

**D'ORTSCHY-ZEN INSTITUTE**  
***Dharma-Letters, Essays and articles***

**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



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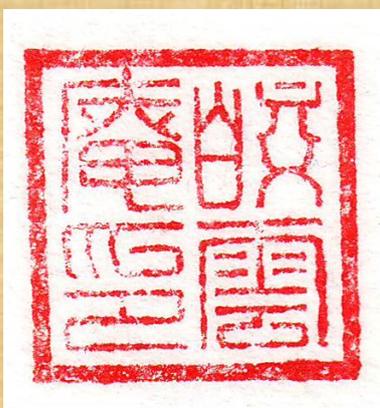
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**The Roshi - the Master**  
**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



## The Roshi, the Master

Lao Tzu said:” If the Tao were something that could be offered , everybody would offer it to his ruler.

If the Tao were something that could be handed over, everybody would hand it over to his parents.

If the Tao were something that could be imparted, everybody would impart it to his brothers.

If the Tao were something that could be presented, everybody would present it to his sons and grandsons.<sup>1</sup>

Where there are objects, there is giving and receiving.

If you have a piece of bread you may give me some and I may receive it.

Where there is objectified knowledge, there is giving and receiving. The teacher tells the child that the earth is moving around the sun, and the child may receive this piece of knowledge information.

Whether we receive a piece of bread, or whether we receive a piece of objectified knowledge or of information on whatever field of science, makes no difference in principle. Whether we get an object that we may store in our house or stomach, or whether we get an object that we may store in our brain, in all cases we receive something new and ready-made and we may use it.

Objectified knowledge is teachable. Teaching is filling.

Love is not teachable. No amount of teaching, explanation, or analysis will ever make anybody grasp how to feel love. Love cannot be given or received like an object or objectified knowledge. You may love someone, but you cannot give him a piece of love, ready-made, so that he/she may use it, i.e. that he/she may be able to love.

“Hot” is not teachable. The most elaborate treatise on “hot” won’t make anybody grasp what “hot” actually is – He must experience it for himself, then he will know. So the educator tells

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from the German translation by Richard Wilhelm in *Dschuang Dsi (=Chuang Tzu)*, Diederichs Verlag, p. 110.- In the German translation the word ‘tao’ is given by ‘SINN’ derived from the ancient German word ‘sinnen’ = way. In English we don’t find an equivalent – so the original Chinese word ‘tao’ (Jap. ‘do’) is given.

the child: “Put your finger just a bit into the flame of this candle. Carefully!” – “Ouch!” – “See? Now you know what “hot” is.”

“Hot” cannot be given or received, any more than all the other qualities. How to teach “sweet” or “bitter”? “Soft” or “rough”. Where teaching ends, instruction by practical demonstration begins.

Where there are no objects, no objectified knowledge and where there are no qualities either, then there is neither giving nor receiving, nor teaching, and an instruction by demonstrating in a practical way is impossible as well.

The Unobjectified-Qualitiless can neither be taught nor shown.

So then: What is any master of spiritual training good for – a Zen-Roshi, a Hindu-Guru, a Sufi Khan, a Yoga Master, a Zaddik of the Hassidim, etc. – whose sole concern is to bring about the experience of the Unobjectified-Qualitiless in his disciples?

The Roshi does not teach – the Roshi IS!

In a certain way we may compare the work of a master with that of a catalyst. The master does not add anything to his disciple, just as the catalyst does not add anything to the liquid it is put into. He does not take away anything from his disciple, just as the catalyst does not take out anything from the liquid. The catalyst therefore does not work in the way of a teacher, nor in the way of an educator. Its mere presence is enough to make the liquid react, to crystallize. Just so, the mere presence of the master makes our consciousness react in a certain way.

However, for the beginner, the Zen-master or the Guru gives a few practical instructions; and later on another level some instructions again are necessary. And so it is with the other masters of other Ways. The role of the Roshi is also not merely that of a good pedagogue who influences by example. The Roshi’s role goes far beyond that. He is the manifestation of the disciple’s true nature. The Roshi is not outside. No master is outside. If the disciple wants to find the master, he must dive into himself. The disciple may look at the master, but that is just looking at a picture created by his own state of mind. In that way we cannot discover the master – neither anything else.

In the beginning, the disciple does not have the faintest experience of what his Roshi is. In fact it is almost a miracle that anybody of the ordinary “everybody-consciousness” (Jap.

bonpu-no joshiki) ever comes to be the disciple of a true master. In our everybody-consciousness we are much more inclined to take a false “master” for a true one. And the other way around. This happened very frequently and perhaps today happens more often than ever before. Our ordinary state of mind does not give us the slightest possibility to evaluate the Roshi.

This gets quite evident in the following story taken from “Tales of the Hasidim” by Martin Buber.<sup>2</sup>

“The Rabbi of Kotzk asked: ‘What about the world (i.e. the congregation)?’ His disciple (Rabbi Mendel of Vorki) replied: ‘The world stands.’ (i.e. the question of the succession has not been solved). Then the Rabbi continued: ‘They say you will take over the world.’ And young Mendel answered: ‘If that were so, I should have a feeling.’ In conclusion the zaddik said: ‘They say it is the Hasidim who make a rabbi.’ Thereupon Mendel of Vorki replies: ‘I was never eager to accept alms.’ “

And Martin Buber says concerning this in his Preface:<sup>3</sup>

“By that he meant that he did not wish to receive the gift of heaven from the hands of the congregation and that he did not recognize their authority, but kept to the great Hasidic tradition.”

It is only the master who can recognize who is a master, not the disciples.

But in some human beings there is a dark drive, a stirring, an instinct, a feeling of value, a secret working of their True-Nature, an almost artistic inkling that drives them to the Roshi, or any other genuine master, manifestation of their inmost Being

While a teacher’s knowledge must be directly proportionate to the abilities of his students – a university professor needs greater knowledge than a kindergarten teacher - , it is different with spiritual guidance. Here the least developed ones need the most deeply enlightened sage or saint for their master, while a more developed human being can be furthered by many a master, as long as that man or woman genuinely has experienced enlightenment.

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<sup>2</sup> *Tales of the Hasidim* by Martin Buber, II, p.8f Schocken Books, N.Y., 1948

<sup>3</sup> *Tales of the Hassidim* by Martin Buber, II, p.9 dito.

Many years ago, I once read a line in a Far Eastern tale that said about: “He can even guide the fishes”, indicating that only a man of the highest state of consciousness is able to reach into the dullest, e.g. that of fish. The state of consciousness has nothing to do with intelligence. A university professor, a famous scholar, an excellent engineer may well be “fish”, while a gardener or waiter may be of a more highly developed consciousness - - - although not necessarily so.

The words of the Roshi are of great simplicity. Endlessly, patiently he repeats the same sentence, the same words over and over again, words often that do not need the slightest intelligence to be understood the very first time. But: Often only after years often we grasp what his words really imply. Several times on or the other co-disciple said after having arrived at a small insight concerning his practice: “It is so easy. Why did they not tell us?”. However, “they” – that is our two Roshi – had told us many times, only we just had not been able to “hear” it. We can hear only what we know, what we have experienced even if ever so slightly; we can understand only to the degree that our consciousness is developed by experience. The rest passes unnoticed. So, where is teaching?

The Bible says:

“He who has ears, let him hear.” (Luke 14,35)

But alas, in our ordinary consciousness we just don’t have “ears to hear”.

Why then does a master say anything at all?

Whatever the master says comes from his direct experience of the Truth – or whatever we want to call IT - , when he uses a given text. Nothing is based on hearsay, on learnt knowledge, nothing is secondhand. The master’s words thus don’t act upon us by literal contents, by an objectified knowledge that we may or may not understand with our brain. In fact, whether his words have any literal meaning or none, is not of such great importance. In the beginning without understanding the Japanese words of a Roshi, I was still well guided by them. How? What matters most is the way in which the words are carried forth by the whole being of the Roshi, a Being that is my Being. His words vibrate at the Source that is the Roshi’s as well as the disciple’s, whether the latter knows it or not.

So the master's words affect us not the way science does, but the way art does. They are not addressing our head, but our heart. They are not addressing the feelings, the emotions of our heart, but its very root.

Does art depend on the objects given? For example, does the great art of a picture depend on the objects it shows? No! An apple by Cezanne, a stone by Sesshu<sup>4</sup> are great art, while many a picture representing Jesus-Christ or the Madonna are nothing but "Kitsch", as millions of little "religious" pin-up pictures demonstrate. Blasphemy!

By his "teisho"<sup>5</sup> the Roshi overshadows his disciple with his direct experience of the Essential-Nature. It is very misleading to translate the word "teisho" by "lecture". A *teisho* is the offering of a Roshi's experience of the Source, art rather than science, the re-sounding of the primordial Truth. Do you understand his words? Do you know the language? Don't even care! Just listen with your whole being and let your heart be pierced by this power.

What is Rinzai Zenji's<sup>6</sup> "Katsu!" other than this direct expression of the Genuine? Of that which cannot be expressed in words of logic. There is no logic, scientific, psychological, philosophical meaning whatsoever. Teaching? Instruction? Example? Ha, ha!

But just as millions of us cannot discriminate between art and trash in paintings, sculpture, music, or poetry, the multitude of people is even less able to discriminate between the genuine and the false in religion. Sticking to the objectified, being nailed down on the literal meaning, the Unobjectified is not discovered. The Genuine is only perceivable to the one who has become genuine himself to a certain degree. To perceive it is the first step. With that, however, we are still far from being able to realize it, still farther from living it, "acting" it. Just as the able perceiver of art is unable to paint a great picture or to compose a great symphony, so it is here.

Just as it is with the pinkish-sweetish pin-up picture of a saint or of Jesus, painted by an usurping dilettante, and the apple painted by Cezanne, so it is with words. The most supreme words – the Sutras, the Bible, the Tora, the Vedas and Upanishads – are nothing but a lie in

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<sup>4</sup> Sesshu Toyo (1420-1506) Zen monk and famous painter, China and Japan

<sup>5</sup> "tei" means "to hand up, to offer", and "sho" is "to recite or read with loud voice". So it is a "recited offering" to the Buddha and not an instruction for the disciples.

<sup>6</sup> In Chinese; Lin-chi I-hsuan, Jap.: Rinzai Gigen (? – 867), famous Zen master, founder of the Rinzai-sect.

the mouth of a fool, i.e. of one who has not experienced to some degree that state of consciousness by which those were written. But the very simplest word, coming from direct experience, is the revelation of the Truth itself. A sentence that is perfectly true in the mouth of one, is a lie in the mouth of another.

Listen to one of the *Tales of the Hassidim*<sup>7</sup> called “The Reception” (p.99), where Rabbi Baer, “a keen scholar” visits the Baal Shem for the first time .

“Take this book, the *Tree of Life*, open it and read and expound”, the Baal told him. Rabbi Baer did. “You have no true knowledge” said the Baal Shem. “Get up!” The maggid did. The Baal Schem stood in front of him and recited the passage. Then, before the eyes of Rabbi Baer the room went up in flames . . .and his senses forsook him. Then he awoke, the room was as it had been when he entered it. The Baal Shem stood opposite him and said: “You expounded correctly, but you have no true knowledge, because your knowledge has no life.”

Information- knowledge, second hand-knowledge, knowledge without experience: dead words!

It is the master who knows the copy from the original. Can he explain it? There is no explanation, just as nobody can explain why this or that piece of music is great art. We experience it or we don't – it can't be helped.

“Hock!” The Roshi hit his desk. What meaning does this have? It is just “Hock!” Now is this a Buddhist, or a Christian, or a Jewish or a Taoist hock?

In our everybody consciousness we are not happy if we cannot label a thing. We do not drink a delicious whisky, but we drink “Red Horse” or “Bobby Runner”, in short as Erich Fromm says, “We drink labels”. In the same way we do not undergo any experience pure and simple, but we label it “Christian” or “Buddhist”, or “Islamic”, or whatever. We live in the realm of the objectified. The labels belong to the hearsay world.

As soon as we come to an experience, to a breakthrough, we exclaim: “Really! That's IT!” Now we come to realize that it is THAT which the Roshi's words have been revealing to us

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<sup>7</sup> ibid

all the time – to our deaf ears. To a certain degree now we have “ears to hear”. Suddenly we know by experience. We are affirmed by the master, and the master is affirmed in some measure by us, by our indescribable experience.

When we discover the Source, the Unobjectified, all the many religions that sprout from it snap back into the source, are consumed by this Original-Point. In an instant objectified knowledge is gone, all labels, all thoughts are gone. But every single item now is just ITself. In the Original-Point with no qualities whatever every quality comes up brilliantly shining, most expressive, most unique. “Form is nothing but emptiness, emptiness nothing but form”<sup>8</sup> Yes, indeed!

With the experience of this Zero-Point, the Absolute, for the first time we also catch a glimpse of our master. Up to that moment we may have trusted him, venerated him, and obeyed him, but what we venerated was not him-Self. We may have said that he is wise or kind or patient, but what qualities the Roshi has we come to see a bit only after we have touched the “point” where he has no qualities at all.

But beware of starting out with this as an idea in mind! In fact, the master is the most personal person. Out of the personal relationship between the master and his disciple, a relationship of great profundity, there grows the General. But what do I say? Nothing “grows out”! But suddenly one day we realize: the utmost Personal IS the General, the Absolute!

The Roshi just IS! I just AM! At the Root of Being – the ROOT-ZERO-BEING, there is no difference, there are not two. The master’s wisdom: THAT, my foolishness: THAT. WISDOM! FOOLISHNESS! No difference.

The master is and acts in the Root, in the Original-Consciousness. And what do we do? Can anyone ever act outside this Consciousness? This consciousness has no outside. There is nothing else. The difference between the master and ourselves is only in the awareness or non-awareness, the experience or non-experience of this basic fact.

With opening our eyes a bit to our-Self, we discover the Roshi – and the whole world. Although after such a first glimpse our world still has a fissure, now after all we have come to be aware of the Ever-Existing.

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<sup>8</sup> From *Makahannya Haramita Shingyo = The Heart of the Great Wisdom Sutra*

“And lo, I am with you always, until the consummation of the world.” (Matth.28,20)

Yes, of course!

Finally, there is no “with”. So it is also with us and a living master. Finally there is no “and”. But as long as we are not living that “Finally”, we need the master’s guidance.

What does he do? He is there.

Does he reveal anything special to us? Anything different from the rest of the world? No!

Every tree, every stone, every cloud – every bird, every cat – every gourd, every apple – each, any, everything reveals the Same.

