

WIND BELL

Monthly Newsletter of Zen Center

MAY 1964

VOL. III, NO. 4

NEWS

Our grateful thanks go to those of you who have responded so quickly and generously with contributions to help Zen Center meet its new financial obligations. We have already received several new pledges and several raised pledges from old members. However, we are still a long way from our goal and any help you can give us will be appreciated.

ONE-DAY SESSHIN EACH MONTH

Zen Center has decided to hold a one-day sesshin (period of concentrated meditation) each month, instead of the 1-1/2 to 3-day sesshins which have been held in the past every two months. The one-day sesshins will begin at the usual time of 5:45 a.m. and will continue throughout the day alternating 40 minute periods of Zazen with kinhin (walking meditation), lectures by Reverend Suzuki, and meals. As always, everyone is welcome to attend. There is no charge for sesshin, but contributions towards meeting costs (approximately \$2 a day) are greatly appreciated.

COMING EVENTS

THIS MONTH'S SESSHIN

The sesshin for this month will be held on May 30 from 5:45 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you plan to attend, please sign the meal sheet on the bulletin board on Thursday, May 28, or at least before meal time on Saturday, the day of sesshin.

ANNUAL ONE-WEEK SESSHIN

The annual one-week sesshin has been scheduled for August 24 through August 30.

SOTO ZEN BUDDHIST CONFERENCE ON MONTEREY PENINSULA, JUNE 6 & 7

A Soto Zen Conference attended by all Soto Zen Buddhist groups in America, but particularly by those groups from Los Angeles, Monterey, and San Francisco, will be held on June 6 and 7 at Asilomar on Monterey Peninsula. Bishop Yamada of Los Angeles, head of Soto Zen Buddhism in America, urges all who can to come. There will be separate meetings for English-speaking people. The cost for room and board at the Asilomar Conference facilities will be \$13.00 (total) for the two days per person. There are also camping facilities nearby, and meals alone at the Asilomar Conference Center will cost considerably less than the \$13.00 charge for room and board. For those of you who are not driving, Sokoji is chartering a bus for the trip. Reservations for a place on the bus should be made soon with Rev. Suzuki or on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. But whether you plan to drive or take the bus, please sign up on the bulletin board now so that we can know the total number who will be at the Conference.

NOTE: There will be no Sunday Service at Zen Center on June 7 because of the Asilomar Conference and no meeting on June 6. Instead, the monthly meeting will be held on Saturday, June 13.

REVEREND ISHIGURO COMING TO SAN FRANCISCO

On July 2 Reverend Horyu Ishiguro, Zen Master and author of The Scientific Truth of Zen, will arrive in San Francisco to remain until July 9 as the guest of Zen Soto Mission and Zen Center. Rev. Ishiguro, who was the disciple of Zen Master Harada Sogaku, has been assisting Dr. Koji Sato with his research into the meaning of Zen from a psychological point of view. Many of you may be familiar with Dr. Sato's movie and work about the effect of meditation on the brain waves of Zen Masters and their students.

MORE BY JEAN ROSS ABOUT HER STAY IN JAPAN

It has been said that modern man tends to regard nature as something exterior to himself. Supposedly he is so intent upon analyzing it scientifically, to prevent potential disasters or to modify its forces to meet his own ends, that a sense of separation develops. Perhaps there is some truth in this. However, there are many people today who wish to emphasize not separation but our oneness with nature. Zen Buddhism is a help in this respect, because it has always taught that there is a basic unity between man and all other forms of animate and inanimate life.

Most of my life has been spent in a city and prior to my trip to Japan I was an apartment dweller in San Francisco. Here the weather is of uniform pleasantness and one hardly notices a change in seasons. In Japan while living in the Soto Zen Temples, I rediscovered facts new to me but old as time. Sitting and sleeping on the floor, separated from the outdoors only by Shoji screens and a sliding window, I not only observed the changes four seasons can bring I also felt them throughout my whole being.

Life at Eihei-ji had a fixed schedule from the time of arising at 3:30 a.m. until bed time at 9 p.m. It was a well balanced schedule but sometimes hard for a westerner. Language difficulty, intense introspection, and adaptation to a different culture can create great pressure. I sought to balance this pressure. So near my room I kept some serviceable shoes and rubber boots. During a free period I would quietly slip down the hall, down the numerous stairs, through Sammon Gate, out toward Jakkoen (burial ground of the Eihei-ji Patriarchs). Was I lonesome, frustrated, or tearful? If so the time spent by a stream watching the foaming water surge over the rocks cleansed me. Or standing in the white silence of deep snow, my spirit would feel renewed.

