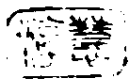


ZEN notes



SOKEI-AN SAYS

THE FOUR FOODS 1937 The foundation of the City of New York is rock--an earthquake could not shake it. New York is built on solid rock, I am told.

The foundation of Buddhism is death. If I were eighty years old, I would say this and go away, but I like to entertain you and myself, so I will speak a little more about this.

We think of the foundations of life as food, clothes, houses. Which is the most important? In New York, a roof. In the Gobi desert, I would say food, geisha girls, clothes. Of course as long as we have physical bodies, we need all these things.

But we have something more important--a mental body. What are the house, the food, the clothes, for this mental body?

The mental body means mind. The mind can be divided into two different states--or according to Buddhism, into three different states.

(1) The mind that is used by your intention. You use your mind intentionally as you think; you must concentrate to hold your mind. The Buddha called this "search." He searched his mind with his force. Everyone does this; it is a very common state; habitually we stop in that state of force of intention.

(2) The Buddha said, "Peep into."

(3) Let the mind go. This type of mind does not need any force, any intention.

In the first state you hold the mind by intention--human intention.

In the second state you hold it gently; you do not need your own intention; the mind will be operated by natural force. A trained writer will stand between these two--let the natural mind provide what he calls inspiration and then, to write, use his own intention.

In the third state you have your own mind but nothing to think about. You are keen, are aware of your own existence. This is not dream or trance or oblivion...it is consciousness itself, not your consciousness but the consciousness of all sentient beings. This consciousness is alaya consciousness, everlasting consciousness; it does not take death; it exists forever. But from the beginning it is not yourself; it is the consciousness of the universe.

This pantheistic view is different from your Christianity, but throughout history your philosophers and your poets and some monks of various denominations, and modern science, have held this pantheistic view just as we have.

There are then three states of mind; Searching; Peeping; Anatman. They explain Buddhism very plainly.

In the first period of your meditation, while you are practicing meditation, you will use your mind to think something philosophically.

In the second period of your meditation practice you will find unity with the entire universe--

this is Yoga. There are many different Yoga schools in India; but if a Buddhist can be said to belong to a school of Yoga, it is of this type. Yoga doesn't mean to join; it means to fuse, to synthesize into one piece of existence.

The Buddha said there were four foods. The first for the stomach; the second for feeling--clothes, a rug, food for the eye and ear; the third, mental food.

The fourth food is very important. Everyone talks about food for the stomach and mind, but no one in the past ever spoke about this fourth food for the fourth mind. This fourth mind is consciousness.

I asked a question of my teacher: "Consciousness is the foundation. How can consciousness be a food? Who will eat this consciousness?"

He answered: "I know who eats that consciousness food, but I cannot tell you. If I tell you, you will not meet him in a lifetime."

I thought he was hiding something from me, but he was very kind.

Consciousness is not final. Consciousness is a link between two things. Consciousness is like a glass mirror that has two sides. This side is phenomena. The back is infinite emptiness.

So our consciousness is food for *That*; for that one who has no name, no figure, but who is called the source of all. We are simply the microcosm of That One.

Reconstructed by KENNETH PATTON

THE FOUR FOODS 1937 is the sixth and last article in our collection on the subject, reconstructed by Kenneth Patton. What Sokei-an said about the Four Foods was previously noted in Zen Notes X/1--1935; X/2--1939; X/3--1942; X/8--1938; X/9--1933. The reporters of some of these lectures took rather sketchy notes and it was originally my intention to publish less than half of these, but as I read them over and over, and more readers expressed interest in them, it became difficult to discard any of the delightful bits of mind-stuff tossed up by the undercurrents of Sokei-an's flowing mind. Peeping at the flotsam and jetsam bobbing on the surface--monkeys, Buddhist terms, the Buddha's bowl, the human and mythical figures of the Buddha and his disciples, details of Japanese life, the juxtaposition of the fantastic and the local ("The Japanese believe that angels eat the mist and that...demi-gods eat the rainbow. It is pretty hard to support demi-gods in New York, therefore."), fishes, tortoises, turtles, snakes, frogs, and crocodiles, screaming pretas and demons, the wood worm--who could ask for a more fascinating kaleidoscope? There is a great deal of talk about the oriental "mind" by persons who never encountered one even on the most superficial levels. Here one has a chance to taste, once in a lifetime, the fresh and unique flavors by which one such mind was nourished, never before offered, never again to be precipitated.

ED.