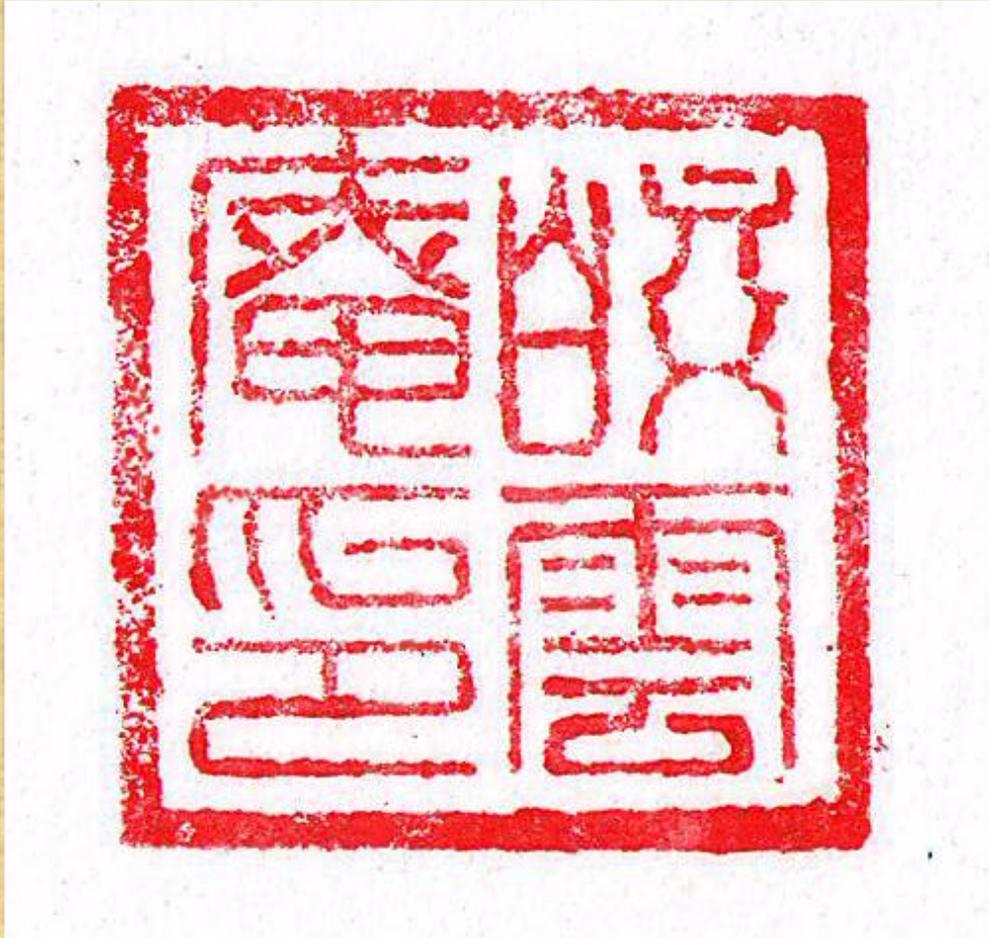
So then, why a Roshi? Why, why, why a master?

While everything reveals the same, these everthings have not realized that they do so. The master has. He has made the real REAL, is fully conscious of it. Our consciousness reacts to this Consciousness. All of us in our ordinary state of mind, our everybody-consciousness, are unable to react in this way to the existence of a blade of grass, a bush, a table, or a human being that is not Self-realized. So it is the enlightened master, magnifying glass to our weak eyes, catalyst to our consciousness who makes us see THAT what IS.

Kamakura, August 19, 1971







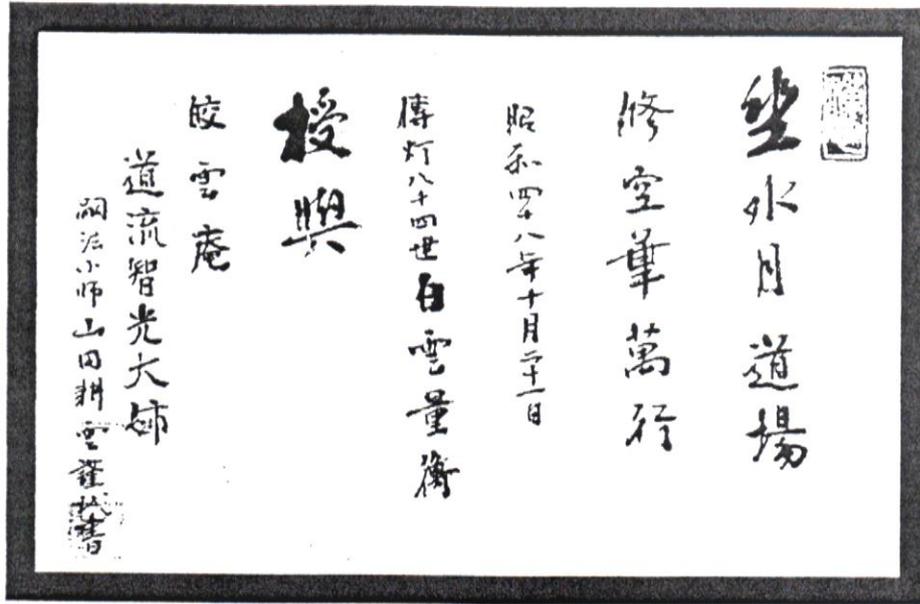
# Dear Go-Roshi Sama

## Brigitte D'Ortschy

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Kesa (Rakusu) von Brigitte D'Ortschy



坐水月道場

za-sui-getsu-dō-jō

修空華萬行

shu-kū-ge-man-gyō

昭和四十八年十月二十一日

21. Oktober 1973

傳灯八十四世白雲量衡

84. in der Übertragungslinie,  
Haku'un Ryōkō

授興 皎雲庵道流智光大姉

Überreicht an Kōun-An  
Doru Chikō Daishi

嗣法小師 山田耕雲謹代書

Respektvoll geschrieben für  
Yasutani Roshi von seinem  
Dharma-Nachfolger Yamada  
Kōun Ken

In der Übungshalle des Wassermondes sitzen.

Die unzähligen Wohltaten der leeren Blumen übend.

October 7, 1987

Dear Go-Roshi Sama,

now it is autumn and the cool air will be a relief after the exceptionally hot summer in Japan. Here, after a cool summer there was a hot September, but now we have the usual autumn weather.

In the beginning of September, Maurer grandmother has died after only three weeks in bed and with little physical pain. But during these three weeks, there was an intense inner struggle. As a devout Christian who had prayed at least for an hour each day of her life, she went on praying the familiar prayers, but more and more also praying for a "release from this valley of tears". This alternated with phasis of panic fear of death.

So it is: From the depth there is a dark drive, a blind longing for emancipation from our delusion - and on the other hand there is this shrinking back from the unknown, there is this clinging to the "ordinary", i.e. to our burdens and sufferings as if they were indispensable friends.

Grandmother's struggle was a vivid unintentional demonstration and teaching for us "thirdclass horses", and several of my companions had the opportunity to be present and see and hear for their benefit. This was all the easier, since grandmother, though being absorbed by her struggle, liked people to be around her. Moreover, two or three occasionally helped in the nursing. But right through, grandmother was occupied by solving her ultimate problem to the exclusion of almost all else: exactly the state to be reached on the cushion.

Indeed, subject to death is only what from the outset does not really exist, a superimposition - and no happy one at all. This being "killed" there is no death any more. How utterly foolish we are! Loving our fetters and shrinking from our freedo, which is "close at hand" right through. It is a profound riddle. All the more so, since people love deep sleep, a state in which the superimposition is temporarily gone. But to experience this state while wide awake and fully aware is feared - though longed for---

The Christian mystic, Johannes Tauler, remarks on this:

"As a consequence of this divestment there is an unbearable fear. . . . Man does not know what to make of it, such a strange fear he feels. . . . Your divestment is the reason thereof: you do not want to die to yourself." (translated from German).

However, for some the force of a breakthrough is so rapid that they "have no time" for fear.

Fortunately with grandmother a little while before her last breath the blind longing had overwhelmed all resistance, and there was peace.

Miki San is in contact with us, but during September he was extraordinarily busy, as he had told us before - probably also due to "Oktoberfest"-visitors.

More and more people address us, some after quite and Odyssee of searching. Among them there are more and more professional religious. We do what we can inside and outside the "dōjō" to meet the basic need of as many people as possible as far as it can be done in a continuous and personal manner. In my eyes, it is not very helpful to admit hardly known people to a "sesshin" only twice

a year with almost no preparation, no "zazen-kai" in between, and very little personal contact.

The silvery moon is shining - twinkling through the trees. How marvellous is our heart-mind.

Sitting here, hands moving on the typewriter - how? The telephone rings, lifting the receiver - how? The daily process with myriads of facets - things just going on, just going on - becomes ever more "miraculous" to me and there is an ever deeper amazement. It is all so evident and yet so secret. The Zero-multitude . . . , but though experienced to some degree, I can't understand it.

When regarding this we say "I know", it is direct knowledge as such and without any object; it is not a "knowing something".

But there always remains an Unknown - or, maybe, an Unknowable - - -

For intellectuals coming from a "why-culture" like the European one it must be quite a shock to discover that all answers to "why?" cover only a very thin surface, no matter how brilliant they may be. And again: no matter how foolish a saying, it is not outside IT. But there lurks the great danger of "akubyōdō" if clear discrimination does not go right through.

A Hindu story comes to mind: A disciple had heard his Hindu-master say that everything is Brahman. A few days later, in a ravine he met an elephant with an elephant boy. 'No fear', he told himself, 'the elephant is also Brahman.' So when the elephant-boy called out to him: "Take care, this is a wild elephant, go aside!" he did not stir. When the elephant was close, he grabbed the disciple and threw him aside - where the disciple found himself with broken bones. He dragged himself back to the hut of his Master: "You have told me that everything is Brahman, and now look what has happened to me", and he told the story. The Master smiled and said: "You have overlooked the fact, that the warning of the elephant-boy is also Brahman."

The silvery moon is now high in the sky - a marvellous autumn night.

My good wishes for health and wellbeing are with Go-Roshi Sama and Okusama as ever.

With Gassho,

相模三番  
靈場



**Answer to January 14 th**  
**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



Answer to January 14<sup>th</sup> (for the next "Kyōshō")

Having carefully weighed in my mind what we heard (all in Japanese) on January 14<sup>th</sup> I have come to the following considerations. This is my answer regarding the "check-up of the 'kenshō' of other people's disciples":

Zen was transmitted from India to China, from China to Japan on a very high level. Unfortunately, it has now entered the West on a low level. Though we have often heard that the succeeding teacher should not only equal his Master but even surpass him, I fail to discover any trace of that principle when it comes to appointing Western teachers.

More than ten years ago, when seeing that Go-Roshi Sama would run into a problematic situation with Western Zen, I started to warn - but in vain. The meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>, however, was the confirmation that one has run exactly into the situation I had warned of.

When it was considered during this meeting whether the 'kenshō' of other teachers' disciples should not be checked by P. Lassalle or myself "so that Zen will not become nise mono", this implies that one regards it to be 'nise mono' already. Otherwise such check-ups would not be considered necessary.

Such check-ups will become a source of quarrel, distrust and confusion and finally poison the European Zen atmosphere - as everybody will know who is somewhat familiar with Europe. Here are the reasons:

First of all, it is a question whether or not the other teachers will be willing to follow that instruction, that is, to send their disciples whom they consider to have experienced 'kenshō' to someone else for a check-up. This demand is a clear sign that their Master who has authorized them does not trust them to be able to discriminate a 'kenshō'.

The students themselves may have misgivings about that method: the teacher whom so far they had fully trusted is not trusted by his own Master. So they will be thrown into confusion and insecurity which is in no way desirable.

Now, if a person would come to such a check-up on command, not voluntarily, his/her heart will be closed - not a good situation to begin with and to evaluate a person justly. Even if a person comes willingly, what is the next step? Let us assume that the teacher has said "this is 'kenshō'" and according to my view it is not. The person has to return to his/her teacher and will be under the same guidance, and everything will go on as before. Maybe, the other teacher will ignore my opinion. In this case it was entirely useless. But even worse: there is also the possibility that the other teacher will start to quarrel with me. That is the last thing to be desired. By and by, with such things going on the Zen scene will be poisoned. Quarrel is not only detestable but also fruitless in the matter concerned. There is no logical proof for 'kenshō': One sees it or one does not - it can't be helped.

When one does not trust a Zen-teacher, authorized by oneself, to be able to discriminate a 'kenshō', one ultimately does not trust him to look into the human heart. Where then is any genuine guidance? The European teachers may well say: "Since we were authorized to guide people we had the impression that we are trusted by our Master. Now it comes up that we are not. Why then have we been authorized?"

In fact, a reasonable question. "Equal to the Master" or "surpassing him"? It is evident that this standard is not applied to Westerners.

None of the hastily educated Westerners would be considered appropriate and good enough for the Sanun Zendo. But if not good enough for the Sanun Zendo, then not good enough for any other Zendo. We do not see a single Japanese educated with such haste and sent off as a teacher. Why this double standard?

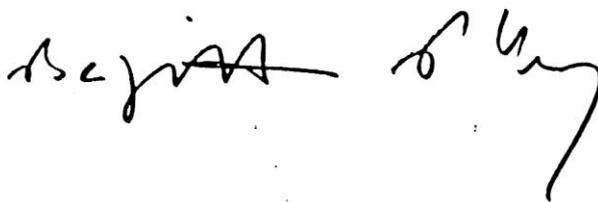
To really "repair" a false 'kenshō' is a very difficult and time consuming task, as I have indicated by telling the cases of two people who had come to us from other countries with an attested but insufficient 'kenshō'. It is a matter of continuous guidance. However, I am in no position to supply this kind of guidance because the people concerned would have to return to their respective teacher right away.

All these years, I have strictly refused to interfere as long as anybody is the student of another teacher. I shall stick to this principal which has proved beneficial.

Moreover, while we are asked to "repair" things abroad, more and more Westerners, educated hastily, are sent abroad from here as teachers - and may one day need to be "controlled". It is as if someone would ask us to quench a fire while adding more and more fuel to it. Where will this lead to?

Did Go-Roshi Sama himself rush through his Zen training eager to teach as quickly as possible and was he quickly authorized by his Master? No!

The suggested control will never lead to the result one would hope for but will only prove detrimental to the European Zen scene. Everybody familiar with Europe will understand this.



Kamakura,  
January 21st, 1988



**In Memory YAMADA KOUN ROSHI**  
**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



In Memoriam  
Yamada  
KOUN ROSHI  
13.Sept. 1989

In Memoriam YAMADA KŌUN ROSHI

It was two days before the full moon of autumn that on September 13<sup>th</sup> my venerable Master, Yamada Kōun Roshi, has entered the Great-Transformation.

Although, to some extent, we all had been prepared by the eleven months of his suffering, this news came as a shock. It is as if an era had come to an end with him.

My Master who, for so many years, has guided me on the path of Zen with sternness, limitless patience and loving compassion is now carried out of sight, removed from all sense impressions - a deeply painful: Never again.

Kamakura without Go-Roshi Sama - impossible, unbelievable! His paint-brushes, not used already for months, are hanging at their stand, never again to be led by his hand. Never again shall I see his benevolent smile, experience his fury, hear his deep voice while reciting - incomprehensible and very painful.

