

WIND BELL

Monthly Newsletter of Zen Center

JUNE 1964

VOL. III, NO. 5

NEWS

JULY SESSHIN

A one-day sesshin (period of concentrated meditation) will be held on Saturday, July 18, beginning at 5:45 a.m. and continuing throughout the day alternating 40-minute periods of Zazen with kinhin (walking meditation), lectures by Reverend Suzuki, and meals. Everyone is welcome to attend. There is no charge for sesshin, but contributions towards meeting costs (approximately \$2 a day per person) are greatly appreciated.

ANNUAL ONE-WEEK SESSHIN

The date of this year's week-long sesshin has been changed. Instead of being held from August 24 through August 30, it is now scheduled for August 10 through August 16.

LIBRARY BOOKS

Will all those who have borrowed books from the Sokoji library please return them as soon as possible for inventory. Thank you.

OBON HOYO

Obon Hoyo, the Festival for all Ancestors, will be celebrated at Sokoji Temple by a ceremony at 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 12. There will be no morning lecture that day.

THE FIRST ANNUAL SOTO ZEN CONFERENCE

Soto Zen Buddhism is both a new and old religion in America. It is part of traditional Japanese culture, most of its scriptures or teachings are written in Japanese, and most of the Soto priests and masters speak only Japanese. These aspects are balanced by the facts that Soto Zen Buddhism is a very forward-looking religion, hoping to propagate its beliefs in America; most of its members are first or second generation Japanese who are trying to preserve aspects of their Japanese culture while at the same time participating fully in American life; there are a number of excellent priests and two masters in America, some of whom speak English; and the religion is attracting a sizable number of Caucasians who are interested in practicing meditation.

The problems which stem from this situation of being a relatively young religion in the West and at the same time an ancient and integral religious tradition of the Orient were at the center of the discussions by both the Japanese and Caucasian groups at the First Annual Conference of Soto Zen Buddhists in America held at Asilomar Conference Center, Monterey Peninsula, June 6 and 7.

Because the majority of the members are Japanese and the sessions are conducted in that language, the solely English speaking members formed a second group for discussion in English. A brief summary of the meetings follows.

- I. At the Ministers' Meeting the following were recommended:
 - A. To teach and emphasize to all Soto Zen Buddhists that their religion is based upon the practice of Zazen (meditation), a spiritual technique practiced by Buddha and the Patriarchs. A period of meditation at the beginning of all ceremonies and rituals is recommended.
 - B. To sponsor the training of a member from the second generation Japanese for the priesthood. This student should have a good command of English.
 - C. To expand and develop the religious education of the children, both Japanese and Caucasian. The instruction should be based primarily on the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. In order to do this the teaching staff should consist of at least one English speaking instructor. It is recommended that sincere lay-Buddhists assist the teacher of Sunday School or Young Buddhist Association



Zen Center
1881 Bush Street · San Francisco
Rev. Shunryu Suzuki · Fillmore 6-7540

(YBA), and that there should be a seminar or study period for the teachers at least once a year.

D. Each minister should have at least a one-week vacation once a year. This period would be used for a retreat.

II. At the Men's Meeting the following were recommended:

The annual conference of Soto Zen Buddhists should be called "The Conference of the Adherents." Next year's conference (1965) will be held in Los Angeles. Some of the merits of the other Buddhist sects should be incorporated in Soto Zen teaching. Gassho (bowing) and meditation should precede each ritual. Chanting or speaking the name of Buddha should have greater significance. Buddhism should be practised and lived so that the younger generation will be encouraged to follow the religion and in some cases to train for the priesthood.

III. At the Women's Meeting nearly the same points as above were emphasized. YBA members should be encouraged to participate in each Annual Conference. The religious education of the children should be in every way encouraged. A slogan is needed to emphasize the importance of Zazen like "Zazen a little while each day" and "Let's stop for a short period each day to observe the need for tranquil mind."