THE CHILDREN OF THE EASTERN SEAS The upper lefthand and lower righthand pictures show an Institute meeting at 124 East 65th Street commemorating the death of Sokei-an in 1945.

The lower lefthand picture shows an Institute meeting at 156 Waverly Place in 1955 when Miura Roshi witnessed the taking of the Three Refuges by twelve persons.

At the upper right is a portrait of the founder of Daitoku-ji. This scroll was sent to the Institute by Daitoku-ji in 1955 and bears the transmission message given to the founder of Daitoku-ji by his Chinese master, Kido Osho.

It reads, in part:

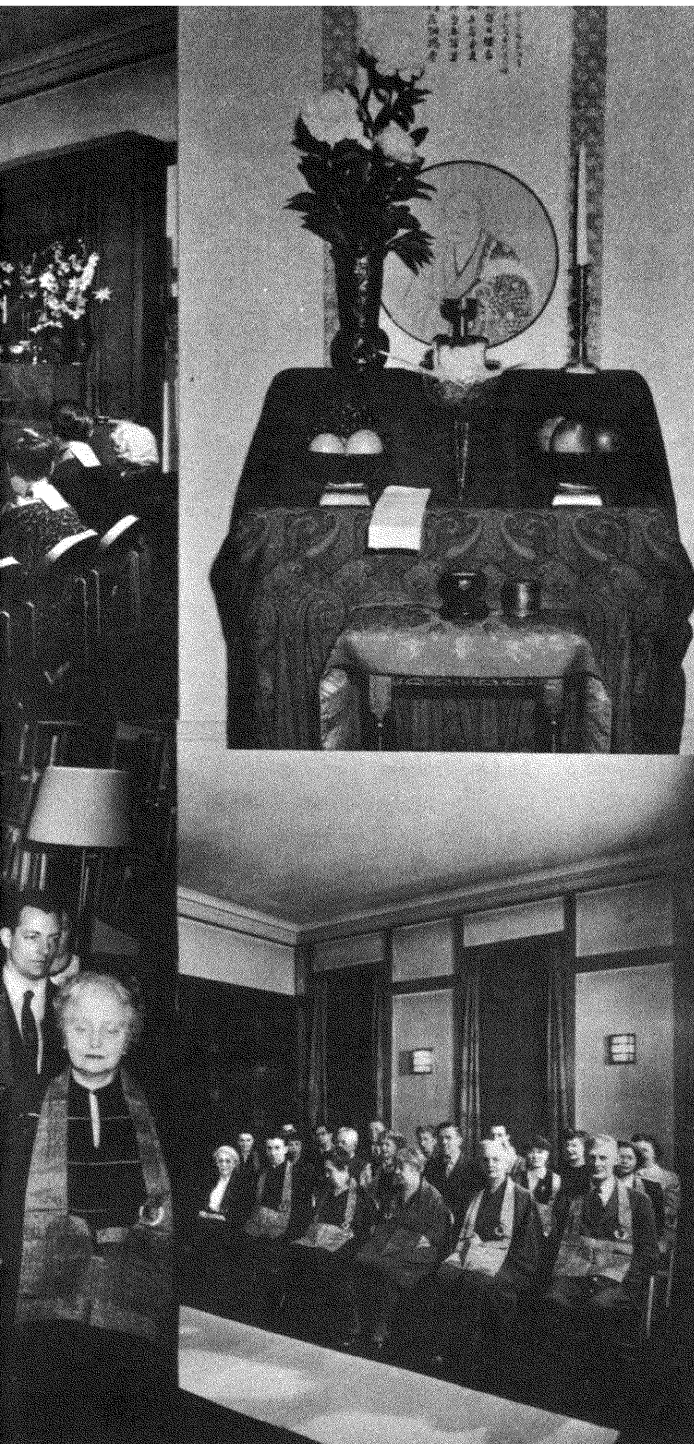
I, the old monk Kido, make
this prophecy:

The children of the eastern
seas

Will increase in number
day by day.