And yet there is peace. It is most of all this fundamental peace which I owe his guidance. Thanks to him I could open my eyes to some degree to the fact that the perishable itself is nothing but the imperishable. In this experience we are safe. Thus there is also a shimmer of light in our mourning. In this world of form-emptiness, of the zero-multitude, the quality-qualityless the opposition of life and death, of time and eternity is transcended. There is just LIFE beyond life and death; and in this LIFE the deep karmic bond is further in existence.

Though Go-Roshi Sama was to me most of all an excellent Master, he also was like a fatherly friend, always concerned about me in a helpful way, far beyond his acting as my sponsor. What I owe him is more than I can say. During the latter years another important aspect of his role in my life emerged: In a certain way my Master became an enigma

to me when, with regard to training and transmission, he said one thing and did something different. Often it was as if I were dealing with two persons. A tremendous challenge. Just this "koan" has driven me deeper and deeper. The loss of this constant precious challenge is a great one, weighing heavily.

Throughout there was that frankness between us which also prevails at "dokusan". It is only the truth which enlivens and makes free. After all, one can only truly struggle with each other when one is in accord in the very depth. Thus my Master has never made me pay for my frankness - just the contrary: The bond became even stronger. Just this fact clearly shows his greatness.

Oh, my Venerable Master, there is still so much to be done together! Just this was shimmering through when in the beginning of December 1988, after my return from Europe, Go-Roshi Sama said to me at Toranomon Byōin:

"There is so much I want to talk with you about - but at present it is impossible."

At that time we thought that a few months later there would be the opportunity. But alas! With my physical ears I shall never hear what my Master wanted to talk with me about. But perhaps the mind of his disciple Brigitte may divine to some degree what was going on in the mind of her Master, what in particular was on his mind.

His last legacy I received later in December at the same place:

"Stay alive for a long time and healthy."

While saying so he held my hand in both his hands. His words are to me like a command. What kind of hardship they imply I know now: With regard to the risk of life and health which for me is connected with boarding an airplane, I had to curb my longing to be with my Master during his last days on earth and, moreover, also had to renounce to participate in the ceremonies in Kamakura following his Transformation. A bitter lesson in non-attachment... Thus, there is no definite point of termination for me -

everything somehow remains in suspense: Is he here? Has he gone away? The border is blurred - - - yes, having gone away he yet is here.

It is also painful that just during this period I cannot be with Mrs. Kazue Yamada who has taken care of each and all of us in many ways. In 1971 she had the Sanun Zendo built which facilitated a continuous training. Thanks to this "dōjō" there have been regular Zazen-kai and Sesshin at one and the same place. We all owe her very much. Now, during these grievous days I cannot be with her. But my heart is with her.

And my heart is with Go-Roshi Sama. From now on, this "being-with-him" will be expressed in the way we - a small circle of people - shall try to carry on his precious Dharma - undistorted, unmixed, never misused for any secondary aims, and never "sold" - as pure as ever possible - inconspicuously, in strict practice.

We sit because we sit. There is no squinting at concrete fruits, no intentional looking for "progress". Each thought of progress becomes a barrier. My zen-companions and myself, driven by a dark urge, a blind longing, entrust ourselves to Zazen, sure that it takes care of all. By entrusting ourselves thus to Zazen we entrust ourselves to our Master, to that man, to whom we owe all that is going on here.

By becoming aware of the True-Reality in some measure, we meet our Master who so deeply had realized this REALITY.

Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, 1989

Shun-ryū

**In Memory YAMADA KOUN ROSHI**  
**Monica Maurer**



## IN MEMORY OF YAMADA KÔUN ROSHI



Monica Maurer

It was in about 1968 or 1969 when I began to become interested in Zen and took a look in our library at home to see if there was anything there to read about Zen. There I found the book *Zen in the Art of Archery* by Eugen Herrigel. I read the book, understanding nothing. It confused me so much that I went to the nearest bookstore where I found myself magically attracted to a thick book with three wide strokes on its cover. It was the book *The Three Pillars of Zen*. I opened it and read "The enlightenment experience of Mr. K. Y., a Japanese executive, age 47." My first reaction was: "WOOOOOOWW! -- That's what I want!" I bought the book.

Only much later, when I already knew Yamada Kôun Roshi, did I learn that he was this Mr. K.Y. to whom this deep experience had occurred.

My goal became to have such an experience and with this book as my guide I began to sit alone until in 1974 my grandmother read in the paper that a Father Lassalle would be giving a lecture on Zen in Munich. But this lecture turned out to be more than just a lecture, because it eventually brought me to a one-week sesshin in which I got the "taste" of Zen -- mostly in my legs. Father Lassalle told me about his master in Kamakura and of a woman named

D'Ortschy. By chance a stranger heard me wish out loud that I wanted to meet D'Ortschy, and she in turn knew someone who knew D'Ortschy. So I met D'Ortschy in the most direct way during the three days when, by chance, she was in Munich and became her pupil. Once again I was excited to hear the name of the "Roshi in Kamakura," Yamada Kôun Roshi.

One year later in San'un Zendo in Kamakura, as I bowed before the Roshi during dokusan, I realised with thankfulness that I was kneeling before one of the most exceptional people I would be privileged to meet in my life.

The older I become the deeper my thankfulness -- because something unique happened -- the knowledge of his existence alone changed my world. A roshi "IS," and the longer I follow the path of Zen, the more aware I become of this "IS."

I was a pupil of Brigitte D'Ortschy, Kôun-An Roshi in Munich, who in turn was a long-time disciple of Yasutani Haku'un Roshi and Yamada Kôun Roshi. I went through the koans in Munich and since 1975 was able to accompany my Roshi on her travels to and from Japan and in this way travelled twice a year to Kamakura. I was allowed to sit in San'un Zendo and during my first years there received dokusan with Yamada Kôun Roshi. These dokusans will always be etched in my memory.

This presence of the Roshi, even after long hours in the dokusan room -- a whole universe opened up in all its brilliance. In contrast to my small answers he was like living fireworks. HE WAS! And that was stunning, spurred me on, and was refreshing. He showed me the "True Man" with all his facets. For me he never was a strict roshi, or perhaps only seldom.

He showed me the person who, through his spiritual transformation in life, had passed through the "Zero-Infinity" equation which he often mentioned. Only after both my roshis entered the "Great Transformation" am I slowly beginning to grasp this.

He and his wife invited me to live in their house and I am endlessly thankful that I had the fate to be allowed to accompany him and his wife on trips and excursions, as well as to be allowed to witness their personal life, to experience his dignity, goodness, endless humor, charm and his wonderful warmth and kindness. Yamada Kôun Roshi and Okusama became my "Japanese foster parents," really in every respect, in the same way as they had been for my Roshi, Brigitte Kôun-An D'Ortschy, and for many others in the zendo in Kamakura.

But his influence reached much further: to Europe, for example to the zendo in Munich. D'Ortschy Roshi often said that, if it were not for Gorôshisama and all the help of Okusama this zendo would not be. She spoke lovingly of her honored master as a fatherly friend, sponsor, and as a deeply enlightened person -- and of her greatest challenge, which spurred her deeper and deeper. Until her death in 1990 she spent half of every year in Japan, to train herself further by having intensive contact with her master. A few months before her death, as she heard in Germany that he had entered the "Great Transformation," she said: "He was the most important person in my life." How she regretted not being able to attend his funeral services.

I was fortunate enough to witness some of their intensive encounters in the zendo in Kamakura. Once, sitting in the zendo and waiting, I heard a loud discussion about the suitable words for English and German translations. Sometimes it sounded as if

sparks were flying -- a loud commotion -- then after the job was finished both came out beaming with satisfaction, the Roshi with an impish smile on his face. An unforgettable sight.

I experienced Yamada Roshi not so much as a personal challenge, but rather as an indicator of my most inner essence. He was, and for me will always be, the "True Man," who uncovered everything. He was a "Japanese Father."

Thankfully, I now follow the Way which was revealed to me by him, and which he exemplified in complete naturalness. This! -- the first autumn leaf -- the warm sun in the face in front of the south portal of Notre Dame in Paris -- the smell of miso soup in Kamakura. So many memories, so many hours spent together, and now in retrospect, all the time in the world.

All the time which I was fortunate enough to spend together with Yamada Kôun Roshi, Okusama, and D'Ortschy Roshi in the many cities of Europe still resounds thankfully in my heart.

What luck that the spirit of the Roshi lives on and shows itself in San'un Zendo personified through Kubota Ji'un Roshi, Yamada Ryôun Roshi, his son, and of course Okusama, who remains as before, the soul of the house. My thanks to them, as well as to all the other roshis and teachers there.

Yamada Kôun Roshi's spirit lives on in the zendos of the Sambô Kyôdan around the world -- also in the Munich zendo.

I wish and pray that the teachings, writings, and the teishos of the Roshi will be further propagated and his life will in this way be perpetuated, because a roshi "IS."

Dedicated in deep esteem and thankfulness to my two Roshis, Kôun-An D'Ortschy and Yamada Kôun-ken.

(May 1994; translated from German by Steve Reese)

# **Interview with Brigitte D'Ortschy**





Brigitte d'Ortschy

#### Interview mit Brigitte d'Ortschy

Die noch jugendliche Diplom-Ingenieurin und Architektin Brigitte d'Ortschy ist in Berlin geboren und studierte später in Graz und Berlin, wozu sie sich ihre Studiengelder selbst verdienen musste. Schon als Werkstudentin fand sie Zugang zu psychologischen und optischen Forschungsarbeiten, die im Zusammenhang mit der Architektur standen. Eine Stellung als Assistentin an der Technischen Hochschule München kam ihrem Interesse an wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten entgegen. Während eines mehrmonatigen Studienaufenthalts in den USA arbeitete sie auf dem Gebiet der Stadtplanung, und dies wiederum war die Grundlage für ihre darauffolgende Mitarbeit bei der Bayerischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Raumforschung und in der Landesplanung, in der sie bis zum Jahr 1952 tätig war. Mit dem Aufbau der Frank-Lloyd-Wright-Ausstellung in Florenz und kurz darauf im Haus der Kunst in München, stiess Frau d'Ortschy auf ein Arbeitsgebiet, dem sie nun lange Zeit treu bleiben sollte. Der Begegnung mit Frank Lloyd Wright aber folgte zunächst ein längerer Aufenthalt in Arizona, mit intensiver Arbeit im Atelier Wright verbunden.

7500 Wohnungen hat Brigitte d'Ortschy dann in den Jahren darauf als Leiterin der Münchener Wohnberatung des Deutschen Werkbundes eingerichtet. Deshalb meinte sie auch eines Tages, nun sei es genug und wandte sich neuen Aufgaben zu. Seitdem arbeitet sie auf dem gleichen Gebiet selbständig, schreibt für die Fachpresse und den Funk und hält engen Kontakt mit der Industrie und allen Stellen, die sich mit Fragen des Wohnens und der Raumgestaltung befassen. Am liebsten würde sie die Industrie beraten. Sie glaubt genau zu wissen, wer besonders geeignet wäre, alle Lücken zu füllen, die der Einrichter und natürlich auch der Käufer immer wieder spürt. Was aber gebraucht wird und wie es beschaffen sein müsste, weiss sie sehr genau aus ihren reichen

#### Interview with Brigitte d'Ortschy

The still young graduate engineer and architect Brigitte d'Ortschy was born at Berlin and studied at Graz and Berlin for her degrees, being compelled to earn the money for her education herself. Her work while a student included psychological and optical research in connection with architecture. A position as an assistant at the Technical University Munich blended with her interest in scientific work and several months of studies in the USA acquainted her with city planning, which in turn was the basis for her following employment with the Bavarian Association for Housing Research and State Planning, where she worked until 1952. When the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition at Florence was started, and shortly afterwards at the Haus der Kunst at Munich, Mrs. d'Ortschy encountered a branch of activities she would be devoted to for a long time. The meeting with Frank Lloyd Wright was followed by an extensive stay in Arizona, combined with intensive work at the Wright studio.

Then, during the next years, Brigitte d'Ortschy decorated 7500 homes in her capacity as head of Munich Advisory Branch of the German «Werkbund». One day she felt that she had done enough in that line and she turned to other objectives. Ever since, she has been working as a free-lance artist, writing for trade journals, for the radio networks, maintaining a close contact to industry and other institutions connected with living and interior decoration. She would very much like to advise industry. She is sure of knowing what would be suited best to fill the gaps always faced by the decorator and, of course, by the buyer. What is needed and how it should be obtained is something she knows very well from her wealth of experience and the requests of wives advanced in that connection. We asked Mrs. d'Ortschy what in her opinion should first be offered by the trade. She replied that a well-designed double bed

#### Une interview de Brigitte d'Ortschy

Brigitte d'Ortschy, ingénieure diplômée et architecte, est née à Berlin. Elle fit ses études à Graz et à Berlin, où elle devait gagner l'argent nécessaire à cet effet. Déjà comme étudiante, elle trouva accès aux travaux d'ordre psychologique et optique en rapport avec l'architecture. Un emploi d'assistante à l'Ecole polytechnique de Munich vint au-devant de l'intérêt qu'elle prenait pour les travaux scientifiques. Au cours d'un séjour de plusieurs mois aux USA, elle s'occupa d'aménagement des villes, ce qui lui servit de base lorsqu'elle fut appelée à collaborer à la Communauté de travail bavaroise pour l'étude de l'espace, et dans l'urbanisme régional, où elle fut occupée jusqu'en 1952. En participant à l'édification de l'exposition Frank Lloyd Wright à Florence et, peu après, de la Maison des Arts de Munich, Mme d'Ortschy aborda un secteur auquel elle devait rester longtemps fidèle. Sa rencontre avec Frank Lloyd Wright fut d'abord suivie d'un long séjour en Arizona, qui comportait un travail intensif dans l'atelier du précité.

Dans les années qui suivirent, Brigitte d'Ortschy procéda à l'aménagement de 7500 logements en tant que directrice du bureau de Munich de la Consultation en matière de logement, organisation du «Werkbund» allemand. Un jour, elle trouva que cela suffisait et se tourna vers d'autres tâches. Depuis lors, elle s'est établie dans le même secteur, écrit pour la presse professionnelle et la radio, et entretient des contacts étroits avec l'industrie et tous les organismes qui s'occupent de questions relatives à l'aménagement intérieur. Ce qu'elle préférerait, ce serait de conseiller l'industrie. Elle croit savoir exactement qui serait particulièrement apte à combler les lacunes sans cesse relevées par le décorateur et, naturellement, aussi par l'acquéreur. Mais ce dont on a besoin et comment se le procurer, elle le sait très bien; son expérience l'y autorise et elle connaît les désirs des maîtresses de maison.

