage, with the Zen temples forced to accommodate themselves to the changed political order with priests like Muso and his disciples advocating a Zen that could successfully manage the transition to the new age.

Japanese Zen, like its Chinese counterpart, continued to depend on the support of the ruling elite, and the Ashikaga samurai of Muso's day were, with few exceptions, a basically uneducated group, unsuited to the Chinese-style Zen study of the Kamakura temples. Even in Kamakura under the Hojos, the majority of the samurai elite had favored a syncretic Zen including Esoteric practices; and Muso, too, found it expedient to provide his new patrons with a Zen that was strongly Japanese in character, embracing familiar elements drawn from the old Buddhist sects, a kind of generalized, provisional teaching that could be presented in simple and recognizable terms. Yet Muso's syncretic approach was not limited to his dealings with important samurai and courtier patrons. It seems to have been employed equally with his own priestly disciples, and in the end became general throughout the sorin temples, indicating that the Japanization of Zen embodied in Muso's teaching conformed not only to the demands of Muso's lay supporters but to those of many Gozan monks themselves.

Like Ben'en and Kakushin, Muso entered Buddhism as a student of mikkyo, or Esoteric Buddhism, receiving instruction in Shingon. Though he never visited the continent, Muso was exposed to Sung Zen as a monk in the Kamakura temples, studying under the Chinese Master I shan I-ning (J: Issan Ichinei,

1247-1317) and later receiving inka transmission from Koho Kennichi (1241-1316), an Imperial prince and the heir of Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan (J: Mugaku Sogen, 1226-1286), founder of Engakuji. Despite his imperial lineage and early training at Tofukuji, Koho appears to have had only superficial ties to Esoteric Buddhism and to have taught the pure Sung Zen he had studied under Wu-hsueh.

Yet, unlike Daitokuji's founder, Shuho Myocho (Daito Kokushi, 1282-1339), who had also studied under Koho in Kamakura, Muso never rejected Esotericism or other elements associated with the older, Heian schools of Buddhism, and his own teaching seems to have fused the various sects. Muso's Zen emerged as an amalgam of diverse components, though it is difficult to assess the relative importance of each within the whole, or indeed to determine whether Muso's approach constituted, or even sought to present, a coherent teaching. The influence of Esoteric Buddhism, in particular, seems to have persisted throughout Muso's career. While insisting that the practice of Zen embodied the supreme path to enlightenment, Muso recognized the performance of Esoteric Buddhist rites, or *kito*, as a useful and legitimate, if somewhat less absolute, means to the same end. Even after receiving Koho's sanction, Muso returned to his original Shingon teacher to receive his transmission, and many of Muso's own disciples engaged in practices related to Esoteric Buddhism, such as divination, and worship of the wrathful Esoteric deity Fudo.

There is, however, no evidence that Muso himself actually practiced Shingon, and a passage in his *Mucho mondo* decries the widespread use of Esoteric rites in Zen temples, asserting that it leads monks away from real zazen practice. This suggests that esotericization of the sorin temples was already well advanced by Muso's day, a widely accepted trend to which Muso merely lent qualified support. Similarly ambiguous was Muso's attitude toward the scriptures. While Muso spoke of the need to transcend words, his teaching style appears grounded in the spirit of *kyo zen itchi*, the unity of Zen and scriptural study, which became a popular concept in the Muromachi Gozan. Muso's works abound in references to, and discussions of, Buddhist scriptures and he would often answer questions concerning them. We can perhaps gauge the extent to which Muso's Zen relied on such dialectical methods from the remarks of a priest in Muso's work *Seizan yawa* who demands to know why, though a member of the Rinzai school, Muso never teaches koans to the assembly of monks, but always lectures on the scriptures.

In contrast to the intuitive, nonintellectual bias of Chinese koan Zen, Muso's approach appears to have been essentially

theoretical. This impression is reinforced by the critical response Muso's teaching encountered among supporters of pure Sung Zen, notably Daito and his patron and disciple the retired Emperor Hanazono (1279-1349). In an entry in Hanazono's journal for 1325, Daito condemns Muso's teaching for remaining within the net of the sutra schools and declares that for a priest like Muso to become abbot of Nanzenji threatens the very existence of true Zen. The retired Emperor concurs that Muso's assuming such an exalted position is likely to destroy the authentic Zen teaching.

In this light, the crowning contradiction in Muso's Zen may be his lifelong enthusiasm for the Lin chi Master Ta-hui Tsung-kao (J: Daie Soko, 1089-1163), which began early in his career as a monk and deepened throughout his life, becoming especially marked in his late years. The outstanding exemplar of pure Sung Zen, Ta-hui, had emphasized a direct, vigorous, non-discursive approach, with the student focusing his efforts on a single koan, generally "Chao chou's Wu"(J: Joshu's "Mu"), and it is difficult to reconcile Muso's persistent devotion to Ta-hui with the broad, syncretic character of his own teaching.