IV. The English Speaking Meeting discussed a number of topics:

One of the most important was the problems posed by the language barrier. Two mutually complementing aspects of the language problem were brought out in the discussion; one side is that the difference in language is a barrier between the Caucasians and --the Japanese congregation-- most of the Japanese priests--and almost all of the written teachings, the most important being Shobogenzo by Dogen Zengi; while the other side is that the language difference is an opportunity for cultural enrichment, and a deeper understanding of Buddhism itself because of the direct confrontation of American attitudes with Japanese Buddhist culture. Although the San Francisco Zen Center members felt that the relationships between the Japanese congregation and Zen Center were very good, everyone felt that they could be better. One of the things said was that the grouping into racial and language groups emphasized and tended toward a self-perpetuation of the differences. It was generally felt that probably almost all the Japanese congregation understood English well enough so that the sessions could be conducted in English; but it was also thought natural for the Japanese people to want to have services, lectures, and meetings in Japanese because it is not only their family and traditional language, it is also the language of Japanese Buddhism.

To help improve the problems relating to the differences in language, it was suggested that Zen Center members as individuals should make greater efforts to learn Japanese and, of course, to continue to extend their good relationships with the Japanese members; and that Zen Center as an organization should make greater efforts to see that its organizational relationships to the other groups within the Soto Buddhist Church in America are reasonable and equitable. No one felt that the solution to the problems posed by language were easy or soon to be solved, but everyone felt that a great deal of progress had been made to date and that progress would continue.

The following are some of the main ideas, sentiments, and suggestions expressed during the discussions. It would be useful if Buddhism were strong enough in America to help all those people it can. The meditation groups should work toward making Buddhism strong enough to do this by continuing their cooperative participation with the Japanese congregations; by thinking constructively about ways to help the Church in Japan to help us, for example: how can we encourage the establishment of adequate training centers in America, how can we help to see that more priests learn English--could we possibly help pay to educate a priest (at some time in the future); and by developing within ourselves a better understanding of and deeper feeling for reality.

A booklet should be prepared for new members and meditation groups which explains ritual and practice at Zen Center as well as advice about personal behavior and habits. Next year it is hoped that the participants in the Conference who speak only English will be able to play a more active and official role in the Conference. Next year it would be very nice to be able to hold a week sesshin at some location on the coast which would have some of the aspects of a retreat from the city and which would be accessible to Los Angeles, Monterey, and San Francisco.

A great gratitude was expressed for the benefit we share by having as our teachers Reverend Suzuki, Roshi, and Reverend Katagiri. The benefit we obtain from this is immeasurable and the advantage we have because both teachers speak English gives us an obligation to develop and make strong Zen Center and our meditation.

V. Resolutions from All Meetings were:

A. The annual conference of Soto Zen Buddhists should be called "The Conference of the Adherents."

B. A second-generation Japanese member should be sponsored for the priesthood.

C. Each minister should be granted one week each year for a retreat.

D. Zen Center should be helped and encouraged to hold an annual one-week sesshin for all who desire to participate.

The priests at the Conference were Bishop Reirin Yamada, Reverends Shunryu Suzuki, Kenko Yamashita, Dainen Katagiri, Koshi Kawahara, and Dojyun Oki.

3

There were approximately 90 Japanese members from Los Angeles, Monterey, San Francisco, and other parts of California and the country. There were about 20 members from the meditating groups in Monterey and San Francisco as well as a few other interested persons attending.

Although this description of the Conference does not catch all the details of the Conference and certainly does not report all the aspects of the Conference discussions just as they occurred, I hope that it serves to give readers an idea of the scope and general areas of concern of the Conference. The report of the Japanese meetings was largely written by Reverend Katagiri. The notes on the English speaking meetings were taken by Pat Herreshoff.

RICHARD BAKER

MORE BY GRAHAME PETCHEY ABOUT HIS STAY AT EIHEJI

The following is the second of a series of articles by Grahame Petchey, who spent four months of last year at Eiheiji Monastery in Japan. The "Tangaryo" mentioned below is the trial period of about one week required before a novice can enter the monastery. Tangaryo was described in the April-May issue of the Windbell.

The word zanto can roughly be translated by freshman. The term is applied to a young monk who, having passed through Tangaryo, has been accepted as a member of the monastery. Such a monk is called a Zanto for a preliminary period of about six months. During this period the monk cannot leave the monastery. He must learn to perform the duties of the monastery, to chant the sutras, to follow the rituals, to learn the rules and generally become one with the monastic life. Much is expected of a Zanto. He must always be first on the job when it is time to begin work but must always be last when it is time to finish. He must show willingness and alertness at all times and always be ready to perform any additional duty. He is the servant of every monk. He must show patience during criticism, respect for his seniors, forbearance with difficulties, politeness with everyone and strength in his practice. There is not time for self-pity, despair, incapacity or escape. It is a difficult period for all young monks.