The "children of the eastern seas" referred to originally were the Japanese. But as America is to the east of what is called the Far East, its application to Americans is equally accurate. We are related to Daitoku-ji on two other accounts. In 1935 Sokei-on put on the dignifying robe of the priesthood of this line of the Rinzai sect of Zen over his layman's clothes. He had originally been invited to be the Zen master and "reverend" of the first American branch of the Ryomo-Zen Institute and was so "ordained" by his



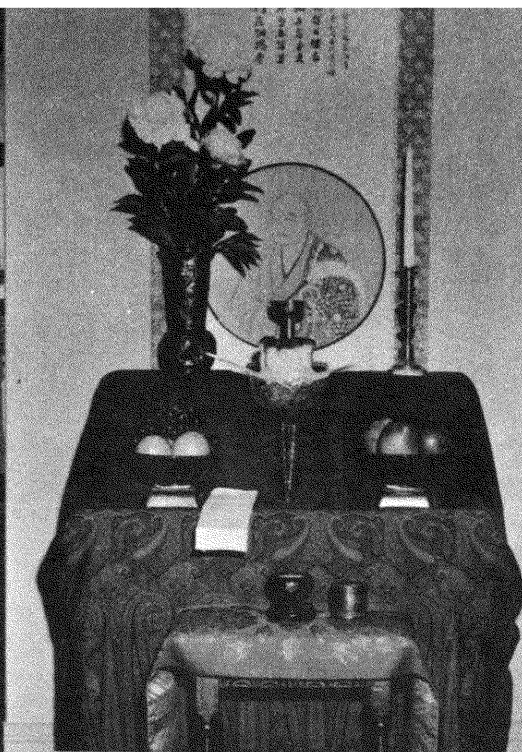


Dharma-father, but he was not at that time the "priest" of any temple. Now he apparently felt it necessary to distinguish himself from the horde of spurious teachers that gave the name of Oriental religion a carnival tinge. This was in direct opposition to the principles of his Zen master Sokatsu who remained all his life outside the ranks of the Zen priesthood and meant his heirs to do the same. Sokatsu was bitterly angry at Sokei-an for his act of disobedience but later re-acknowledged him.

In 1958 Ruth Sasaki was ordained a priest of Daitoku-ji, the first American in history to be so honored.

Mrs. Sasaki appears in both of the lower pictures, second from right in the righthand picture, at the extreme right in the lefthand picture. Miura Roshi is seated at her left, Mary Farkas at his left, Dr. Fowler, the president, directly behind. Vanessa Coward appears twice, in the righthand picture directly behind Mrs. Sasaki, in the lefthand picture in the third row from the front, second from the left. At her left is Secki Shapiro, the Treasurer. Fielder Schillinberg, a council member, is directly behind Mrs. Sasaki in the lower lefthand picture.

Disciples accepted by the Roshi (Koji is the title in the case of men, Daishi for women) wear rakusos, or vestments, like the Roshi's.



(continued)

Zen is a very interesting teaching. What a Zen man says seldom conforms with human reasoning. But this non-conformity with human reasoning is really the precious part of Zen. That which conforms with reasoning is of no avail in the moment of grave crisis. People of the world for the most part find the management of themselves too big a task. People are exhausted by their own attachment to themselves. They cannot guard themselves by themselves. Moreover, there are many people who have never had an interview with themselves. "Self" is that which people think they understand, but which they really do not understand.

Once upon a time in India there was a traveler. He had wandered from his way and when evening fell he looked about him for a place where he might spend the night. Fortunately he found a little hut. He entered the hut and, finding no one there, in deep fatigue he lay down in a corner and fell immediately into a deep sleep. Alack! That house was the abode of demons. Presently the green and the red demon returned, and as they approached the hut they smelled the odor of a human being.

"Thank God! At last we are going to have a human dinner," they thought.

They entered the house and, seeing the traveler sleeping soundly, they sprang upon him. The green demon tore his left arm off. The red demon tore his right arm off. With a cracking sound they tore off both his legs. Then they tore his neck from his body. Every part of the body was separated into pieces. In terrible agony the traveler screamed aloud, and his own screaming wakened him. He looked around. Nothing was changed. There was no red demon and there was no green demon. His body which had been torn into pieces was still existing there with him. He realized that this was a dream. Whereupon he thought deeply:

"This is a strange thing! If that were 'myself', then was it the right hand or the left hand or the right foot or the left foot or the neck or the body which was 'myself'?"

He realized that after all there was no 'self' which is immortal. 'Self' is, therefore, non-selfness. 'Self' is nothing but that which exists by the relative law, depending upon the form of the human being.

" If we pulled the weeds,
If we fastened the weeds together,
It would be a hat of weeds.
If, however, it were unfastened,
It would be the original field of weeds."

The weed-hat which people think exists forever is merely a weed-field when the hat is unraveled. All existing things are temporary compositions in accordance with the law of natural causation. Existence is, therefore, vain existence. In Buddhism there is a term 'Emptiness'. 'Emptiness' means 'that which is vain'. Sentient and insentient beings are, therefore, vain existences. There is nothing which exists perpetually. Accordingly, there is no 'self' and the existence of the human being is also a vain existence.