Erfahrungen heraus und von den Wünschen der Hausfrauen her. Wir fragten Frau d'Ortschy, was nach ihrer Ansicht als erstes recht bald in den Handel kommen sollte. Es fehle, so meinte sie, ein gut konstruiertes Doppelbett. Die Einbauschränke in den Wohnungen des Sozialen Wohnungsbaus liessen zu wünschen übrig oder fehlten ganz. Gute Flurgarderoben seien kaum zu haben, und nur wenige der im Handel befindlichen Bettzeugkästen seien wirklich brauchbar. Anbauschränke liessen in der Konstruktion oft zu wünschen übrig. Und schliesslich fehle auf dem Möbelmarkt ein in der Serie — also billig — hergestellter Esstisch, der an der Wand hochgeklappt werden könne. Gute, billige Lampen würden immer wieder verlangt. «Es gibt so viele Dinge, die es nicht gibt», sagte Frau d'Ortschy humorvoll. «Vom Kochlöffel bis zur Verkehrsampel ist vieles, vor allem in der Formgebung, verbesserungsbedürftig. Auch sollten endlich einmal Fussböden entwickelt werden, arbeitsparend, isolierend und wärmend, aber auch in der Preislage so, dass jedermann sie bezahlen kann.»

Unter den deutschen Formgestaltern und einschlägigen Fachleuten gibt es wohl kaum einen, dem nicht zumindest der Name Brigitte d'Ortschy's bekannt ist. Die meisten aber sind ihr irgendwo einmal begegnet. Denn sie ist viel unterwegs, nicht nur in Deutschland, sondern auch im Ausland. Zur Zeit richtet sich ihr Blick auf Japan; von dort wurde eine sehr verlockende Aufgabe an sie herangetragen. Man möchte in Tokio eine Ausstellung über gute Industrieform zeigen, andererseits plant man unter ihrer Regie in den europäischen Ländern eine Ausstellung von Arbeiten japanischer Formgestalter. Das aber würde für die stets Unternehmende bedeuten, dass sie ihre reichen Ausstellungserfahrungen von Helsingborg und von der Triennale in Mailand, wo sie als Beauftragte des Rats für Formgebung für die deutschen Pavillons zu sorgen hatte, verwerten und vermehren könnte. Auf der XI. Triennale in Mailand galt es, im Anschluss an den Deutschen Pavillon eine Wohnung mit vorhandenen Serienmöbeln und Textilien einzurichten. Dies erforderte grosse Geschicklichkeit und ein beträchtliches Mass an Objektivität und Sachkenntnis. Anlässlich der Interbau griff Frau d'Ortschy wieder einmal zum Zeichenstift. Der von ihr entworfene verstellbare Kindertisch und auch eine aparte Stehlampe mit einem Schirm aus Lindenspanholz fanden viel Beifall. Im übrigen richtete sie im Hansaviertel im Haus des Finnen Aalto eine Einzimmer- und eine Dreizimmerwohnung vollständig ein.

Der Schwerpunkt ihres Schaffens liegt für Brigitte d'Ortschy nicht bei dem Entwurf des Einzelmöbels oder des einzelnen Gegenstandes, so wichtig sie ihn auch nehmen mag. Ihr Hauptinteresse gilt neuen Ideen und den Dingen, die den heutigen Bedürfnissen entsprechen und die Menschen von überholten Gewohnheiten lösen. Ständig verfolgt sie den vielschichtigen Einfluss der Wohnprobleme auf die menschliche Gesellschaft und auf die gesamte soziale Struktur. Daraus ergibt sich wiederum ihre Vielseitigkeit, ohne jede Zersplitterung.

was a first essential. Wall cabinets in the homes built by social planners either left much to be wished for or were left out entirely. Good floor stands are hardly ever offered and few of the chests for the bedding available are really practical. The design of unit-type cabinets she considered often questionable. And finally, the furniture market as yet never offered a dining room table, sold at low price due to series manufacture, hinged to the wall. Good, low cost lamps were always an asked-for item. «There are so many things not available», Mrs. d'Ortschy said with wry humor. «Beginning with the ladle, and ending with traffic signs, much can be improved, particularly as to design. And then there should be floors of the labor-saving, insulated and heated type, at a price anyone can afford.»

Among German designers and pertinent experts there is hardly one who at least did not hear about the name of Brigitte d'Ortschy. Most of them did meet her somewhere at some time or other. She does a lot of travelling, not just in Germany, but also abroad. At present, she is infatuated with the idea of going to Japan from where she has received a tempting offer. Tokio intends to hold an exhibition showing good industrial design, while in addition, Japanese designers are planning an exhibition of Japanese products in European countries, to be organized by her. To this enterprising woman this would mean an opportunity to exploit and improve upon her experience gained at the exhibitions of Helsingborg and the Triennale at Milan, where she acted as a deputy of the Council for Design at the German pavilion. At the XIth Triennale in Milan she had to furnish a home with available series-type furniture and textiles on the basis of exhibits at the German pavilion. This took great skill and a considerable measure of objectivity and trade knowledge. At the Interbau Mrs. d'Ortschy once again took to drawing. The adjustable children's table designed by her, and an attractive lamp with a shade made of linden tree plywood found much acclaim. At the Hansaviertel in the house of the Fin Aalto she completely decorated and furnished a dining room and a three-room apartment.

The focal point of her activities is not purely the design of an individual piece or object no matter how important she considers such an item. Her main interest is devoted to new ideas and to objects meeting present-day requirements, and the desire to free mankind from the habits of tradition. She continuously observes the many-sided influences of the housing problem and the homes on human society and the entire social structure. This, in turn, proves her versatility, which by no means indicates a scattering of efforts.

Nous lui demandâmes ce qui, à son avis, devait être introduit sans retard dans le commerce. Il manque, dit-elle, un lit double de construction bien conçue. Les armoires encastrées des appartements construits dans le cadre du programme social laissent à désirer ou font totalement défaut. Les portemanteaux de vestibule bien étudiés sont rares et peu de coffres à literie en vente dans le commerce sont réellement utilisables. Les rangements par éléments sont loin d'être irréprochables quant à la construction. Enfin, il manque sur le marché une table de repas fabriquée en série, donc à un prix abordable, et qui peut être relevée contre le mur. On réclame toujours des lampes utiles et bon marché. «Il y a tant de choses qui n'existent pas», dit Mme d'Ortschy avec humour. «Depuis la cuiller à pot jusqu'à la lanterne de signalisation, que de perfectionnements nécessaires, surtout quant à la forme. On devrait aussi trouver enfin des sols isolants, chauds, d'entretien facile et dont le prix fût à la portée de toutes les bourses.»

Parmi les créateurs de formes et spécialistes compétents allemands, il n'en a guère qui ne connaissent Brigitte d'Ortschy, au moins de nom. La plupart l'ont déjà rencontrée quelque part. Car elle se déplace beaucoup, non seulement en Allemagne mais aussi à l'étranger. Pour le moment, ses regards sont tournés vers le Japon d'où elle a reçu une proposition séduisante. On voudrait organiser à Tokio une exposition qui présenterait la forme industrielle esthétique. D'autre part, on envisage de mettre sur pied, dans les pays européens et sous sa direction, une exposition d'ouvrages réalisés par des créateurs de formes japonais. Cela revient à dire que cette femme entreprenante pourrait mettre en valeur en même temps qu'accroître les expériences en matière d'exposition, qu'elle a accumulées à Helsingborg et à la Triennale de Milan où, déléguée par le Conseil pour l'étude des formes, elle s'est vu confier l'organisation du pavillon allemand. A la XIe Triennale de Milan, il s'agissait d'aménager un appartement annexé au pavillon allemand et de l'équiper de meubles de série et de textiles trouvés sur place. Cette tâche exigea une grande habileté et un haut degré d'objectivité et de connaissances. A l'occasion de l'Interbau, Mme d'Ortschy saisit une fois de plus le crayon. La table d'enfants réglable dessinée par elle, ainsi qu'un remarquable lampadaire muni d'un abat-jour en copaux de tilleul récoltèrent un grand succès. En outre, elle procéda, dans le quartier Hansa, à l'aménagement complet de deux appartements, une et trois pièces, qui faisaient partie de la maison du Finlandais Aalto, connu dans tout le monde.

Le point essentiel de son oeuvre créatrice n'est pas, pour Brigitte d'Ortschy, le dessin de meubles ou d'objets individuels, si important soit-il pour elle. Son intérêt se porte surtout vers les idées nouvelles et les choses qui répondent aux besoins actuels et détachent les hommes des coutumes dépassées. Sans cesse, elle suit les influences multiples que le problème du logement exerce sur la société et sur toute la structure sociale. D'où ses vastes connaissances sans que l'on puisse apercevoir le moindre éparpillement de ses riches capacités.

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## Interview with Brigitte D'Ortschy

by Doris Rossa, Stuttgart, ≈ 1958

The still young graduate engineer and architect Brigitte D'Ortschy was born in Berlin and studied at Graz and Berlin for her degrees, being compelled to earn the money for her education herself. Her work while a student included psychological and optical research in connection with architecture. A position as an assistant at the Technical University of Munich blended with her interest in scientific work, and several months of studies in the USA acquainted her with city planning which in turn was the basis for her following employment with the Bavarian Association for Housing Research and State Planning, where she worked until 1952. When the Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition at Florence was started and shortly afterwards at the Haus der Kunst at Munich, Mrs. D'Ortschy encountered a branch of activities she would be devoted to for a long time. The meeting with Frank Lloyd Wright was followed by an extensive stay in Arizona, combined with intensive work at the Wright studio.

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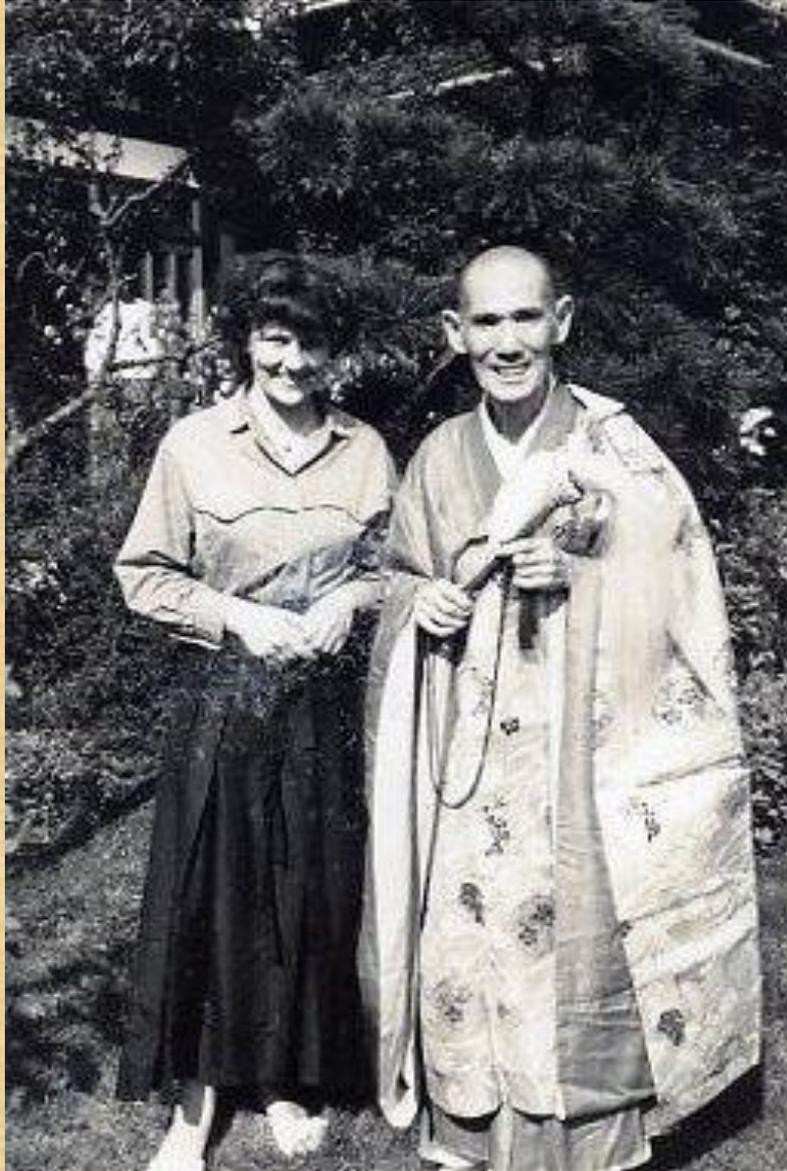
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# **Attempts to see the obvious**

**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



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K Y O S H O

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# ATTEMPTS TO SEE THE OBVIOUS (1)

By Brigitte D'Ortschy

When I <sup>came</sup> can to Japan in August 1963, I didn't even know the word "zazen." But I was convinced that this Zen I had heard of in Germany had something of fundamental importance in store for me. Now, which were the reasons for searching this fundamentally important Something? This needs some explanations.

Memory, going back to the age of one year and two and a half months, tells me: First, that I never had the feeling of being freshly "produced", but just of "continuing", and secondly that essentially I have never changed.

When being four years old, learning a little prayer, I refused to say "dear God", just "God" would be all right, and explained that "God has no qualities". A little later, being four or five years old, and desolately sleepless in bed as usual, because I needed only four hours of sleep, I suddenly realized that I was not this tiny body - I just as well was that strange furniture over there, the room, the garden, etc. This deeply consoled me.

When being nine, there was a strange experience with healing. The essence of it was to me: His body is not "his body"; my body is not "my body".

At the age of twelve when one afternoon walking around in a suburb of Berlin, I suddenly experienced IT - no ~~no~~ shock, no vision - plain and simple: IT. Rushing home for an unknown purpose, on my arrival I found myself writing a poem on IT. Not to talk in hieroglyphs, some lines of it may be given here, translated from German into English:

Beginning: IT is.

In tranquil totality there stands  
what seems to be existent by itself,  
beyond cause and effect.

End:        There, at IT's first radiance  
              the whole world may arise to me in brilliant shine.  
              And surprised I am looking at me,  
              not yet understanding what my heart was contempl-  
              ating here.

It took me 34 more years to know a bit more of "what my heart" had been "contemplating" then! Being full of IT, I tried to tell everybody. Nobody understood. For companionship I turned to the large library of my grandfather. For four years, up to the age of sixteen, going through volume after volume, this reading was no ordinary reading, but only an intensive search for somebody who knew IT. Finally I found Chuang-tzu (Sōshi), Angelus Silesius, and Meister Ekkehart, and was somewhat content. I stopped reading altogether. But all this was not enough.

When being 13, waiting at the familiar station of Werder/Havel, it came to my mind: At first in human life there is the "First Naturalness", then the state of "Cognizing Consciousness" is entered, and after that by all means the "Second Naturalness" has to be reached. I then knew that "long ago" I had entered Cognizing Consciousness. How now to reach - consciously - the Second Naturalness?

Two years later, being 15, when one afternoon I sat waiting for a pupil to teach her Latin, looking out of the window and seeing only sunshine-light and nothing in particular, all of a sudden I got aware of smelling withered violets, and at the same moment down in the courtyard somebody opened the metal garbage can. Abruptly sight, fragrance, sound coincidingly rushed into one, into NOW! While IT did not come as a shock, NOW did. Deeply excited for weeks and months, I tried to give this marvellous , never ending NOW to everybody. Nobody wanted it. Nobody understood. Within the following weeks, slowly and penetratingly I learned about time and TIME. But

this was not yet TIME-time – that came many years later. In an entirely different way I was to learn about SPACE-space.

