

ZEN NOTES



TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDY OF THE ORTHODOX SECT OF RINZAI ZEN

By GOTO ZUIGAN ROSHI

FORMER KANCHO OF DAITOKU-JI

I

THE LINEAGE OF THE SECT

Although the Supremely Awakened World-Honored One attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree and for forty-nine years thereafter revealed his wondrous message by preaching far and wide throughout the land of India, the inmost recesses of his mind lay far beyond the reach of words! In the end he held up a golden lotus flower before the assembly on the Vultures' Peak. Arya Kasyapa alone understood his meaning and to him the Buddha entrusted his True Dharma. This is the origin of our Zen sect. It does not cling to words and phrases; it does not adhere to written meanings. And because the transmission of this Dharma is only by Buddha-mind to Buddha-mind, the sect is also called "The Sect of the Buddha-mind."

From Arya Kasyapa the Dharma was handed down through an unbroken succession of patriarchs to the twenty-eighth patriarch Bodhidharma. Defying wind and wave Bodhidharma journeyed to the distant eastern land of China and there affirmed his ultimate principle to be solely: "A special transmission beyond teaching and outside the written word; seeing human mind directly, penetrating into one's essential nature and attaining Buddhahood." By sitting nine years facing a cliff he demonstrated this.

When Rinzai Gigen appeared in Japan ten generations later acting in ways which could arise only from some profound and mysterious source the ten directions shook to their foundation as one flock of evils after another fell beneath his blows. Under his impetus the various branches of the sect spontaneously burst into luxuriant growth and formed a single school. Hence this sect is called the Rinzai sect.

Thereafter successive generations of patriarchs transmitted the Dharma from one to another until it reached the eminent Zen Master

Kido of Kinzan. Then the priest Daio went to China and, when he returned from "following to its end the road which leads beyond all boundaries," he transmitted this true and living stream of teaching only to our country of Japan. Now the great torch burst into flame and the barrier-mountain soared aloft. Great masters handed down the Dharma and men of great ability received it. Generation after generation the Imperial Family embraced it and everywhere throughout the land, even in remote hamlets, gentlemen and commoners paid reverence to it.

Ten more generations later, Shoji Kokushi, better known as Hakuin, appeared. It is owing to his revival of the true school of the sect that this true school continues to exist today.

Actually twenty-four streams of Zen teaching flowed into Japan, but for the most part these have disappeared. Only this one line of Rinzai Zen has uncompromisingly continued the orthodox transmission. It must be acknowledged that the source of this stream is deep and its flow continuous.

II TRUE FAITH

A thousand different paths lead to the No-gate of the Great Way. The desire to enter this gate is not the prerogative of young or old, men or women; the wise are not preferred above the foolish nor the rich above the poor. The essential requirement is that one hold steadfastly to true faith.

"True Faith" means to believe sincerely in the Three Treasures and to embrace and cherish them. The Three Treasures are Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

THE TREASURE OF BUDDHA "Buddha" is awakenedness. In men this luminous, spiritual, perfectly bright, awakened existence is called "original-ly awakened mind-nature." As it completely pervades every-

thing throughout the entire universe it is termed Reality. It is not decreased in sentient beings nor is it increased in Buddhas. Since it neither appears nor disappears, is neither impure nor pure, is utterly still and immobile, it is called the True Buddha. Sometimes it is called Tathagata, sometimes Great Ego. But though the names may differ the real essence is one and the same. To have firm faith in the existence of this in one's self, to take refuge in it and be acquiescent to it is called "personally to embrace and cherish Buddha."

THE TREASURE OF DHARMA "Dharma" is regulation; (regulating principle; principle of regulation). The fixed and immutable Law penetrating the entire universe is irrevocable in its operation and orders everything. In accordance with this Law all existing things appear and disappear, come into being and come forth and pass away. Therefore the universe with all its component parts is also called the Realm of Law. There is no limit beyond which Dharma does not extend; there is no single thing it does not permeate. To have firm faith in this, to take refuge in it and be acquiescent to it is called "personally to embrace and cherish Dharma."

THE TREASURE OF SANGHA "Sangha" is the community. It is also harmoniousness. All existing things present a varied array of long and short, square and round, great and small, crooked and straight.

Their differences are innumerable and their variations infinite. However,

although they seem to be incompatible with one another and even conquering and destroying one another, nevertheless careful observation will reveal their complete interdependence and mutual harmoniousness. Through this interdependence and harmoniousness the true fruits of co-existence and equality of prosperity are obtained. This harmoniousness of all things existing in the universe is what is known as Sangha. To have firm faith in this, to take refuge in it and to be acquiescent to it, is called "personally to embrace and cherish Sangha."