Jakkoen was always quiet with its crumbling moss covered stones. An aura seemed to surround the place. There was a small shrine at the rear and if I sat to one side of it I felt hidden and at peace. Often I would turn my head to see if someone was near. It was as though friendly ghosts hovered in the vicinity. During the summer when I walked back to the temple, I would sometimes be awed by the adventure of passing through a field that teemed with white butterflies, or I would pause to observe an ebony colored scorpion with red legs and red antenna.

The Zen Priests approved of this interest of mine and they encouraged it. One night there was a commotion in the hall. I was called out of my room to find that some of the young monks had caught a horned owl that had swooped in through an open window. I was able to stroke his soft feathered head and gaze at close range into his yellow eyes. On another occasion a Priest tossed a large firefly into my room. With delight I watched him as he flew, glowing like a flickering candle, until at last he was lost in the crevice between tatami mats.

This closeness to nature often made me uncomfortable too. In the cold weather I dreaded to leave my hibachi, I constantly sniffled, and I was badly frightened by an earthquake which jolted us several times during one day and a night. I had visions of it starting an avalanche of snow.

In the summer it was humid and hot. Even at 4 or 5 a.m. the perspiration would roll down my face and back. Since there were no screens or netting, the insects could be a nuisance. It was difficult to meditate in the evening with mosquitos buzzing nearby, and many a night I lay awake irritated by their hum and waiting for a new bite.

Once during July a group of doctors from Nagoya and myself, plus several of the Eihei-ji Priests, visited a small temple some distance away. We were to stay a week for purposes of study and meditation. Most of the daytime was taken up by lectures but every night we practiced Zazen until 9 p.m.

One evening I was quite tired. I was having trouble with my breathing and my chest hurt. The sound of hard shelled insects throwing themselves against the Shoji screens began to unnerve me. Then we got up for Kinhin. The pace was somewhat slower than I was used to, and insects struck against my face and body, I found myself swatting them away from me, and I was close to panic. At last it was over and I hurried to the room which I shared with three other women. Two priests were close behind me. I had no sooner sat down on the tatami when one approached with unsmiling face. He said, "I have a gift for you", and he placed a large helmet beetle at my feet. "Is it alive?" I cried at their retreating backs. All four of us women watched the insect with fascinated horror. But when he began to move his legs and the pincer like appendages on his head, I became strangely quiet inside. He was just a beetle being a beetle. I took a piece of tissue, picked him up, and took him outdoors where I placed him on the ground. The panic was gone.

Soto Zen Priests react to the changes of nature just as they do to the changes in man. They identify themselves with both in an even flow of interdependence.

As for me I stood on the Eihei-ji earth, and for the first time I felt planted in earth. I began to recognize Buddha nature not only in man but in all forms of life. Such expansion eased the pressure of adjustment.

MODEL SUBJECT NO. 53 from the HEKIGAN ROKU (BLUE CLIFF RECORDS)

Introductory Word by En-go

Introducing En-go said, "Obtaining the sole existing independent body, the total free activity takes place." (When you become one with an object, your activity is omnipresent, the activity of one existence.) "On each occasion, an enlightened mind is quite free from intercourse with the world." (This is called intuitive free activity.) "Only because he has no idea of self are his words powerful enough to put an end to ordinary mind." (Ba-so's powerful way in this main subject.) Think for a while. After all, from what place did the ancients get the ultimate restfulness. Ponder about the following subject.

Main Subject

Attention! Once, while Ba-so was walking with his disciple Hyaku-jo, wild ducks were flying over them. Ba-so, the great teacher, said, "What are they?" Hyaku-jo said, "They are wild ducks." Ba-so said, "Where are they going?" Hyaku-jo said, "They are flying away."

Ba-so gave Hyaku-jo's nose a great tweak. Hyaku-jo cried out with pain. Ba-so said, "Did they indeed fly off?"

Note by Reverend S. Suzuki

Ba-so Do-itsu (709-788) was a man of mighty physique. It is said that his eyes were like a tiger's eyes, that he walked like a bull, and that his tongue reached to his nose when he talked. He was the chief disciple of Nan-gaku Ejo (?-775) and spiritual grandson of the Sixth Patriarch, Dai-kan E-no (638-713). During his life and under the patronage of the Tang emperors, Buddhism in China was spreading rapidly.

His posthumous name was Dai-jaku Zen-ji. (Zen-ji means Zen Master.) One hundred and thirty-nine disciples attained enlightenment under him. Hyaku-jo E-kai was one of his five most outstanding disciples. (Ban-zan Ho-shaku, Model Subject No. 37; Ma-yoku Ho-tetsu, No. 31; Nan-sen Fu-gan, Nos. 28, 31, 40, 63, 64, 69; Tai-bai Hojo.) It has been 1050 years since Hyaku-jo E-kai Zen-ji passed away. In Japan this year they held big memorial services for him in many Zen temples.

