



Dear David

Thanks for telling me about Suzuki Roshi, priests, etc.  
Zenky said Paul Heller told him that story. He (Zenky) said Omori Sogen had inka from all the main Rinzai temples in Japan + had the authority to found a temple in Japan, some kind of big five head temple, etc etc Per horizon, some kind of big five head temple, etc etc all of which amount to the same thing - Omori ~~(Zenky)~~ had all the hierarchical/patriarchal lineage stuff that Suzuki may have also had but thought was B.S., as you said. So -- so what?!

Still - I like this zen sanga. I think it's well that I've had a lot of previous training and study of the literature, because Zenky may give people a maybe odd idea of zen Buddhism with his emphasis on the old-time "ki-zi" training + power, all those old Rinzai stories of masters zapping students into great realizations, etc, altho he does not attempt such, himself.

I like the rigor + attention in the zendo, and I like the informality everywhere else. We sit facing out, "facing the world", + keep a 180° look-out at the room, more or less, without actually looking at anything. Sometimes Zenky gives out a hair-raising yell that really wakes one up, or, when walking about with the stick, suddenly may give out another terrifying yell while instantaneously kneeling down + whapping the floor with the stick, with all his strength + he's a big guy. That really wakes us up! So far, even in a few days of a session that I attended, I've seen no one hit who didn't ask first.

The service I don't like so well; all the chants in Japanese + beat out bong-bong-bong with no cadence or rhythm. Our Saturday routine is sit twice, <sup>service,</sup> <sub>BIG</sub> then we spread out newspapers, inkstone, ink + brushes + each do 4 characters once written by Omori Sogen; in a formal manner - bow to the pages, then the brush, then write, bow, retreat ~ otherwise the zendo routine is much less formal. Once a couple of Berkeley zendo folks came + met in all downcast eyes, clasped hands, slow

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steps, all silent + <sup>in</sup> perfect  
Zen Center zombie-style, I was  
embarrassed for them. It took me  
awhile to get used to everybody talking all the time.  
Set. rarer starts at 7.A.M. + as I arrive people say "Good  
morning, how was the drive over, it raining out your way?" etc  
+ I had to get used to that. Zenky says Omori decided  
first thing that westerners get weird being silent so he banished  
silence. We do kintan super-fast, which I like. The  
whole idea is to bring up the energy that it seems to  
me Zen Center is trying to always repress, + ~~the~~ expressing  
energy is more my style than repressing it. After writing  
characters we go into Zenky's beautiful kitchen + drink tea  
+ coffee + eat toast + just chat, + talk. Mostly about Zen  
+ Buddhism but it's a smart, educated group of people  
mostly in their 40's, + the conversation goes everywhere,  
from life in the neighborhood to poetry to theoretical physics +

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Cosmology. It's invigorating. Most people are also practicing some martial art, there are ~~4 or 5~~ 4 or 5 kyu-do practitioners. I did Tai Chi for awhile but have archery retreated to just doing brush art as a practice. There are only 4-5-6 ~~to many~~ people on a Saturday, & ~~at~~ I like a small group I can know. Zendo is open every weekday morn but I don't go. Zenasy of course thinks of bigger & more & I tell him - "wait until there's a hundred students & you have to rent a hall & then appoint people to collect money & run everything & they argue all the time & you have to run the whole thing & we have to make an appointment to see you & no one has time to be friends & you'll wish we were back in the kitchen, all together." or - "ask Kobun Chino why he retired irrogueto ~~the student~~ & hides even his address & that his students ate him alive & his marriage & family was destroyed etc, IT HAPPENS!" so our little group ~~kinda sorta~~ ~~kinda sorta~~ ~~kinda sorta~~ kinda goes along about the same.

I attended 1 1/2 days of a 3 day session. I told everybody that this time around it was "life comes first" for me, not Zen, so I left on Sunday to go attend a memorial



from the kitchen window

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service for my favorite + beloved college professor, one of  
UCVA + the service was at UC Santa Cruz where he  
ended up. a youngish man (40's) called Sayama Roshie,  
came from Hawaii to ~~lead~~ lead the session. He's  
and affable (sp?) fellow with a big smile + a little  
train boys. (not here). One thing I like a lot is that  
as far as I know there is very little professional  
paid staff. ~~at~~ at Chosen-ji. Almost everyone, including  
this Roshie, hold regular jobs in the world, have families,  
households, etc. So the tone of the practice is much  
more LAY, <sup>than 2.c...</sup> ~~more~~ without a big self-perpetuating hierarchy,  
+ bureaucracy. This man is Hawaii-born, Japanese race.  
No language problems. Is a master of aikido + kendo, + has  
a Ph.D. in psychology from U. of Michigan, ~~is~~ is some sort of manager  
or executive for Blue Cross in Hawaii. The session