My first day as a Zanto at Eiheiji was a pleasant one. I was very relieved to be out of Tangaryo and able to talk and mix freely with the monks. The first step after becoming a part of the Sodo (meditation hall or Zendo) was to be assigned a tan (a tatami: 3' x 6' rice straw mat) in the Sodo, on which he must sleep, eat, and practice zazen. The tans are arranged around the walls and in the center of the room and are elevated on a platform about 3' high. There were 120 tans in the Eiheiji Sodo. At the end of each tan are two cupboards, one for the futon (Japanese bed) and one for the kesa gori and oiyoki (a monk's traveling and eating equipment). At the outer edge of the tan is a one foot wooden ledge which is used as a table. Since there was much speculation as to whether or not I could physically fit onto a tan, I tried it out for size*. We found that if I put my feet inside the cupboard and my head on the table I could lie down comfortably. When I sat in Zazen posture, my knees just fitted the width of the tan. It was however, a close fit, and a source of trouble to me to keep my robes outside of the adjacent tan. It is a strict rule that one does not stray onto another's tan, and I frequently was reminded of this! I was also assigned half a tatami and half a desk in the Shuryo, the study room. I was given my personal belongings and allowed to arrange them here. In this room a monk can study books on Buddhism and learn sutras, etc.

The duties of the monastery were divided into several divisions. Each division had its room for a base from which to organize its duties. It is usual for a Zanto to be assigned to the Shuryo, the room in charge of ringing gongs and hitting wooden sounding boards, looking after the Sodo and performing general duties. I was assigned to the Shuryo along with four other Zantos. My first duty was to clean the restrooms. Anyone who has performed this task will know it is not the most pleasant, but since it was our duty, it was performed in the same quick and efficient manner as other duties at Eiheiji. I was also given the job of washing up in the kitchen.

On our first night in Shuryo, the monks welcomed the new Zantos and gave us tea and cookies, not without first warning us, however, that this was special and on the morrow our training would start. The long and intricate schedule of duties for Shuryo was pasted over half an entire wall. We were told that we must learn every aspect of this schedule within three days; as I could not read kanji I was to be given a much longer period.

The duties of Shuryo began early in the morning. Three quarters of an hour before rising time, one monk must get up and prepare the shrines in the Sodo, restroom and washrooms. He will change the

* Grahame Petchey is 6' 2" tall.

④ flower water, light candles and incense and perform other duties in preparation for the other monks arising. Another monk will prepare to hit the great bell or Obonsho, and a little later two others will prepare to run through the corridors ringing handbells to wake everyone in the monastery. I found this latter duty a trying experience. Tabi (Japanese socks) are the only footwear worn, yet the floors and corridors at Eihei-ji have become highly glazed with the years of polishing. One is required to run at full speed through the long corridors, and I was always terrified of falling. It was not the thought of bodily injury which troubled me, but more the fear of not performing my duty. Furthermore, the effort of running up dozens of stairs a few minutes after waking left me out of breath for as long as an hour afterwards.

Other early morning duties included ringing various bells and gongs, cleaning the Sodo and Shuryo, and preparing for breakfast. Except during the ninety-day training period, we ate at a low table in the kitchen in order to save time. Immediately after breakfast we changed into work clothes and cleaned the corridors on our hands and knees. As I said before, a Zanto should be always first on the job. This, I soon found, was not as easy as it may sound. Japanese people are well known for their quickness of movement, but I had never thought there was a significant difference between us. Here it seemed there was. Although I tried every possible way - laying out my work clothes, loosening my belt during breakfast and removing every obstacle, I was always last to finish changing and be out on the job. I became a source of utter frustration since I was always scolded for being late.

One morning one of my fellow Zantos hit a drum at the wrong time. The effect startled me. Two monks speeded to stop him and brought the unfortunate culprit to the Shuryo. Here he was scolded in no uncertain terms, and later he had to visit each person in the monastery and apologize; I am sure each one found something to say to him. After seeing this, I became very anxious not to make any mistakes.