These Three Treasures are not three separate entities. They are three aspects of one Reality. Since this is the fundamental article of faith for those who follow Buddha, the foundation must not be wanting. Although the description is simple, the implications are very profound. If one searches deeply enough within oneself, however, one will come to understand the hidden rhythm, grow steadfast in faith, and find refuge in the Ultimate Mind. This is called the Precept of the Treasures.

Furthermore, there are three groups of holy precepts. They are the Precepts Relating to Conduct, the Precepts Relating to Virtue and the Precepts Relating to All Living Beings.

THE PRECEPTS RELATING TO CONDUCT We cannot live isolated existences in the world of men. Human beings naturally draw near to one another, dwell together, form groups and organize.

In any organization the personal wishes of individual members must be restrained and rules and regulations for mutual concession and assistance be formulated. These are precepts. When these are transgressed, dissension arises and the resulting confusion becomes difficult to cope with. Therefore these precepts must be strictly upheld. This is called "to keep the Precepts Relating to Conduct."

THE PRECEPTS RELATING TO VIRTUE If human beings were born into the world merely to exist, their lives would in no way be preferable to those of animals. Therefore, for men to

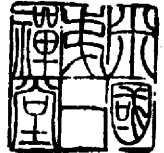
live harmoniously does not suffice; they must strive toward mutual betterment. There is no other road than that of mutual betterment. By refraining from an erroneous deed and practicing a good one happiness is created; by continuous progression toward good a moral world and a bright land are established. This is called "to keep the Precepts Relating to Virtue."

THE PRECEPTS RELATING TO ALL LIVING BEINGS Men should never forget that they owe the gift of their present existence to the unremitting endeavors of countless living beings through the infinite past, and, furthermore, that they are enjoying this life because of

the boundless benevolence of numberless living beings in the present also. As a matter of course, therefore, they should give thanks to all living beings and bow to them with grateful and loving hearts. Going forward hand in hand, they may confidently anticipate the joy of everlasting peace. This is called "to keep the Precepts Relating to All Living Beings."

For further information on Goto Roshi, Kido and Daio, see August *ZEN NOTES* Goto Roshi's message to the Institute is in two parts, the second of which will appear next month.

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Vol. II, No. 9, September
1 Year \$1.00
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THE GREAT TAO HAS NO GATE To each student of Buddhism there is always some gate through which he enters into its main avenue. In true Buddhism there is no gate open to the public, with ushers standing on both sides, smiling and beckoning you to come in. The gate of true Buddhism is always closed. When you knock, no one will answer. You must break in. Unless you do, you can only stand on the outside of Buddhism, talking about it, of course, but you yourself will never be admitted to see the beautiful treasures. You will have to wait for one who has returned from there to tell you about them.

In Zen there is no gate. No one can get in. There is a famous saying in Zen: "The Great Tao has no gate." *Tao* means "Mind" here. The Chinese used the word *Tao* to mean "Law" or "Dharma" also; *Tao* does not necessarily always mean the Tao of Taoism. But here it means "Mind." Mind is the gate; you do not need to enter, you are inside already. And you don't need to open the door; there is no door. And you don't need to break in; there is nothing to be broken. Just sit down with this Great Mind. The Mind Itself is the Great Tao. Of course it is easy to say, but to have faith in it is very difficult.

Sokei-an, 1942

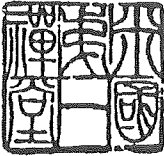
With this issue of ZEN NOTES and in future as available members of the Institute will receive Mrs. Sasaki's "Letter from Kyoto," bringing us up to date on "persons, places, and things Japanese" of interest from the Zen point of view. This added feature comes to you through the cooperation of Kent Associates, offset printers, 60 E. 11 Street, New York, whose gracious owner has made possible in the past our publication of this paper. Subscribers who are not members but would like to receive this letter are asked to send \$1.00 and to notify us of their wish. Mrs. Sasaki promises us that from now on she will send this letter each month or as often as her heavy schedule of work in Kyoto permits. Sample copy sent on request. May we also remind you that a limited supply of back issues of ZEN NOTES is still available. \$2.50 for set of first 18 issues, \$2.75 with cover (while they last), 15 cents per individual issue.

Published monthly by

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

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Founded 1930



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