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was much less awful than I was afraid it might be. I told everyone beforehand that I was totally fed up with Japanese-male-hierarchy-bushido-serious-uhm-been zen ~~with~~ but I was willing to attend part of the session anyway. Of course zenkyo hater to hear this, all the above being his style. But not the style of the Sanyama Roshin, it turned out! The session was actually much looser than our Soto sessions (+ I haven't done one since Tessjima, circa '71) (why suffer?). True sitting was more rigorous but there were more breaks. We did calligraphy, we did floor exercises to stretch + strengthen, we had no work period but were sent out to walk around the neighborhood for an hour (no talking this time). We had fabulous meals, using an oryoki-type set of bowls, sitting before low bench-like tables. Beautiful cooking, all Japanese style, with a couple of extra dishes on top of the basic three, beautifully arranged in to stilling dishes + bowls, some made by the ceramic-Roshin in Hawaii, service style about the same as Tessjima. Twice we had breaks where we just sat around a table in the back room + stretched out any old way + ate cookies + ~~the~~ fruit + drank Tea + coffee + cider, and talked. very social. Imagine!! (of course, all I know in z.c. + Tessjima)

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During one of these breaks, I told Seyena Roshi that I'd read part of a book about practice by Omori who was discussing various kinds of zazen practice, breathing, counting, shikan-tara, etc. — I was surprised that this warrior-type man said something like (my words) "you can approach all this with a martial energy, or with LOVE" (my caps, his word) + I was ~~was~~ started to read the word love + Seyena said, "yes, the point of all this dedication + sitting + practice is compassion, love. Now Zensky here (pointing at 2.) is too martial, needs to develop more compassion. . . ." later I said to Seyena that I had no interest in the martial style + wanted to do something softer + was I in the wrong place to do that? + he said, oh of course, that style is perfect for you, for zhead, etc., so I was hugely relieved of a big fear ~~of your interest~~ + dis-interest in + of the so-called combat-boot whorn-ben style I thought all Rin zai training was. We had several 4-~~5~~ 40 min. zazen sessions in a row, sometimes with only stretching a little ~~in~~ on our cushions in between, this was hard for me but I survived. Late in the evening one of our people played a beautiful bamboo flute piece, from the hallway. Those over 50 could retire at 10 P.M.

The Roshie gave an evening talk.  
~~stranger~~ outsiders could come & listen. 8

Everyone else had to stay sitting till mid night, & some like to sit all night! ~~up to 4 A.M.~~ sit again at 4. A.M.

I like the emphasis on the arts, the expression of the <sup>at Chouan</sup> practice. Just to do practice is not enough. Zenkyu says I should go sit some sessions in Hawaii & "set a rank as an artist" from there, etc — at first I thought "B.S., whose ~~going~~ presume to rank my art, & who cares any how?", but now I'm actually thinking of doing it —!. I've been feeling lately here <sup>(pushing)</sup> & there & it wouldn't hurt to have a <sup>stamp</sup> stamp of approval from some big Zen organization, a purely practical & self-serving reason to continue sitting. I'd like to do classes at Esalen, etc. (They love all that big-time Zen stuff along with art.) Mostly I don't know why I continue sitting since I no longer expect to get enlightened, ~~or~~ nor do I expect to get any better, or learn anything new.... I just have an urge to join with others & DO it. ? also I feel an obligation to repay my Zen teachers & my art & biology teachers & everybody by giving back



something, which for me is art, & teaching  
 people how to do art. We did a good 6-series  
 class at Bill's house, learning to use the Chinese brush.  
 (Took a lot of talking to get Zensky to allow me to  
 have people sit at a table & not on the floor.  
 I always stand to do art, get my whole body into it.  
 Sitting seiza cuts off energy, for me, rather than  
 "strengthening one's hara" or all that Japanese stuff.  
 Zensky doesn't seem so much of a Zen fanatic, as you  
 said, as a Japanese ~~fantastic~~ fanatic - studied tea, built  
 a tea room in his house, lives on udon noodles, cooks  
 beautiful Japanese food, <sup>idealizes?</sup> idolizes & reveres Japan. Luckily  
 we have a sangha member, a lawyer with the U.S. Treasury  
 dept., ~~who~~ lived in Japan for years, set at Dai Tokoku-ji,  
 does U.S. - Jap. relations, & he, <sup>with</sup> his very lawyerish expertise,  
 manages to set Zensky right about some of his <sup>mis</sup> ~~mis~~ conceptions  
 without making anybody angry or <sup>taking</sup> ~~falling~~ any sides.) Mostly  
 I think Zensky does a good job, & he has a  
 sincere desire to see people train in Zen & does his best  
 with a whole heart.) Angie Runyan come to the brush  
 class!

Zensky says that after Omori Sofen received income from all the big temples, ~~to~~ he scandalized everyone by taking off for Hawaii + opening his temple there, telling the Japanese - "if you want to do ~~any~~ true Zen, go to the West." I wonder if he ever really changed from the dreadful person described in that Zen at War book - ??

My sister Jean lives in Port Townsend, Washington, & last time I was there, a couple years ago, she had a little soiree + invited Silas + his wife and Nils. at that time Nils said he never sat zazen + had no interest in it at all. Jean recently met Nils on the street + told me he seemed quite more serious than before and told her he was sitting zazen every day. But you probably know all about everyone, anyway. at that evening gathering Nils, Silas, + I all agreed that you were one of the great zen practitioners and would be a great teacher if you ever decided to be one. you are a voice of clarity + truth always, never stuck on any side or any special idea. Well - more than enough for now  
love Fern