All those years, I was so busy within myself that whenever a member of the family addressed me, my only answer was: "Quiet, I am thinking." In reality it was a constant "listening", but I could not hear well enough – not remember well enough. The family in mocking horror called me "Mme. Blavatsky," which I hated without knowing who this Mme. Blavatsky was.

With IT, NOW, and TIME as thorns in my flesh and the Second Naturalness as a goal, I was determined to go any and all ways to find an explanation and to fulfill THE DEMAND. It was in any minute of my life, even in sleep.

Now at first I turned towards science, the normal source of information for a normal European of today. Studying several fields of science, including engineering, I however could not find what I was looking for. But I am grateful for the severe training I underwent, to all those, who taught me, and played the delightful game of science with me. But when I did not find what I was in search of, I got angry, furious indeed – and the world got angry, furious with me.

Most intimate friends were much more revealing: They were magnifying glasses for IT, catalysts for IT to "crystallize" – as I told them.

When being 32, the following happened: Sitting in München in discussion with highly intelligent friends, I had a glass in my hand, and suddenly I "saw" that glass. On the spot I said: "When we have undergone all kinds of research on this glass, as to physics, chemistry, mathematics, optics, etc., we still don't know anything about it. But look: This is a glass – GLASS! That is all. That is IT!" In a new way, I had found that "God has no qualities". But it was not enough.

Around the middle of my thirties, the darkest period of my life had begun, full of suffering, guilt, and constant fighting, chall-

enging myself. It was like galloping wildly, stamping the earth to strike sparks from it, and threatening heaven to make it answer... and sometimes there was a spark, there was an answer: When I had worked myself into the depth of suffering, one evening I met: JOY. But in my utter foolishness, I forcibly pushed aside even this striking experience: Not enough! But this moment of intense delight I could not get out of my memory. However, I was not willing to give in.— Miraculously enough, successful work had gone on all the time, and other problems and difficulties were rather easily solved by “concentration on the moment.” Christmas and Easter, two dearly beloved festivals of deepest meaning to me, I decided no more to celebrate: As long as Christ was not born, not resurrected within me every minute of my life, I had no right to celebrate, what then was only a “historical fact”, and thus without any meaning and reality. One day I closed the shutters of my dwelling in Munchen, and lived in nearly complete darkness, after I had separated from all my many friends — friends in spite of myself. But one friend did not take notice of that, and now and then broke into that “cave of a devil” to see whether I had committed suicide, and if not, to keep me alive by some food. (I did not at all intend to kill myself, because I knew it to be useless, even “impossible”, and I was much too busy)... One day, after some weeks, when finding me at the top of fury, loudly and blasphemically shouting at the brilliant IT, this friend slapped me right in the face. Nothing I had deserved better. Then this friend opened the shutters. The shutters remained open. I resumed work, torrents of work, furious work.

At the age of 38, in one of those whirlstorm-like working periods of twenty and more hours a day, each day for months on end, one morning I awoke and knew: All TIME is my time! A triumphant feeling, full of awe. I worked on with absolute precision.

Time was made of rubber, endlessly stretchable. Now I had TIME-time. But it was not enough.

At the beginning of my thirties, a friend had given me a small booklet, asking me to read this "Zen in the Art of Archery" – and for once I did. Soon afterwards, I met Amano Taro San an architect, at the place of Frank Lloyd Wright, Arizona / USA, – my first Japanese friend. The booklet on Zen and this friend made me feel: Japan has something of highest importance in store for me. But the time for Japan had not yet come. The time of rebellion was ahead. Once in those fits of rage, I shouted in the house of friends in Munchen: "Why can I not become what I am! I can't run around in the streets, calling aloud for a master-masters are not just lying around there!" But in due course the master came – in Japan.

Around forty, I somehow made peace with myself. But THE DEMAND remained as constant urge. When being 41, I received a letter from Japanese friends: "Why don't you come to Japan?" Indeed, why didn't I? Thus I finished my several professional tasks, slowly dissolved my household, and bought a ticket. Things were done, as if not myself were doing them. It was as if a page in a book had been turned, and I had read: "And then she went to Japan." Ah, that's what she did.

Shortly before leaving for Japan, I had a strange experience: When getting up in the morning, I fainted (which is completely unusual), fell down, got up – fell down again, got up – and this about seven times. But all the time straight through even while being unconscious and having no command over body and mind, there was Something, which afterwards I called CONSCIOUSESS. I cannot describe it. The only thing I truly can say: IT WAS PRESENT.

Afterwards I knew that it must have been the same as sometimes in sleep only more clearly than while asleep. For me it served as a proof for my lifelong conviction that death is nothing to be feared. – But it was not enough. I went to Japan.

## ATTEMPTS TO SEE THE OBVIOUS (2)

By Brigitte D'Ortschy

After arrival in Japan and settling down in Kamakura, I did not run around to find Zen. So thoroughly were the bridges behind me destroyed, that it seemed to me, this new continent was obliged to open. And that it did, when after six rather difficult months I met Mr. and Mrs. Kapleau in February 1964. Then and there, for the first time I heard the word "zazen". Mr. Kapleau gave me the "Introductory Lectures", by Yasutani Roshi, and I read them. Right in the beginning, when reading Harada Roshi's advice on listening, a doubt arose: Japanese and Europeans seemed to be more different than I had imagined them to be. By own experience I know that when listening together with ten people, my attention is not one tenth, but I am even more attentive as if the understanding of all the ten were my responsibility. Was this only something for the people of Japan? Finally I went on reading. The clearly developed method appealed to me, and I was taken by the serenity and humour which shone out of many sentences, having always distrusted a "truth" which grimly comes along in heavy boots. Most of all, however, "mujodo-no taigen" sounded like my Second Naturalness, and an aspect of "inga-ichinyo" I had experienced by TIME-time. And throughout my life I had been convinced that each human being, in fact, all and everything, was what here was called "Buddha-nature" - just this conviction had caused all this struggle and trouble. So it was not a matter of whether or not to do zazen. I had to do so. Period.

Thus I joined the April-sesshin at Fukusho-Ji under Yasutani Roshi whom I never had met before in my life. When arriving in the evening it was dokusan time, and I found my-

self in dokusan, before I ever had sat one minute. Mr. Kapleau kindly interpreted. Being asked, why I wanted to do zazen, I answered: "I want to remember.." The Roshi assigned me counting my exhalations. This practice I did for eight months. I liked it, as I always had liked to do "stupid" regular things with concentration. Moreover, since I knew numbers those from one to ten always had appeared in beautiful, never changing colours before my inner eye. So it was pleasant - too pleasant. The physical position was far more difficult, sometimes excruciating. But if the Roshi would have ordered me to do the practice while standing on my head, I doubtlessly just as well would have tried to do so. Although my Japanese was close to zero, I soon went most of the time alone to dokusan, there mostly being taught by observing the extraordinarily graceful and revealing movements of the Roshi.

After those eight months, Yamada Roshi, who was and is my sponsor for my stay in Japan, summoned me for a talk. His daughter, Mitsuko San, kindly interpreted. At some point, that small poem of my twelfth year was mentioned, and on request translated into Japanese by Mitsuko San. Yamada Roshi said: "May be, MU is a good practice for you."

At the next dokusan, Yasutani Roshi after some inquiry assigned me the koan MU. Right away a great handicap arose: For me MU was simply IT. Calling IT now MU, it was as if I had to call my old close friend "Peter" suddenly by the name of "Muneo". Then I told myself: Without kensho one cannot know MU. So, IT and MU have to be something different. But this was impossible! However, I tried hard to regard them as different, to start completely anew, to discover an utterly unknown MU.

But whenever I was so fortunate as to understand some of the Japanese words of go-teisho, the meaning sounded extraor-

dinarily familiar, sometimes so strikingly that I hardly could retain the tears; e. g. what I had experienced with GLASS, I now heard about DOG, HOSSU, SUGAR, etc. It was a miraculous relief to find myself surrounded by people who "spoke the same language," only that they - strangely enough - used that difficult Japanese.

There were many phases of mu-ing: The serene peaceful phase, when any question as to what MU was seemed completely ridiculous, a state when all problems ended, including the question for MU. There was the "iron-box" concentration phase, and others of less significance and shorter duration. Here it may be useful to go into some details of my practice.

#### Concentration:

Being asked to concentrate, it seemed to me that this concentration must be something absolutely unusual. Concentration is a rather normal state. What a concentration was meant here? Yasutani Roshi sometimes said: "Just like a small child playing." But this did not help me much. Concentration always had been of the same sharp kind, whether playing as a child or studying as an adult. So I thought I had to intensify this concentration even more which amounted to something like putting myself into an iron-box. \*) This I most "successfully" did at sesshin, and felt farther away from MU than ever else in my life. Then one day, it came to my mind that none of my many Japanese students had any idea of that high voltage scientific concentration, a kind which so far I have met only in two Japanese scientists. Japanese concentration is not that dead-straight arrow, but rather a "sunken absorption." When asking Yasutani Roshi about it, he said: "Yes, just like a good violin string - not too tense." I relaxed my concentration, changing it at the same time from the "scientific" or better "active" kind ("scientific" here does not imply thought, but a most active inner approach

of the whole person), to the "artistic" or "passive" kind.

\*\*\*)Then it occurred to me, that all my glimpses had come in fully relaxed states of mind. Thus I relaxed my concentration even further to that state of mind by which we try to remember a dream, make a design, write a poem, etc. - a state which I never would call "concentration", a patiently resting within oneself in a state of receptive awareness. Upon Yamada Roshi's agreement I went on with it. Now I had ground under my feet. Today it is clear to me that there are several very different kinds of "concentration". For myself the best one is when feeling like a hen hatching her eggs - just as when "hatching" a design - aware existing in a natural-artistic state.

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\*)Meanwhile I have found out that the "iron-box" state by misunderstood concentration seems to be a pitfall to other Westerners as well.

\*\*\*)The "scientific", active kind is ego-increasing - the "artistic", passive kind ego-decreasing, as I now understand.

Makyo and other phenomena:

Makyo were rare and those which appeared during zazen were no different from those in ordinary life when studying or working. In both instances I often smelled the enchanting fragrance of fir-trees, withered violets, the ocean wind, or others, completely unearthly. In both instances I hear bells and other pleasant sounds. There was little more than that. Sitting generated the same heat as intensive study did, which concentration had kept me so comfortably warm that e. g. I could draw architectural drawings in rooms with temperatures below freezing point for twenty hours each day with nearly no food. Another phenomenon was just as well the same: Time got extremely short. Sometimes I asked myself: What only is the difference in the effects of zazen or studying? Either there was only zazen, "ta-zen" (Tatte iru zen), "ha-zen" (hataraku zen), etc. or my sitting was very miserable. I decided that it must be the latter and tried to intensify my efforts, which helped to lead me into the "iron-box".

## ATTEMPTS TO SEE THE OBVIOUS (3)

By Brigitte D'Ortschy

**Kyosaku, "head", and consciousness:**

From the beginning I liked the kyosaku.

From the beginning I knew that "head" (thought) was forbidden.

Now, from a certain point on, the kyosaku had exactly the same effect on me as "head". Thus the kysaku seemed to be a "forbidden love" – I concluded, and asked the Godo, not to beat me too frequently. Here the explanation: Under a more severely and often applied kyosaku, my consciousness makes a jump and becomes brilliant and as sharp as a knife—just exactly as after 10, 15 minutes of fervent discussion with an excellent partner. Oh, I love this jump! It even has cured me "miraculously" several times in my life from serious illness. But this brilliant consciousness seemed to be the very opposite of that darkness out of which kensho is said to arise. And: Why was I sitting here crosslegged for days, when I could arrive at the very same delightful state so easily by "head"? Thus I renounced the kyosaku to some degree and sat with occasionally applied kyosaku and without that delightful–disastrous effect. What a pity!

For the rest: Neither the kyosaku nor all that "cowstable"-noise ever had made me nervous. But for my person screaming was impossible: a mere waste of energy. Everybody in moments of good concentration gets drawn into complete silence. Why then did some participants scream here? That seemed another proof that this was not concentration as we conceive it. But whether screaming or silent, there was.

**Companionship,:**

Which meant a great help, and without which those years of practice would have been much more difficult, if not impos-

sible. I never would have been sitting for days on end just by myself. But it was easy to do so, surrounded by people who were striving for the same nameless Something. The loving concern of the Godos was an additional help, not to be underrated. Moreover, nearly all my friends in Japan are zazen-people or zazen-friendly people, like my kind landlord and his wife, who offered me their charming "Hanare", so that, sheltered, I quietly might develop in my practice. Thus nearly uninterruptedly I could live in the same atmosphere.

**Limitless Trust:**

The most important factor of all my practice, however, was: Trust. From the aforesaid it may be clear that there was no time that I distrusted my Roshis. But between "not distrusting", "trusting", and a state of "limitless Trust" there are abysms of differences.

At the beginning of 1967, I had arrived at that complete Trust. How did this come about? Several times, I had told Yasutani Roshi or Yamada Roshi in one way or the other that "I knew this Mu." But they did not seem to share my opinion. Now and then, when my Japanese was devoid of any intelligibility and Yasutani Roshi felt that somewhat important factors were at stake, he asked me to contact Yamada Roshi. Thus I started to write to Yamada Roshi, including most of what has been written on pages 1-3 and also telling him about my difficulties with It and Mu. Yamada Roshi quietly said: "From the beginning I have regarded IT as Mu..." A stone dropped from my heart. And the Roshi went on: "But you have made only a tiny hole into the glass which separates you from Reality, you must smash it once and forever!" That was exactly as I felt. Once, Yasutani Roshi said: "You have had a kensho-experience before, but you must get it anew, else koan-practice will be very difficult." Koan-practice or no koan-practice, I knew that I had to

“get IT anew”. When my Roshis chose to tell me so, I imperceptibly had reached a similar state already as I had been in between 12 and 16. The thread was again in my hand. How wisely had I been led by my patient Roshis! Deeper admiration for this teaching arose. Then I realized other effects of those years of zazen: Just as imperceptibly to myself, I had become more and more serene, had returned to that basic joy and merriment with which I had been born. Thus the effect of zazen was different indeed from working! It seems to be like that of best medical healing: the process is imperceptible, but one day one feels healthy – and nobody except the doctor knows how it has come about. With recognizing that, deepest gratefulness arose! And admiration and gratefulness mutually reinforced each other, and soon led to the state of limitless Trust. When having arrived at that state, it was a short way. It was, as if I could “inhale” the Roshi, as if I just had to exposure myself like a film to that light. Unfortunately, I am not a highly qualified “Agfa” or “Kodak”, only a miserable home-made kind of a film...

But one thing is clear to me now: Whosoever arrives at that limitless Trust is bound to arrive at some insight.