The first few days as a Zanto were as much a test of strength as Tangaryo. We often joked that we actually preferred Tangaryo to this new trial, but I doubt that we really did. I tried to keep in mind the advice given to me by the Kaninsama (Bishop) of Eihei-ji at our first meeting:

"You have come many miles to receive the Dharma, and I am sure you are experiencing many difficulties, but nowadays it is very easy to travel. In the days when Dogen and Myosen went to China, the hazards were great and one risked one's life in the process. If you become a little sick while you are here, do not worry too much. Think of the suffering these two gentlemen had to bear.

"Eihei-ji is the Dharma itself. Do not be too critical of our way. Just do as you are told. The spirit of Eihei-ji is Hai (yes). Practice hard while you are here and don't waste your time."

The effect of this advice was very strengthening.

4-06-80-51 **A DISCUSSION OF MODEL SUBJECT NO. 51**
from The Blue Cliff Records (*Hekiganroku*)

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY REV. S. SUZUKI, ZEN MASTER, ZEN CENTER

SEPPO'S "WHAT IS IT?"

Seppo was a good example of a well-trained Zen Master. "Three times a visitor to Tosu and nine times an attendant to Tozai" became one of the catch-words of Zen practice signifying Seppo's hard discipline.

He was born in 822 and died in 908 near the end of the Tang Dynasty. The Emperor was killed by Shuzen-cho in 904. The next and last Emperor of the Tang Dynasty, supported by this traitor, lasted for only four years. A dark restless period followed the Tang Dynasty. A severe persecution occurred when Seppo was twenty years old (845). Metalware throughout the land was turned into coin, including temple bells and images of Buddha, 4,600 temples were destroyed, 26,500 priests and nuns were cast out of the order along with 2,000 priests of other religions except Taoist.

The other principal character of this model subject, Ganto (828-887), was killed by a mob. He was a good friend of Seppo and they had both been born in the province of Fukien. Both went on long, hard pilgrimages from northeast to southeast China, visiting many famous Masters. As stated, they are said to have visited Tosu Daido three times and Tozen Ryokai (Soto School) nine times. You may imagine how hard they practiced.

Later they were handed down Tokusan Senkan's transmission. When Seppo was 44 and Ganto 38, they left Tokusan and started pilgrimages again. At Gosanchin they were caught in a heavy snow-storm. Seppo was sitting all the while Ganto was sleeping. Ganto said to him, "This village is like a fortified town, why don't you sleep?" Seppo, rubbing his breast said, "I do not feel easy in my heart." Ganto answered, "Please tell me one by one what you have acquired."

Seppo told Ganto what he had experienced under Tozan and Tokusan, but Ganto did not agree and said, "The treasures that come from outside are not your family treasures." Seppo was enlightened by this statement. He was 44 years old.

The following year they left with Kinzan Bunsui, their best friend who had become Tozan's disciple, for further study at Rinzai's temple. On the way they heard that Rinzai had died, Ganto went on to Ryuzan near Lake Dotei, Kinzan went back to his temple, and Seppo returned to the south.

When Seppo was 47 he secluded himself at a stone cave which had been the first residence of his old master Reikun. When he was 54 he had his own temple beautifully built on the top of a mountain. At the age of 60 he had 1050 students, one of who was Unmon, founder of the Unmon School. A purple robe was presented to him by Emperor Kiso. His posthumous name is Shinkaku Daishi (Great Master Shinkaku).

Introductory Word by Engo

Engo introducing the subject said, "If you are caught by the slightest idea of good and bad, your mind (true mind, essence of mind) will be lost in the realm of disorder. If you do not have an idea of the order of stages, there will be no purpose in your practice. Now which do you think is better, to pursue the relative way or to resume to the absolute?"

(Note: The relative form and color that you see now are the conditioned attributes of the unconditioned --constant--absolute. The absolute is the eternal unconditionality that gives rise to the conditioned, relative ways of practice. What you see now is the eternal unconditionality of the absolute and the momentous conditioned relative. Actually the positive or relative way is not different from the negative or absolute way. Even though you follow the order of the stages in your actual practice, if each relative stage, even the first stage, is brought out in full relief against the darkness of the absolute, and if there is no fumbling and groping in your practice under the right teacher, then your practice is already in the realm of Reality. Each relative stage bears the full meaning of the absolute and the absolute reveals its actual meaning in the relative practice. If you wish to understand this secret, you must study under the right teacher not only by words but also by actual conduct on each moment under particular circumstances.)