One who only sees the world of reasoning cannot hear 'the sound of a single hand'. Human beings place too much emphasis upon reasoning. They are convinced that they can understand everything. They do not know that there is something which they can grasp only by stopping thinking. Therefore, without thinking this or that, listen for 'the sound of a single hand'. If you do so the problem will be solved immediately. The mountain is green, and this greenness will become more green. The stream of the river is pure, and this pureness will become more pure if you stop thinking. That is all. You do not need to say anything further.

" The sincerity of a harlot,
The four corners of an egg,
The beautiful moon at the month's end,
These are that which has never existed."

There is that which you cannot think by reason; there is existence which is beyond the world of logic. THERE is the world of Zen. I repeatedly say that you must step one step beyond the world of logic, and you must decidedly and clearly understand the value of this physical existence.

Kano Tannyu was a famous artist. He was asked to paint a dragon on the ceiling of the Hatto of Myoshin-ji. Tannyu had never seen a dragon, so he went to visit Gudo Osho of Myoshin-ji. He said:

" I have been asked to paint a dragon on the ceiling of the Hatto, but I have not seen a real dragon yet. I am in a quandary about how to design a dragon. Can you give me any idea of how to make the design?"

Gudo said: " There are plenty of dragons in this room. Can't you

see them?"

Tannyu failed to understand what Gudo Osho was talking about. Then, under the direction of Gudo, he commenced to practice Zen. He practiced it immediately, treading upon the real ground of Zen. When he had attained such progress in his study of Zen that he could see the state of mind of the dragon, he came to Gudo again and demonstrated the state of the Dragon of Mind. Osho said:

"You have already seen the dragon, but you have not heard the voice of the dragon. The dragon which has no voice is a dead dragon. Go back home and find out how to see the dragon which is alive and which roars."

On the day of the opening of the eye of the dragon, when the painting had been completely finished, Gudo Osho looked up at this dragon upon the ceiling. The eyes were fiery and shining. It gazed at the eight different directions. Even the immense (in size of mind) Gudo stepped back with horror. The dragon gazing at the eight directions is still giving dignity to the Hatto of Myoshin-ji today. This is the story of the painting of this dragon.

"Sentient beings are originally Buddhas.
The relation between sentient beings and Buddhas
is like that between water and ice.
Without water there is no ice; without
sentient beings there are no Buddhas."

This is a passage from a poem which we recite before Zazen, a poem written by Hakuin. Everyone possesses qualities which are not a bit different from those of a Buddha. The qualities of the sentient being are so nearly like those of the Buddha that men cannot see in themselves that quality which is different from that of the Buddha. Men cannot see that quality which is very close to them.

"That which is called satori is the thing which
is suspended on your eyelid;
It is too near, therefore no one can see it."

You must stop that discrimination which analyzes everything to pieces. You must grasp the root of that from which discrimination comes forth. It is Zen. Zen is a state of mind in which there are no thoughts, in which there is no attitude of mind. There is no gap, not even one which a needle can penetrate. This is the place where you can hear 'the sound of a single hand'. If you will meditate even ten or twenty minutes every day, lighting a stick of incense before the Buddha shrine

in your house and drawing your breath down below your navel, very soon you will find that you can reach a new state which you have never reached before.

“ The mind of an idiot is relaxed,
The mind of an idiot is infinitely broad
Because there is no seed of reasoning in his mind.”

This is really a pleasant poem. Of course it would be too bad if one were a biological idiot. But the ideal of Zen is for one to become an idiot with no seed of reasoning in one's mind. Therefore, from ancient days, in the Zen school we say, “ Be an idiot!” When I was a novice I was told to become an idiot. I wished that I could be a great idiot who could swallow the entire universe down into my throat. When you have heard ‘the sound of a single hand’ the sound means nothing to you. But it is painful until you can hear the sound. However, if you are caught in the sound of the single hand after you have heard it, there will be no merit in this.

When Hakuin Zenji went to Shinshu on the invitation of people who were asking him to teach them, he met an old woman whose name was Osan. Osan had a fine nature and she had made considerable progress toward the attainment of the principle of Zen. When Osan came to have an interview with Hakuin everyone was watching with wide-open eyes. Something was sure to happen because both Osan and Hakuin were old warriors of Zen. Osan came forth before Hakuin, Hakuin raised his single hand before Osan. Whereupon Osan took a brush and answered Hakuin with a poem:

“ It is much better to perform our business
selling and buying, beating both our hands,
Than to hear the sound of Hakuin's single hand.”