#### **MU – IT**

To the sesshin under Yamada Roshi, November 1967, at the Christian retreat-house of Kamakura, I went as to all the others: Without any special expectation. It may be necessary to mention that I never had been striving hard for kensho. The process itself seemed the solution. –The second day of the sesshin I had to interrupt to teach at Waseda-University. When returning from Tokyo in the evening, I felt a strange urge: I must be in time for the evening dokusan! Although there still much time was left, I rushed over by taxi, rapidly changed into hakama, and hurried to the waiting line. Now, usually I had been among the first for dokusan, but not just by eagerness, only by a life-

long training to do immediately what has to be done. This time it was entirely different. Why? I had not the faintest idea. I, in fact, had nothing to tell the Roshi. But I was spurred as if my life were depending on that dokusan. When entering the dokusan room there was no idea of MU or kensho in my mind at all. But when suddenly the Roshi asked: "And what about MU?"—I knew. It was completely silent, completely natural, just as IT had been. There was nothing new. But I experienced IT anew, by way of MU. This experience is simply and only due to the skillful guidance of my Roshis. This is clear to everybody, when knowing that I had tried in vain for 31 years by myself, but reached it easily after 3 1/2 years of zazen. This time MU-IT was much clearer. I had been let to remember better. But when hearing the word "kensho" in that dokusan, I was extremely surprised, and I either thought or said: "But it must be deeper, deeper. . . ." And simultaneously with the feeling that finally I can begin with my zazen-practice, there arose as a new spur: responsibility. For what? I don't know. Just responsibility. — Somehow I got out of the room.

There was no uproar of laughter, no streaming tears — nothing. Only: The many events of my life rushed together, and everything was pervaded by a huge Smile. Everything was at its place — everything is "in order" now.

At the dokusan of next morning, the Roshi tested me again and said: "It is clear. Here is the next koan."

During the following weeks there was and is a steadily deepening, silent joy, and an often nearly overwhelming astonishment. In addition there seems to be a riddle: How only is it possible that not everybody sees this what is most obvious? And an even greater riddle: How is it possible that I still don't experience IT-MU to the very bottom? It is incomprehensible! THE DEMAND is not yet answered — there is much more to it — to IT — to MU. And this is not enough.

Kamakura-Shi, February 7, 1968

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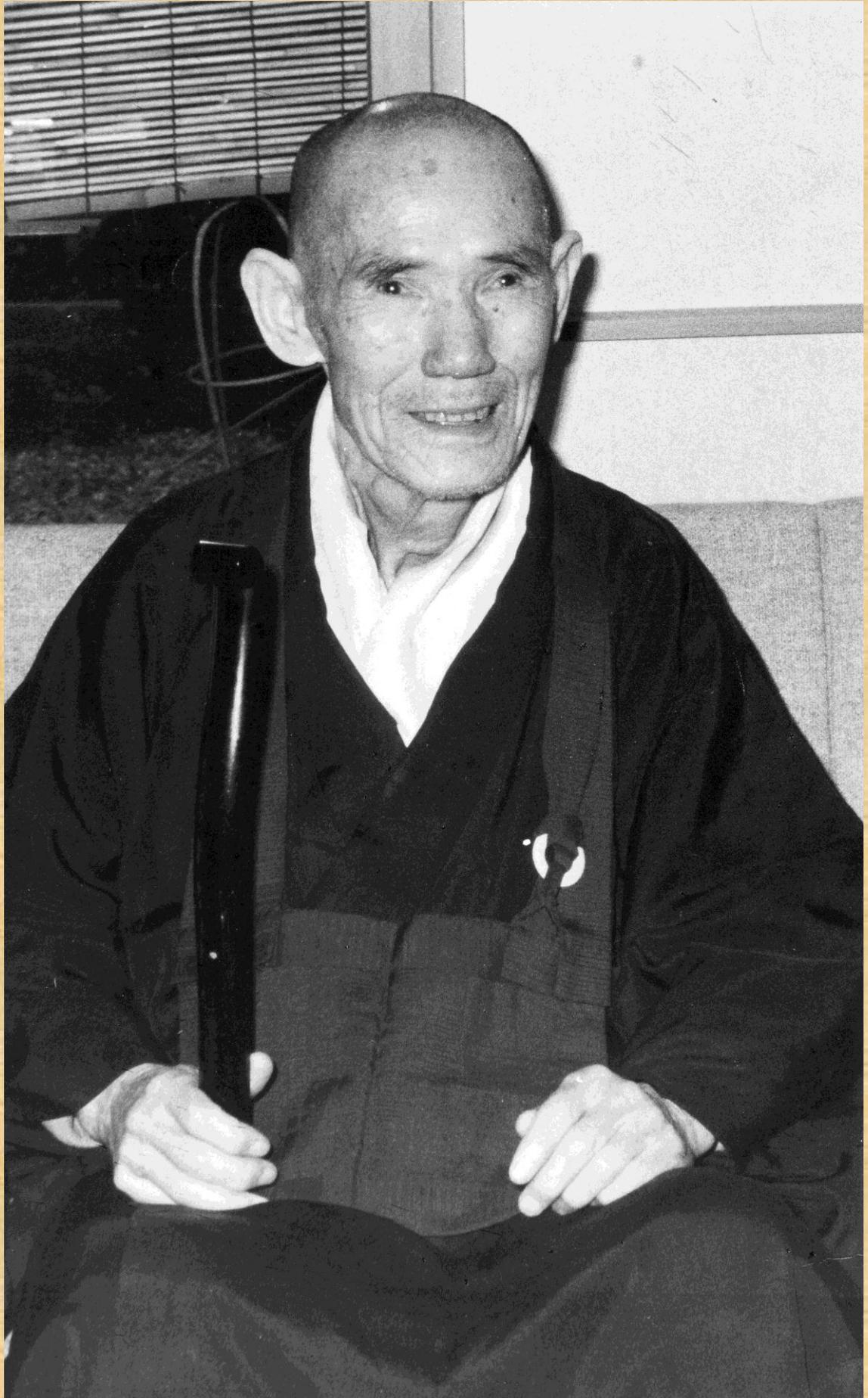
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- 二、埼玉県朝霞市溝沼一、九二一(美浦伊三五方)「三宝興隆会」(振替口座東京一四三六二七番)宛にお送り下さい。
- 三、隔月(奇数の月)に機関誌「暁鐘」を送ります。各地の禅会御出席も自由であり、また御質問や種々な御相談にも応じます。

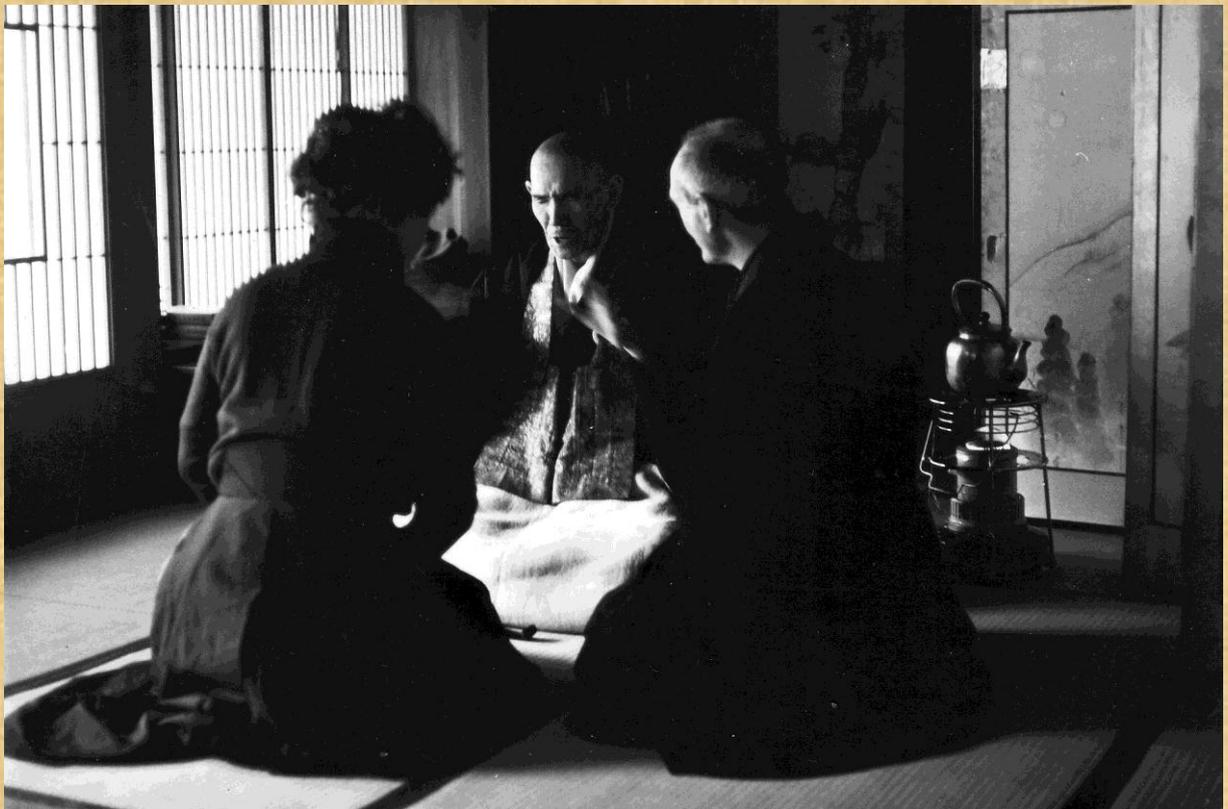
神力演大光  
普照無際土

消除三垢冥  
廣濟衆厄難

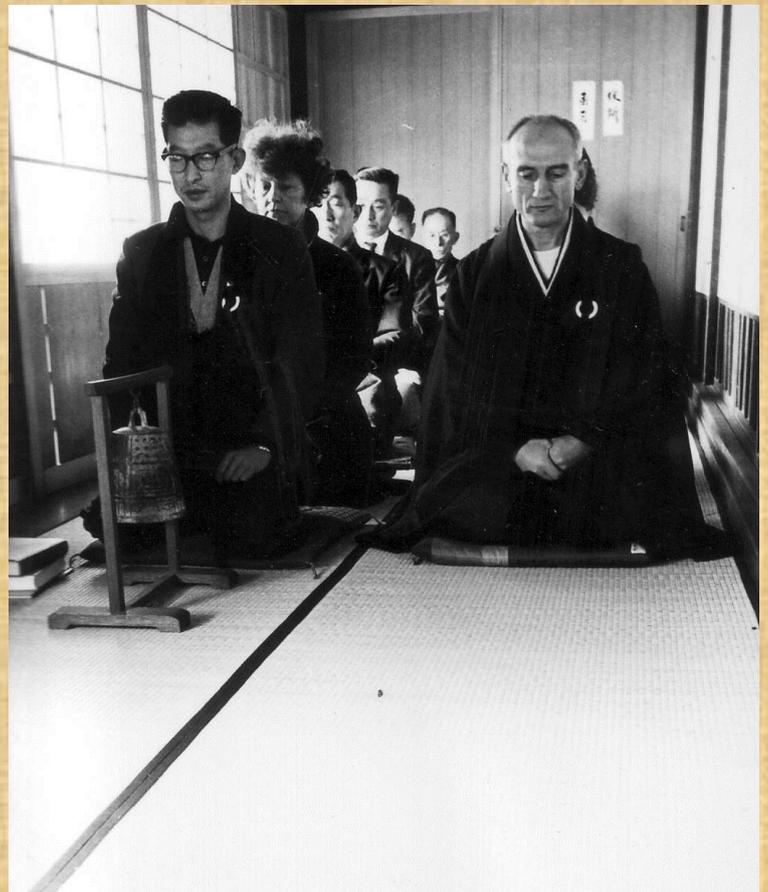


鎌倉大佛殿











**NYOI -JU**

Neujahrsglückwünsche

von

**YASUTANI HAKU-UN RÔSHI**

**(1885 - 1973)**

an

**Brigitte D'Ortschy**

**KÔUN-AN DÔRU CHIKÔ DAISHI**

**(1921 - 1990)**

**Our Father**  
**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



**Brigitte D'Ortschy and Father Thomas Hand, SJ**

to become that we  
are

"Our Father"

(Math.6,9-13)

"Our Father who art in heaven":

What is heaven? It is the realm of God, His kingdom, the very kingdom of which it is said: "The kingdom of God is within you". This kingdom of God is God's heaven, and in fact, this heaven is within us, but we don't know it. So we go on praying:

"Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth":

What does it mean: "Hallowed be Thy name"? His name does not need to be hallowed, it is sacred by itself forever. But while we are blind, we are unable to conceive the holiness of his name. Instead we make a name by our ideas, and that name is lacking in sacredness, because we are lacking in sacredness, our consciousness being on a low level. So we pray that we may come to such a high level of consciousness which enables us to realize directly the holiness of His name. Then His name is hallowed for us by our realization. In this way we create what forever is.

What does it mean: "Thy kingdom come"? There is no kingdom outside of us, and outside of that kingdom there is nil. This kingdom is immovable and ever present. So this kingdom cannot come. Again here we use this expression of "coming" in the sense of the process of our realization: "May we be able to perceive that your kingdom is here already." As soon as we realize that the kingdom is here with us right now, we may have the impression that it has "come", but we only have discovered what was here all the time.

What does it mean: "Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth"? As soon as we have come to know by direct experience that God's kingdom is here, we also realize that there is no difference between heaven and earth, that there are not two separated realms - one over there, glorious and wonderful, the other here, miserable and ugly - , as we imagine in our deluded consciousness, but that the glory is right here and always was, and that there cannot be any other will but the will of God. There is nothing else but THAT.

"Our daily bread give us today"

God Father, the Ultimate, the Absolute, does not give, nor does He take away. He is what He is. So, how to understand that "giving"? Again this is said from the viewpoint of the process of our realization, i.e. from the viewpoint of our impression and means: "May we realize that we have already everything what we need - every day, this day, this day - every hour, this hour, this hour - , that we are filled to the brim." When finally we come to see this, we may exclaim: "Indeed! God has given us everytzing for our daily need!" But in reality we had it all along, and under all conditions, whether at the point of starvation or whether feasting unbandantly.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors":

How to understand this? As long as we live in our ordinary consciousness of separatedness, we feel that we have debtors and that we are debtors. But when we have transformed our consciousness, we realize that there is nothing and nobody outside of us. So how could we have debtors or be debtors? It is one and the same consciousness that acts on either side: as accusing and demanding and as being accused and under demand. And again, it is the same consciousness that is forgiving and forgiven. in the case of the transformed consciousness  
As long as we have not come to see this, we pray that we may realize that we have nothing to claim and that there is no claim on us, as if these were two separated things. But having come to realization, in a flash our debts "are forgiven", and we "have forgiven" our debtors, according to the change of our consciousness.

In the Collins Bible (1952) we read the following version:

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This translation that is not in concordance with the original, sounds almost shrewd: "We have forgiven, so you also should forgive us. We have done our share, now you better do yours." It is perfectly clear that this is not the meaning of this line.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil";

How could God lead someone into temptation? Would that be fair?

If I knew that there is a guy struggling to get rid of his drug addiction and I put a piece of heroin in front of him to tempt him, I would be a rotten rascal. God is not a rascal. So He won't lead us into temptation, and this is not what these words imply. They rather mean: "May we come to realize that there are no temptations at all, that we are perfect, lack nothing, and cannot do any evil, due to our Original-Nature, due to our being the Image of God." Realizing this, in an instant we are "delivered" from evil.