Hyaku-jo established for the first time monastic rules and a special monastery for Zen monks in a more suitable and advanced understanding of Vinaya. Before Hyaku-jo, almost all Zen monks practised Zazen at temples of the Vinaya school.

Hyaku-jo's way of Buddhist life is not altogether the same as the Indian way of devotional life. In China, one of the most important practices for a Zen student was physical labor or to work on building a temple. This kind of work was thought to be wrong activity for monks in India. These Chinese monks must have appreciated a cup of tea after their hard work. It was from this practice and the certain deep way in which their appreciation was expressed that the tea ceremony developed.

Buddhism became more a part of practical life and was expressed as near-at-hand truth in such ways as "have a cup of tea" or "if I do not work one day, I do not eat one day."

Hyaku-jo E-kai Zen-ji (720-814)

Posthumous name Daichizengi

Grandson of Dai-kan E-no, the 6th Chinese Patriarch, Son of Ba-so Do-itsu

Father of O-baku-Kiun (Huang Po, father of Rinzai) and I-san Rei-yu (founder of I-gyo School)

Zen Center will hold a Memorial Service for Hyaku-jo during the one-week sesshin,
August 24 - 30, 1964

Hyaku-jo had practised Zen under Ba-so for 20 years. There is no break in Zen practice. Who but alert Zen Masters, would know that by these wild ducks was meant Buddhatathata. Hyaku-jo was too truthful to his teacher's question to realize the secret point, and he said, "They are wild ducks." Ba-so was pleased with his disciple's usual innocent answer; but as an efficient teacher of a good student, he had to be a poison oak. So Ba-so said, "Where are they going?" This is a so-called old woman's kindness or to go into a donkey's belly. In the realm of Buddhatathata (reality), there is no where to come from for ducks; but from the standpoint of the relative there are the ducks flying away over their heads. For a good Zen Master like Hyaku-jo, his way should always be free, sometimes relative, sometimes absolute. But instead he always remained in the relative way of observance. Ba-so wanted him to get over the relative by himself. That is why Ba-so put to Hyaku-jo a strong relative question expecting a kind of strong absolute answer. But Hyaku-jo remained in his pure complete innocence and presented a relative answer, "They have flown away." So at last Ba-so gave Hyaku-jo's nose a sharp tweak with his big hand and Hyaku-jo cried out with pain.

(Continued from page 3)

Thereupon Ba-so said, "Have they indeed flown off?" and enlightened Hyaku-jo (who acquired the free activity of Ba-so -- see Introductory Word).

Ba-so and Hyaku-jo, a teacher and a disciple, had practised together for twenty years. It was sincere Hyaku-jo who fulfilled the absolute request of his teacher Ba-so. It was kind Ba-so who recognized his disciple's train of relative effort and helped to switch him over to the full awakening of relative and absolute. They are a good example of the relationship between a teacher and a disciple.

When we come to a thorough understanding of the oneness of the relative and the absolute, we will realize that what Ba-so said was right because of Hyaku-jo's enlightenment. Or it may be said that the wild ducks did not fly away because of Hyaku-jo's true practice. In short, Hyaku-jo completed this relative conversation provided by Ba-so. Here is the true sense of the oneness of practice and enlightenment.

Appreciatory Word by Setcho

Oh Wild Ducks! How many of you understand them? Ba-so saw them and started the conversation with Hyaku-jo. His great tongue covers the mountains' clouds and the moon above the vast ocean with one lofty sentiment. But Hyaku-jo remained unaware of his true nature and said the wild ducks were flying away. Indeed! Except for the tweak and the pain, their true nature would have flown off. What else would you say but to cry out; Say! say something!

SUBSCRIPTIONS

There is no charge for a subscription to the Wind Bell, but Zen Center welcomes voluntary subscriptions of \$2.00 a year to help meet publication expenses.

ZAZEN AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

Monday through Friday		Saturday	
Morning zazen	5:45 - 6:45 a. m.	Zazen	5:45 - 10:00 a. m.
Afternoon zazen	5:30 - 6:30 p. m.	Sunday	
(except Wednesday)		Zazen	8:00 - 9:00 a. m.
Lecture Wednesday	7:30 - 9:00 p. m.	Lecture	9:00 - 10:00 a. m.

NOTE: No zazen on dates containing a 4 or 9 (except Sunday when there is always zazen). No zazen on Wednesday afternoon (because of lecture in evening).

ZEN CENTER
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