Had she not freedom in her Zen view? Without freedom Zen cannot be available for daily life. There is no merit in staying in the place where you have heard the single hand. But if you have never heard ‘the sound of the single hand’ though you beat both your hands you will never attain anything. What is the sound of the single hand? You must experience it really by yourself!

FOOTSTEPS IN THE INVISIBLE WORLD

The First Zen Institute of America was founded in 1930 by the man best-known by the name Sokei-an, a name he in turn applied to his own residence. In a lecture in 1938, he said: "Sokei is the name of the country in which the holy temple of the Sixth Patriarch was situated and my teacher gave me this Sokei as my name. I am not so good as he was, but after he attained enlightenment he went to South China; and after I attained enlightenment I came to America." The Sixth Patriarch happened to be the one under whom Zen (as his Way is called today) first showed itself in something like the guise we know it. So Sokei-an (both man and place often bore the same designation in old China) might be said to mean the home of Zen.

Sokei-an Sasaki had been recognized as an heir of his teacher, Sokatsu Shaku, in 1928 and had been authorized to establish an American branch of the "Ryomo-Zen Institute of Tokio," a Japanese organization that had for its aim "kindling the flame to forge those laymen who wish to attain enlightenment." Sokei-an's center, at 63 West 70th Street, was opened February 15th, 1930. "I had a house and one chair. And I had an altar and a pebble stone. I just came in here and took off my hat and sat down on the chair and began to speak Buddhism. That is all."

On May 11th, 1931, the Society's incorporation papers in the State of New York were signed by four persons, including Sokei-an. The corporate body took the name of The Buddhist Society of America. On February 9th, 1945, the name was changed to its present one.

Two other addresses in the City of

New York figure in the history of the Institute.

Beginning in November 1941 the meetings of the Institute were held in a building at 124 East 65th Street owned by Ruth Fuller Sasaki, the wife of Sokei-an and his disciple. "After more than ten years of spreading Buddhism in this country," Sokei-an said at the first of these meetings, "Now I commence the second period of my work in New York City."

The "second period" was to end abruptly with Pearl Harbor scarcely a month after it began. On May 17th, 1945, Sokei-an died in a country at war with his own.

In May 1942, when Sokei-an was sixty, he spoke of his own death, even then anticipated. "You say," he told his students, "'When I die nothing is left. All becomes nothing. There is neither karma nor reincarnation. My individual life comes to an end with death.' This is a one-sided view. In the world of desire your desire remains. When you were living you wanted to do something--as I wanted Buddhism to be transmitted into America. This desire remains after my death. Every mother and father leaves his or her desire behind after death, and those who join the funeral service, having heard the desire of this dead man, wish to carry on his desire after his death. Someone lives in the dead man's house and enjoys the house if it is beautiful. Someone remembers the dead man's words and lives in them and thinks of them. Shakyamuni Buddha left Buddhism to us; we are living in it. Christ left Christianity to the world; we are sucking that milk. Every footprint is kept in the invisible world."

In 1935 Sokei-an had said, "It is an

unhappy death for a Zen master when he does not leave an heir." Sokei-an left none. Nor did he leave a house. But his words have been remembered.

In 1947 the eighteen issues of *Cat's Yawn*, in which most of the words Sokei-an had written down in English, or at least edited, were recorded, were reprinted in book form. In 1954, *Zen Notes* began its ten-year work of presenting what Sokei-an had said in English, as noted by his students.

In 1942 Sokei-an had said: "I hope Buddhism will be spread gradually in the Western hemisphere in order to create mutual understanding between East and West. Those who follow me sincerely must spread Buddhism in the Western hemisphere, following my method of transmitting Zen and talking about Buddhism as I do according to authentic manuscripts."

Following Sokei-an's wish, meetings similar to his have been regularly held. The notes of his students were collated to prepare the lectures, which are still being read at public meetings.

When Mrs. Sasaki's work, particularly that part of it which had to do with the publishing of Zen texts roughly translated by Sokei-an, took her to Japan (where she founded and maintains The First Zen Institute of America in Japan), the Institute was invited by Nicholas Farkas to hold its public meetings at his home at 156 Waverly Place. Mary Farkas, since 1947 the Secretary of the Institute, acted as hostess. Zazen meetings were held in an apartment maintained by Mrs. Sasaki on the top floor.