So, may we come to realize our True-Being to the full. Then this prayer is answered in every detail. Amen.

  
(Brigitte D'Ortschy)

Kamakura, February 22, 1972

**Saving People**  
**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



## "Saving People"

(Concerning the conversations on February 3rd and 11th )

On February 11th, Go-Roshi Sama stressed the importance of 'saving people' as it is expressed by "Shujō muhen seigan dō".

When I said that I am deeply sad about the Zen situation in Europe, my Master reproachfully remarked "Only sad? Why do you not do something, contact the other 'shidōsha', talk with them.....?"

A week earlier on February 3rd, Go-Roshi Sama said "Hardly anybody of them (=Western 'shidōsha') has grasped the world of Emptiness." In spite of that my Master has authorized them as Zen-teachers. If the core experience of Zen is missing, how can anybody truthfully respond e.g. to such words as:

"The clouds and the moon are the same; valleys and mountains are different from each other." (M-K 35, Verse)

What kind of Zen remains? How can it 'save people'?

But Go-Roshi Sama has passed them through all the koan - - -

As to talking with the other 'shidōsha': No matter how much I or anybody else would talk with them, nobody can hand them the missing experience - not even a Patriarch. Moreover, some of them, after having received their teaching license, hardly want to listen to Go-Roshi Sama any more. Did my Master not tell me for example that F. Willigis did not send him the requested 'teishō'? If he does not listen to his Master, how will he listen to me or anybody else?

If an illness is spreading in a body, does one try to cure the symptoms or does one try to find and cure the root? The symptoms are halfbred Western Zen-teachers, the root is with Go-Roshi Sama. So for the last decade I have preferred to be concerned with the root. For more than ten years, precisely in order to 'save people', I have been and am addressing my Master, warning him in this or that way of lowering the standard for Westerners more and more and of hastily producing Western Zen-teachers.

Is it 'saving people' to equip them with teachers whom Go-Roshi Sama himself does not even trust to discriminate a 'kenshō'? In my eyes, it is rather ruining them. Exactly this is what I see happening.

Go-Roshi Sama is aware now that something is deeply wrong with European Zen. Since more than a decade I saw this situation coming up, but whenever I said or wrote something, he either ignored it or got angry. Now my Master wishes me to 'repair' a situation which he himself has induced. Though I urgently wish that I could be of some help, I clearly see that there is no 'repair'. Not only can I not 'repair' it, but even the most 'erai' person can't. It is much too late.

Moreover, most of the European 'shidōsha', being subjects of another institution, are going their <sup>own</sup> way, and for many years have been known to the public as "Zen-Meister" and/or "Roshi". This is the way they have been and still are being announced on radio and TV (F. Lassalle for about 17 years), this is the way they are mentioned in pamphlets and books (in recent years, F. Lassalle as 'sekai jū-no yumei-na Zen-Master'. - Please, see enclosure for just one example), this is the way they are announced for their public talks. How is Go-Roshi Sama going to reverse that when now he says "They should be known as Zen-teachers, but not as Zen-masters"? Shall I contact all the broadcasting stations of radio and TV, all the publishers, all the monasteries and public halls and tell them "What you have said and written is an error; they are not Zen-masters, but Zen-teachers." ? Or is Go-Roshi Sama going to write to all those institutions? One just as well can try to catch the wind as to try to reverse that. Things have totally gone out of the hands of Go-Roshi Sama.

It is a most unfortunate and deeply distressing fact that, due to the methods of my own Master, Zen has entered Europe at such a low level and thus has missed its chance at this decisive turning point. Now we can rather look to modern physics for a transformation of consciousness than to this European version of Zen.

If Go-Roshi Sama is dreaming of a 'world-religion', as far as I can see, his present methods are rather leading away from that goal than towards it, not leading to unity, Oneness, but to a mixture of Zen, distorted and deprived of its essence, with the dogmas and doctrines of a powerful and dualistic Western institution. This may even end up with a clash. 15 - 20 years ago, my Master warned against "binding the branches together", but that is exactly what he is doing now.

On February 11th, when I said "The other 'shidōsha' don't like me especially and won't listen to me", Go-Roshi Sama said "If you'll like them they'll like you." In contrast to this attitude, the Fifth Patriarch did not tell Enō "If you'll like the other monks, they'll like you", but - seeing clearly through the heart-mind of his monks - sent Enō into hiding and thus preserved Enō and with it his own Dharma. Go-Roshi Sama's Dharma is dwindling away in Europe; and if I would follow my Master's instruction to try to influence the others against their will, it would end up with destroying the last trickle of his Dharma there.

Not only due to my deep gratitude, but precisely also due to my pitying those, who, because of my Master's methods of training Western teachers during the last decade, are and will be deprived of their genuine development/in Zen, have I not separated from my Master, but by letters, words and papers have offered warnings. However, still he wants me to cure the symptoms, which is impossible.

If Go-Roshi Sama would despise us Westerners, he hardly could do greater harm than by - lovingly - equipping the West with a kind of Zen that he would never accept for the Sanun Zendo, and which turns out to be deprived of its essence. The day will come - as indicated also by Jan. 14th - that my Master will realize the extremely sad fact that he - for all his wish to 'save people' and all his loving efforts - has severely damaged Zen for Europe.

If it were the proof of the urge to 'save people' to rush them through the training and hastily to send them off as teachers, why did the ancients not do so? Why did e.g. Hyakujō not run after Isan to inquire why Isan, after having been authorized, just sat there all by himself for 7-8 years, not advertizing, nor building a monastery? Moreover, why did the authorized disciples themselves not rush to teach others? Why did Eka, Nanyō Echū, Nansen Fugan, Jōshū Jūshin, Bokushū, Isan, Bassui, Musō Kokushi, Daitō Kokushi, Bankei and many others not rush through their training eager to teach? Why do present day Japanese disciples of long standing not do so? Were and are they all so lacking in compassion and so unwilling to 'save people'? Just the contrary, as far as I can see. Due to their deep experience and equally deep feeling of responsibility, they took their time to mature their experience and finally could really 'save people'. Otherwise we would not hear of them with praise today.

Go-Roshi Sama on Feb. 11th asked me again to consider the European situation and what can be done about it. But I can only repeat: the method of hastily producing Western Zen-teachers should be stopped. I truly implore my Master, that, please, out of compassion he may stop sending more and more halfbred teachers to the West.

What is written here again, is precisely dictated by my urgent wish to 'save people'. Even if it would mean my death sentence, I could not say and write otherwise. When ultimate matters are at stake for many, the naked truth must be spoken, disregarding conventional considerations.

February 19, 1988

Gasshō,





無一物中無尽蔵 mu-ichi-motsu-chū-mu-jin-zō

昭和六十二年五月  
Mai 1987

八十一 81 Jahre

鎌倉三雲禪堂

耕雲軒 Kōun-ken

Kamakura San-Un-Zendo

山田禪心

Yamada Zenshin

Kein einziges Ding  
ist das grenzenlose Schatzhaus.

(Shikishi, 24 x 27 cm, von Yamada Kōun Roshi)

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**SKETCH ON ISRAEL**  
**Brigitte D'Ortschy**



## SKETCH ON ISRAEL

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Without any doubt it would seem rather presumptuous if I would try to give a report on a country, where I have been only twelve days and of which I have seen very little, if however I have experienced there quite a lot. But this here does not intend to be a report, by which in addition only many things would be repeated, which have been said and written many times about Israel. Only a few glimpses shall be given on things, which I experienced there and which even after months of thinking still seem important to me. And no sentence ever has the meaning: so it is! but only: so it seems to be to me.

Writing these notes is something similar to putting together parts of an unknown picture, reconstructing it by the few mosaic-stones found. Some of these stones would allow conclusions into greater connections, in a way perhaps, as Adolf Loos once said, that one may read the culture of a country or of a time by just a single button.

The first of these significant "buttons" was the watertap, which I found in the bathroom of my hotel in Jerusalem at my nighttime arrival: it did not close automatically as the watertaps of other countries with watershortage. This trifle told me more about the character of the inhabitants than a long article. This generous watertap was all the more consoling to me, as I had gotten rather doubtful about the success of my work here, when at my arrival in Lod, airport of Tel Aviv, I found myself facing barracks and uniformed somewhat grumbling officials. But an assistant of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who kindly had come to welcome me inspite of my midnight arrival, helped me out there.

The watertap did not lie to me: the people I met were as generous as it had promised. And with these people I by far do not mean only these officials and artists, whom I had to contact because of the planned exhibition on crafts and design, which should be shown as the first Israel exhibition in Germany at all, but as well bus- and taxidrivens, journalists, engineers, bankers,

lawyers, shopkeepers or unknown people in the street, people of the most different origin or age. Throughout I felt this kind of generosity and this in spite of my telling everybody with the second sentence: I am German, which in this country of Jews sounded in my ears as if I had said: I have the pestilence. But nobody shrank back from me.

In the contrary I met an astonishing and undeserved hospitality. This got evident already in the Hotel "King David". I am not very fond of big international hotels, wherever they may be; the frequent mixture of snobism and servility is very disagreeable. So I was all the more glad to find out here that everybody from the reception chief to the waiter, porter or servant girl was of an open humanity and friendliness, on which I had to rely all the more because of my work and all what was connected with it. These were human beings - no servile slaves only hunting for tips. But this hospitality was allotted to me also in many other ways; so by a young, rather busy artist, who gave me his time to lead me around or at the occasion of invitations to private houses as well as restaurants. So e.g. it never was possible for me to pay at least my own meal, when eating with Israelis in a restaurant, which would have been selfunderstood for a visitor in the USA. All meals, which I got, whether in oriental or other restaurants were very tasty. Especially I admired the many different kinds of bread, all of which were delicately prepared and baked, starting with the "Palafel", the light, flat round bread, with which one takes up the "Trina", a differently spiced paste served as a first dish, to all kinds of a darker bread. The kind of bread, which a country produces, seems to tell much about its culture. In my eyes it is a cultural degeneration, when I find anywhere a bread of the character and taste of cottonwool, as e.g. in the USA, where it gets first deprived of all its natural qualities, to be later on inoculated with vitamins. Hygienics may develop to a superstition. Such small things are symptoms for a merely materialistic-technical attitude, as it properly belongs already to the Past. So the USA in some respects seem spiritually to be the Past of Europe ( a fact, which I can prove by many items) in contrast

to which I regard Israel as thoroughly future, even compared with Europe.

But I should like to insert here, that I have been guest of the USA under especially favourable circumstances both times, that I have experienced there many interesting things and that I have very good friends abroad. But these pleasant peculiarities don't change the general aspect of a country.

When I had some difficulties with the foreign currency at my first day in Israel when paying the chauffeur, the taxidriver immediately helped with the remark: "You are a guest of this country; it is selfunderstood that everybody helps you." Certainly I had told him that I am German. But indeed, everybody was helpful.

Thus when walking at a holiday on the Mount Zion, I met a Jew, who showed me several things and whom I asked because of his fluent German: "Where have you been during the war?" The answer: "In Auschwitz" - and this horrible word was said in a tone as one might have said: "In Sidney, in New York " or something similar. This same man carefully lead me across the rubble, so that I might not hurt me! He also showed me several interesting details from the Israelian-Arabic fights. And from the tower he pointed out the boundary between Israel and Jordania. Well, this frontier everybody easily may discover without being shown: Israel is green and planted, the other side only sun, sands, and stones. Between both there is no soft transition; like cut off the plantations end. Not regarding even the deeper old rights of the Jews on this country this alone seems to me a justification of this land annection by the Jews. The soil, the earth anywhere in the world is something sacred - not for nothing we find everywhere earth-goddesses - and for this soil one has to care. Although one could not see very well, being hindered by the great heat, which was like a flimmering veil on everything, one could identify the Dead Sea not very far away. I felt like under a spell: there I was in this ancient Jerusalem, which so far I knew by the Bible and like a fairytale - and there now was this town in our days and I could see it and

touch it's stones with my hands - just as in other usual common towns.

Rather impressive was the Tomb of King David, whether now King David may be buried here really or not. Certainly I also visited the Dormitian Church, lead around by an old Benedictine monk from Silesia, which however in her present state is so much 19th century that I felt very little. From this monk I learned that they practise the Gregorian Songs - probably one of the most impressive church songs there are in the West. I regretted not to be able to attend one of their masses early in the morning, being hindered by my work. With a serene smile the old Benedictine friar told me, how impressive and beautiful it were for them when on Christmas they were allowed to go over to Bethlehem, which is on the Jordanian side, every monk wearing a burning torch. But strange enough, on this most venerable ancient place I did not feel any religious emotion, although on other places of Israel I understood the saying of the Talmudian sages, that the air of Jerusalem is said to make wise. May be that it depended on me - may be as well that the atmosphere here was spoiled by too many fights because of the most different interests.

One of the important experiences in connection with the redevelopment of the soil was my trip to Ber Sheva, the capital of the Negev desert. Already during the ride I saw with greatest astonishment these plantations within an area of else mere desert, which evidently grew quite well. And this within the short time of only a few years. I had to think of the problems of soil erosion in the Middle West of the USA and in Southern Italy with both of which I am a little familiar. How very slow the redevelopment goes on there, although most excellent experts are concerned with it, even though if one takes into account, that especially in South Italy the circumstances economical as well as political are rendered much more difficult by the old feudal properties, as we do not find anything similar in Israel. Still what I saw on my way to Ber Sheva seemed to me like a miracle. No funds, no work as big or intensive as they may be, alone could produce such effects. For this end an enthusiasm, a love and dedication is necessary which with nearly religious powers are beyond the usual human

attitude of today. When listening to the stories about the Kibbuzim or the villages with private property but cooperative management, then I often remembered old Damaschke, friend of my grandfather and neighbour to our summerhouse in Werder/Havel during my childhood, how happy he would be, to find in Israel several of his thoughts realized, which he had put down in his wellknown book "Die Bodenreform".

It seemed rather interesting to me that in the Israel of today it is possible that cooperative and private economics peacefully live side by side. What a farspread error, that the Russian Kolchosen were about the same as the Israelian Kibbuzim! I met this error unfortunately even in rather cultivated people of different nationalities. The decisive difference may be seen already in the fact, that in Russia the Kolchosen are legally forced, while in Israel the Kibbuzim are based on utter voluntariness according to the momentary given necessities. Voluntariness and elasticity may be discovered also in the fact, that primarily the Kibbuzim were meant for all the lifetime of their inhabitants, that however it soon came up, that many people spend here only a few years and then return to their usual existence.

A comparison of what people are able to perform in freedom or under compulsion should make all governments rather thoughtful. Often I must think of the sentence of Lao-Dse, that the best government is that, which least "interferes", which however may not be mistaken for a "laissez faire".

In Israel the difficulties of agriculture must have been remarkable also aside of the great heat. The watershortage and the influences of salt near the Mediterranean caused various failures. So, as I was told, for quite a time in several parts core-fruit like apple- and pear-trees did not grow although all conditions seemed to be given. But they missed the hibernation. Now they are said to come to good results by getting an injection for an artificial hibernation. These reports I could not control.