Despite the opposition of isolated figures like Daito and Hanazono, Muso's Zen found a ready acceptance among the leading Ashikaga samurai, the court aristocrats, and the monks of the Kyoto temples, and by the time of his death in 1351, Muso had become the most revered Zen master in the Gozan. It was the Muso line which subsequently formed the backbone of the Gozan, providing it with its leading figures and presiding over its golden age. In its mature form, the Zen of the Muso line constituted a fusion of the Esoteric practices espoused by Muso and conspicuous in early Kyoto Zen with the stress on mastery of Chinese literary culture that had marked the Kamakura temples under the Hojos. Both these elements retained a strong appeal among the aristocracy, and the aristocratization of the Japanese sorin tended to recapitulate the experience of the Sung Zen establishment. Many members of the court and their offspring entered the Zen temples, which in turn became subject to the pervasive bureaucratic atmosphere that was a common feature of the worlds of both Chinese and Japanese elite. Actual Zen practice appears to have persisted during the early period of the Muromachi Gozan, but its existence was precarious; it was gradually subordinated to those aspects of the Gozan temples that were not specifically religious, in particular those connected with aristocratic culture, native or continental, namely, Chinese literary endeavor, and the performance of various bureaucratic and ceremonial functions.

The influence of Esoteric Buddhism in the Gozan also continued to expand under Muso's successors, fueled by the

increased contact with the court and the assimilation of syncretic lines like the Hotto and Shoichi. Eventually, the other Gozan lines as well came under the sway of the Muso line, with Muso's style of Zen teaching becoming a common factor throughout the sorin. The result was a dramatic growth of Esoteric influence, as the teachings of the various Gozan lineages fused within the Muso line acquiring a common Esoteric character. Even the Kamakura temples soon succumbed to the syncretic Zen of the Kyoto Gozan.

While "Japanizing" elements such as Esoteric Buddhism were being augmented, the sinicization of the Gozan was also reaching new heights under the leadership of Muso's disciples, and the early Kitayama period (late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries) saw the beginning of the golden age of Gozan literary culture. However, unlike his role in the practice of Esoteric Buddhism, which he had always endorsed, Muso's impact on this aspect of Gozan development appears to have been negligible. While many of the foremost exponents of Gozan literature such as Gidō Shushin (1325-1388) and Zekkai Chushin (1336-1405) were technically Muso-line teachers, their actual thinking and education derived little from Muso and owed most to their earlier studies under Japanese Kongotoka masters, followers of the literary Zen of the Yuan dynasty teacher and poet Ku-lin (see previous issue).



Muso Kokushi-(property of Tenryuiji)

Indeed, Muso's teaching was in many respects alien to the pure Chinese style of Ku-lin's school, which, along with literary composition, stressed the ideal of the gentleman, who prized honor and integrity above all and remained aloof from the world of politics and self-seeking. Muso's importance was in establishing the organization that gave rise to Gozan literature; but it was the influence of the Yuan literary Zen of the Kongotoka which determined its intellectual direction.

Summer falls, winter springs...
Meditate to awake?
When one can sleep, curled in cat dreams by a warm fire?
Great Awakening is effortless with the buzzing of spring flies in my ears..



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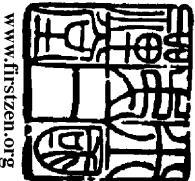
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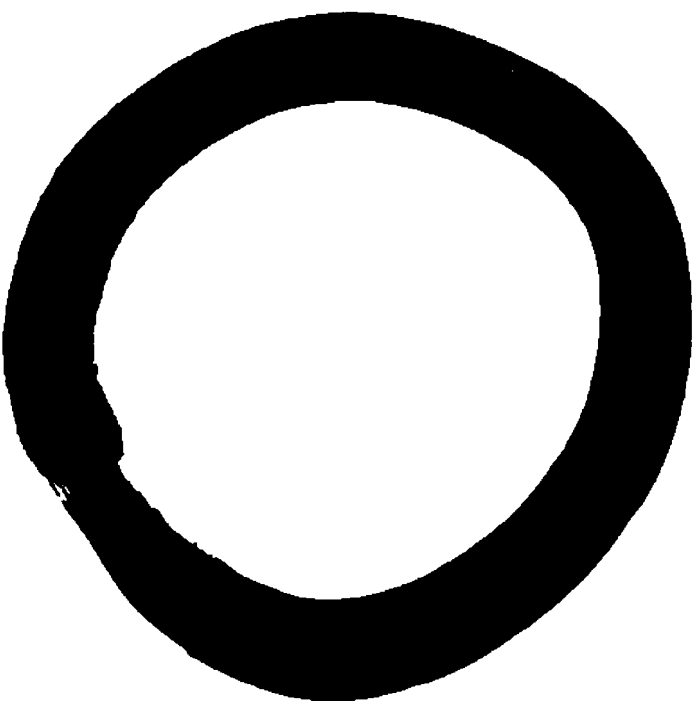
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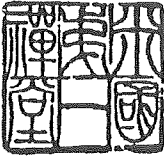


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