In the spring of 1955, Isshu Miura Roshi, a Zen master who had been the head monk at the monastery at which Mrs. Sasaki had been introduced to Zen by his master, visited the Institute for

six weeks. In June of that year the Institute invited him to come as its Zen master. Four persons still active members signed the invitation dated September 7th, 1955. Isshu Miura Roshi's letter of acceptance was received in December, 1956. "I appreciate your letter inviting me to become the Roshi of The First Zen Institute of America. I have no words with which to refuse the hearty invitation of the members of The First Zen Institute, and have decided to devote my life to practicing zazen with you, giving up every personal preoccupation of my own. I sincerely hope that you will double your endeavor from now on for the sake of the Great Dharma."

The endeavors of the Institute members, even though inspired to highest pitch by Miura Roshi's decision to practice with them, proved only barely adequate to the task they now confronted. During the second half of the third decade of the Institute's life, the dream of American Zen verged on nightmare. Perhaps the best that can be said is that the Institute survived.

In September 1959 an ingenious plan for financing the purchase of quarters for the Institute was originated by a sustaining member and lawyer, Nathan Shapiro. This plan was carried out by the Treasurer, Secki Shapiro, who since 1961 has had charge of all monetary transactions.

In October 1960 the Secretary signed a contract of purchase for the premises at 113 East 30th Street. Deborah Reiser, an architect and sustaining member, prepared the plans for the work needed to put the building into condition. These plans were processed by the Building Department under the seal of her father, Edward S. Klausner, a registered engineer. Many hands and much money were

zen notes

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used to bring the five-story building (selected as potentially perfect for the known needs of the growing Institute) to the point at which, on August 8th, 1963, the City granted its Certificate of Occupancy. This document hangs, framed under glass (a City requirement), in the main entrance hall. It permits the building to be used for offices, for Class A and B residence, and for public meetings.

October 1963 completes the 70th year of Zen in America, for it was in October 1893 that Zen Buddhism, in the person of Sokei-an's teacher's teacher, Soyen Shaku, was first introduced to America, at the World's Parliament of Religions. The first public meeting in the Institute headquarters was on October 18th, 1961. October 18th, by the way, is the birthday of another of Soyen Shaku's followers, Dr. D.T. Suzuki, and October 31st is Mrs. Sasaki's birthday. October therefore seems a particularly good month to publish this progress report.

One more name has been given by Miura Roshi to the entity we have presented under its several names East Side, West Side, all around the town, now residing at 113 East 30th Street. The characters that stand for it were brushed on its sign, carved in mahogany by Charles Huffman, a senior member. They read *Beikoku Dai Ichi Zendo*. This might be translated *The First American Zendo*.

At present the Institute's membership hovers around the one hundred and forty mark. Its bank balance hovers around nothing (we tell ourselves this is appropriate for a non-profit Zen organization). And there is a big debt to pay. This debt is most noticeably money owed on the mortgages that are being paid off with what seems painful slowness.

But even more than this debt, as we stop to take breath for a moment, we are conscious of what we owe the teachers, those great-hearted Zen pioneers who have had the courage to leave their homes to bring Japan's greatest treasure to the people of this land.

In any record of the first century of Zen in America, two outstanding names must be mentioned along with Sokei-an's.

The pioneering efforts of the first half of the century on the West Coast were dominated by the personality of Nyogen Senzaki, another of Soyen Shaku's disciples who had come to California in 1901. Although he lived among the Japanese he was also well known to Americans of non-Japanese ancestry. He adopted the monk's habit as his own though he did not belong to any religious order, and influenced the thinking of many Westerners.

Meanwhile Dr. Suzuki was bombarding the Western lay intelligentsia with first his books, and then his lectures and personality. To those outside it, his name is the best-known in the Zen world. Though he has elected to spend his nineties on his native soil he has already devoted at least a half-century to presenting Zen to the West.

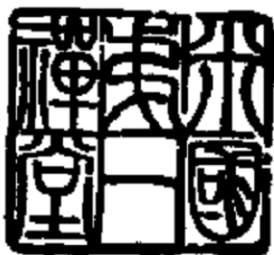
To transmit the true teaching here is not for any weak or lukewarm person. Sokei-an said it was like holding a lotus to rock, waiting for it to take root.

In 1956, when I visited Zuigan Goto Roshi, Sokei-an's Dharma brother who had been a member of the missionary party that unsuccessfully tried to found an American center in 1906, I asked him: "Don't you think we could say we have made some progress in this half-century?" "Yes," he replied. "You could say you have taken a step."

MARY FARKAS

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**Founded in 1930 by
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