To continue with Engo's introduction, he said, "If you become attached to some particular way of expressing Zen, captivated by something told in words or verse, attached to some method of instruction (scolding voice, slapping face, seizing by the collar and casting off, drawing a circle, lifting up one finger, etc.) you are nothing better than the parasitic weeds wrapped around dead trees. Even if a man thinks that he is living in the land of Tathagata itself, when he is possessed by the idea of this land or that land, he is said to be watching the moon of his old home which is now ten thousand miles away. Well, have you understood what I am saying? If not, here is an actual Koan for you to ponder."

Main Subject

When Seppo was in his hermitage on Mount Seppo, two unnamed monks visited him and bowed to him (what is the bow). Seppo saw them coming, pushed open his gate, jumped out, and said, "What is it?" (An indicative question¹, a question and yet an answer, do you understand the real Seppo? Tell me what it is. "He is an iron flute with no holes," Engo said.) The two monks said "What is it?" (The two monks did not fail to respond, but Engo says, "They are old sounding-boards covered by velvet." They were chalk and not cheese.) Seppo made a bow to them and went back to his room. (Engo said, "This is not a dragon because it has no legs, but it is certainly not a snake because it has no horns." "I say, "What is it?")

The two monks later extended their travels to visit Ganto in Ganto Mountain. Ganto said, "Where did you come from?" (Ganto has already caught them.) The monks said, "We are from Reinan." (Be quick and give him a right answer.) Ganto said, "Then you must have met Seppo, haven't you?" (It is very kind of him to wait for their right answer.) The monks said, "Yes we have." (He was not asking them yes or no, but whether they had understood the actual Seppo.) Ganto said, "What did he say?" They told him all about what had happened when they visited Seppo. Ganto said, "What did he say after all?", thus requesting their final answer. But they said, "He did not say anything." He bowed and went back to his room." Thereupon Ganto said, "Oh what have I done? When I was at Tokusan with him, I should have let him know the verse of my dying bed. If only I had told him that, he would not have been thrown into such confusion. (Although Ganto mentioned Seppo's name, he actually meant to give the monks his own last word. Then, what is his last word?)

The two monks were allowed to spend the summer at Ganto's monastery. At the end of the session, the two monks asked Ganto's instruction about the meaning of Seppo's unusual behavior and what Ganto had meant by: How I wish I had told him my last word. Ganto said, "Why did you not ask me that before?" They said, "Because we thought your last word too valuable to ask about." Thereupon Ganto said, "Seppo is a fellow countryman of mine. He and I always went on pilgrimages together, yet we will not die together. If you want to know my last word for Seppo and you, I will tell you what it was. It is nothing but: This is it."

Wherever Seppo and Ganto might be, however long they might live as the best friend of each

¹ Indicative: (gram.) stating a thing as a fact, not as conception, wish, etc., of speaker; suggestive, giving indications. --Oxford Dictionary.

⑥ other, what Seppo did is actual Seppo and what Ganto did is actual Ganto. "This is it" should always be the last word for oneself and for others.

Dogen Zengi said, "Breathing in or breathing out, after all, what is it?" No one can tell what it is.

Now, you may not be calm or patient enough to wait for the right answer, but let us ask ourselves if our activity is either subjective or objective. Let me point to this: What do we mean by 'it?' Do you mean breathing itself or the idea of breathing. If you mean the idea of breathing it will be another matter. If you mean breathing itself on each moment, you have solved the problem already when you breathe in and out on each moment in calmness with big Mind. Now, you will understand that the right answer to 'what is it' should always be 'this is it.'

Ganto was killed soon after leaving his last word to his friend Seppo.

This translation and commentary are my poor offering to these two great masters.

Appreciatory Word by Setcho

Referring to Ganto's last word to Seppo,
I will ask you, Enlightened Mind,
Is daytime different from nighttime or the same?
Even though they lived fully acquainted with each other
In complete companionship,
They were to die in different places. Yes.
They should die in different ways.

Buddha should have curled hair,
Bodhidharma should be blue-eyed.
From East, West, South and North let us
Come back to our old home,
In a mid-night sky to see
A plain white
Mountain covered with snow.

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 (except Wednesday)	5:30 - 6:30 p. m.	Sunday	
Lecture Wednesday	7:30 - 9:00 p. m.	Zazen	8:00 - 9:00 a. 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
1881 BUSH STREET
SAN FRANCISCO

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
San Francisco California
Permit No. 8459