While looking at the newly planted country, I suddenly understood the military forces of Israel. I have no liking at all for uniformed military human beings, of whatever nation they may be. But

suddenly I felt reminded of the early American settlers, who were stubbing and planting with the knife between their teeth and the gun across their shoulder.

In connection with this a little talk with a young girl, while going by bus to Tel Aviv, was significant to me, when she told me about her military education. And suddenly, while she were speaking, something else got clear to me, what was happening here. While we still find rests of the ancient matriarchat on earth, like e.g. in Africa or India, well, in South India even a tribe of Amazons, the Bhawanas, we realize after the long time of a downright patriarchat of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism now in the very center of the Jewish-Christian culture a change to a patri-matriarchat, as we may observe it also elsewhere on earth in our times, but not at all everywhere so evidently. This to me is a further example for the amazing sense of Presence and future trends of this country as I could discover it in Israel from many different aspects. This country is in harmony with the "NOW", with the immanent qualities of this epoch. Another rather important fact seemed to me the way of writing of the Israelis. All times of a rationalistic thinking have written from left to right side. All those times and people of an intuitive, figurative thinking however have written from right to left side. Now, in the very moment, when all our thinking changes from a rationalistic to an intuitive, figurative one (think of modern physics!) an old high race like the Jews starts to write from right to left! O no, this is by no means due to the fact, that the ancient Hebrew was written in this way. Very easily there would have existed the possibility to write Hebrew in latin letters phonetically from left to right, which would have seemed so "practical". But fortunately this practicality did not prevail. Seen from the aspects of the 19th century and all it's horrible consequences indeed very astonishing.

I have met Jews in the USA and other European countries, who were proud on Israel, who praised her, who love her but who are far from living there. Aside of the fact, that this farspread international Jewish background may be very important for Israel it is however interesting to see, who prefers this "background-task"

and who prefers to live in Israel at least for some time. As far as I may judge, those prefer the background who more or less still live in the 19th century (as by the way most of all western people still do today). Those however who are filled with present and future ideas live in Israel. Certainly there are many exceptions on both sides, mostly caused by age, illness or political reasons. Among Orientals as well as among Occidentals I have met several people of the most different races whom however I could imagine very well living in Israel.

And with this we have arrived at another point, which seems momentous to me: any real work of art wears the signature of its creator and of the surroundings. So does Israel, which seemed to me like a piece of art in its whole organization. But as soon as such a work of art is created it also belongs to the generality, first to those, who have an affinity to its importance by their own development, to those, who have the ability of "hearing" in the sense, in which this is meant by the Chinese philosopher Dachuang-Dse: "The hen is able to hatch her eggs, because her heart always is hearing".

It would be very fortunate for all the world, if e.g. there were men in Africa with the ability to "hear" in this way, on what Israel is living and to follow this example. With this the newly independent countries of Africa could become a bridge between East and West, as Israel is, instead of getting an object of struggle between both sides. Africa neither should get an imitator of the West, which only would be its mischief, nor should it become a follower of the East, which as well would be of greatest disadvantage. It should develop a link between both.

Also from the economical point of view this example of Israel might be fruitful for Africa. As far as I could see and hear, the Israelian economics seem to develop rather naturally and organically, in spite of all its earnest difficulties. There are many small workshops, small factories, some of which are developing to bigger ones. A modest but steady growth. The export of this country is slowly increasing in comparison with the import. In the long run this may stabilize the Israelian "hard currency" to a steady currency with foreign countries.

The establishment of atomic reactors in Israel is rather understandable from the economical aspect, because Israel probably is more dependant on a supply with energy by atomic power-stations than any other country. Political however these reactors might be an especially dangerous challenge just in this place of the world.

Another source of energy for Israel is the sun. Several housing projects receive their supply with a warm water system by the sun rays, which are caught in great concave mirrors and the power of which is transferred to a tubing system.

But even these in most other countries rather simple things like the supply of wood for building purposes are here problematical, if one imagines that this wood comes all the long way from Finland to Israel.

But the difficulties of this countries are not at all only to be found in the field of economics.

When I met a lawyer in Israel, if however for a short moment only unfortunately, I suddenly grasped the great complications which exist in this country even in the legal field. Human beings from all parts of the world come here, who are used to the most different legal practises. What is right for one, is wrong for the other. Thus there are some of them who are used to the right of blood revenge. As I heard from the lawyer, the family affairs like marriages, divorces, alimonies, birth and death are taken care of by the communities of Jews, Moslems, Christians, etc. As soon however as it comes to murder e.g., which is carefully discriminated from man slaughter (as in most other countries) the public legal process starts. The highest limit of punishment is fixed equally to everybody. But this high punishment may be brought down to a much smaller one with regard to the origin of the person, taking into account also the special circumstances like temptation. So it seems that here even the handling of the law needs a nearly artistical empathy, needs men, who are not only scientists, but who have in addition the intuition to identify themselves with the different cultures. To me it seems, as if it were desirable, if these elastical forms of the administration of justice would not grow stiff too soon.

Whenever I met Israelis during and after my stay there, they told me: "You are idealizing our country. There are heavy failures, and by far not everything is well." Well, indeed, I am convinced of that. But I told them, that I am not interested to state that here as well as everywhere else there might be thieves or murderers. Human beings nowhere are angels. What alone is interesting to me, are the trends, facts revealing the directions of development, which give above all their signature to the whole. And these directions of development seem to me in Israel very promising, so promising, that I can think only with a smile of all those discussions, which years before I had with geographers, social economists, politicians, planners etc. on the chances of survival for Israel. In these discussions there were several partners, who were well informed about a lot of facts - the pity only was, that they knew as little about the "atmosphere" in Israel as I did. With a merely rationalist intellectual, as it anyway loses more and more of importance today, one neither may understand nor judge Israel.

When I think back to my short visit, full of work, all these problems and questions appear now to me in a very different light. Israel will live and survive, not because one may prove this by rational facts, but because one single fact is dominant: Israel is rather much in harmony with the demands of our present time. There is something in the air of Israel, which I should like to describe as artistical or as religious. When being in Israel, I had the same feeling as I had it in the surroundings of very creative single persons, like in the house of Frank Lloyd Wright/USA or Olivetti/Italy, only here reproduced by a generality, the feeling: everything is always possible. With "religious" thus I mean in no way something ecclesiastical or even dogmatical. I did not visit one single synagogue in Israel, first of all, because this seemed displaced for me as a German. I regret to know very little about the Jewish religion, although I often have read the Talmud, but with small results. Here I mean a religious element of life which I met in Israel as love, dedication and enthusiasm and all of which seemed to have this religious quality. Only people bound to spiritual roots (re-ligio = re-union) may behave as these Israelis did.

But here we as well may just touch the problem of the orthodox Jews. I must stress, that even about the ritual and the habits of this Jewish community I know very little. On this religion I am less informed than on any other. But to me it was rather impressive to see, when visiting the old market of Jerusalem, simple merchants selling their goods - seeds, fruit, hens, vegetables, etc. - on smallest scale there and some of whom were reading holy books, the finger on the line they just were reading and "learning". What an idea to imagine on the Viktualien-market in München the market women reading the Bible or other holy books of Christianity while selling fish, meat, cheese, eggs, vegetables! One certainly may doubt the value of this "learning" on the market. But still I prefer even this possibility to the downright materialistical form as I had observed it in some European and more so some American markets. An exception is the great market at night in Paris, only that here is turned to the artistical what in Jerusalem may be religious. The way in which the French peasants build up their products for the few hours of every night, is thoroughly artistical. And if we are willing to regard "art as the worldly sister of religion" (Goethe) we get a bridge to the Israelian Jews from the French peasants. To me it was astonishing to hear that the orthodox Jews are rather difficult what concerns the present State of Israel. In some respects one may understand their objections concerning the way of originating this State. Without any doubt the Israelis still will have to pay high prices for this way of land annectation. A very ancient right here got mixed with a new wrong as small as it may be in comparison. But the Arabs, who only see the last events without regarding the old Jewish rights by the lamp of legal new rights, will go on appealing to these rights and shall give much trouble, perhaps in an aggravated way compared with the near Past. Not understandable is to me however the attitude of the orthodox Jews which they still hold today towards Israel, after nothing any longer may be changed on the way of founding this State. Even though one partly may understand their objections, it remains a riddle to an outsider that they still behave more like an acute danger than as helpful partners. While we observe these differences between orthodox and liberal Jews it seems all the more amazing, that in this country the three great revelation religions as there are Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all three

with the claim for an exclusive totality, evidently live here rather peacefully side by side, although all three basically have the character of intolerance as history proves. For which reason ever this may happen here - probably because the race is prevailing - it might be hoped for, that in all the world the confessors of all three religions might follow this example.

But there are other observations, which showed the tolerance of this country, which alone gives the basis for the possibility of living together for so many people with sometimes diametrically opposed comprehensions of the world.

When on a camel market day I went to Ber Sheva, I saw an old "medicine man" sitting at the side of the street, being sheltered from the great heat by an Eucalyptus-tree. In front of him he had a cloth, on which there were carefully bundled many different kinds of seeds and herbs. Aside of that he only had a chain of different pearls (looking similar to a rosary), which first of all he put into the hand of his patient, whose fingers he closed above it. Then he carefully felt pearl after pearl until he stopped at one and gave his diagnosis. Then he choose the medicament among the many different ones. Most people who live under the "benefits of western civilization", just only may shrug their shoulders on this practice, and with the word "charlatan" the whole affair is finished for them. May be a charlatan - but we cannot be so sure about it. We have laughed at many old and foreign practices, which laughing later showed utterly unauthorized in medicine as in many other fields. I certainly do not have an explanation for the procedure with the pearls; may be that this chain meant for the old man a medium of concentration to develop a kind of telepathic abilities. But in any case I saw in the face of this old man an earnest and deep concentration, which I have missed on the face of many a western doctor. And if we are inclined to tell the truth, we must admit, that among our so well educated, occidental doctors there are several charlatans. Who is who, this may be decided only individually in any single case. While I was standing there, a western couple approached accompanied by an interpreter. The surprised expression on the face of the male "customer", when he heard the diagnosis, seemed to indicate that the old man was not so wrong with his diagnosis. - Having grown up in the house of my grand -

father, a doctor and homeopathist, now it seems to me, that not this or that way of healing or medicaments is the only right one. Important seems the identity of four items: the quality of the moment of time in connection with the quality of the medicament and the right inner attitude of doctor and patient.

A few hours later I found myself in the beautiful new hospital of New Bar Sheva, which was just being built by Arish Sharon - an urgent necessity for the steadily growing population, which in a few years shall have reached 120 000. Only a short way from the old "medical man" there was this modern hospital! Two worlds in one town. I certainly do not mean, that we should adjust our methods to those of the old man - first of all we would not be able to (always provided that his method was genuine). But I do mean, that we do not have any reason for our presumption as to our civilization. In many respects we find the end of culture simultaneous with the end of analphabetism. One may observe only, what horrible nonsense many people in the West daily read, so that one could wish, they were unable to do so. It seems to have a deep sense that the about 40 000 characters of Chinese language can be read only by very few persons, while the normal Chinese only needs about 2 000.

Very often I remember the sentence of Paracelsus: "Magic is a great secret wisdom - reason a great public folly."

Such a sentence one should keep in mind, when one starts to "develop" other countries of an utterly different culture. We also better don't forget, that the culture of the Western Indians only then was discovered in all its magnificence, when we had destroyed most of it already. The development of other countries never should be a missionering, but a vivid exchange of different cultures and different ways of seeing the world. Then it would get fertile for both sides. Therefore it would be necessary to send only those people to carry out such tasks of great responsibility who aside of their professional medical or technical abilities have enough knowledge and understanding and most of all empathy for other cultures, which they meet. Aside of a professional education it also needs love, dedication and a readiness to absorb as well as to teach on the part of the West, as we may find it with L. Frobenius for Africa, Richard Wilhelm for China and

Heinrich Zimmer or O. von Glasenapp for India e.g. - a new readiness by this Western world, which did not show so very commendable to the East by its destructive elements, which got very evident in both world-wars.

But back to Ber Sheva once more, for the double life of which I had chosen as exponents the "medical man" and the modern hospital. In the old part Beduins, who were sitting for hours in the triangular shade of their camels, veiled female Arabs turning away from the camera according to the law of the Coran, long-haired, shaggy goats, for the price of which was dealt with much dignity and slyness, a few houses and small restaurants.

In the new part a vivid busy life - the new Nias House as a modern hotel, modern shops, restaurants, an exhibition room, etc. The new housing projects quickly grow one after another, numbered by A, B, C, etc. It is a very unusual sight to see here amidst the desert these one-, two-, and more-story houses. If one turns his back to the housing projects, one only sees in front but endless sands under a glowing sun. But in the courts of those houses already a few years old, little gardens are growing already, in which the many children are playing.

It was significant that throughout many hours all this was shown to me by an Israelian engineer, so far unknown to me, whom I had met in the bus. I wonder how many people there were in München, Zürich, Paris, New York, etc., who would be willing to lead a complete foreigner through their city! I must admit that I probably would not be among them.

Some of the buildings in Ber Sheva and other places seemed to European for landscape and climate. One of the best examples, which unfortunately I know only by photo seems the housing project for immigrants in Nazareth. These houses built of uncut stones climb the ascending terrain in terraces and give enough shadow by partly cantilivering roofs. Rather impressive were the cheap and simple, rough houses at the Ramat Rahel, Jerusalem, built as well by uncut stones and seeming more adequate than many of the much more precious buildings. To find here the valid forms probably is a question of time. Still it is admirable that one succeeded with providing the many immigrants with good houses and that in addition we even find several examples of good modern architecture among them. On the very remarkable site of the new University I

admired especially the "Pavillon of Archaeology", built by Carmi. But this is just one of many other good examples. The many talented architects living here, originating from different countries, probably will succeed to form the face of this country in the long run in harmony with the peculiarities of the surroundings and the climate. Areas for green-belts are reserved already.

Here at this crossing-point between East and West I did not find only many different cultures of today living peacefully together - among them there are cave-dwellers until the last generation - but as well a connection of an ancient Past with the life of today. As long as I stayed in Israel, Moses seemed like a contemporary. Biblical events got rather near as to time, e.g. when somebody pointed out to one side, saying that over there was the well at which Abraham met Abimelech or telling other events - it always was, as if this had happened just this morning. To this adds, that today several of the old prophecies are coming true as e.g. for the Yemenites, who are flown back by airplanes to Israel as they were told in ancient times, that they would return to their country "on the wings of the eagle". All this is very fit to feel time not as a progressive line but much more as an entity and in a simultaneousness: everything which ever has been, is or will be, is now and ever present.

Wherever one walks - disregarding the plastered streets in and between the towns, one directly steps on a soil filled with history. Stones of monuments, potsherds or mosaics of ancient cultures everywhere come to the surface. But it is far more than this survival and entering into our time by ancient, objective rests. It is more this impression of simultaneousness as a spiritual fact which seems important. The empirical thinking ends here.

While today we regard the Chinese philosopher Dschuang-Dse, parts of the Zend Avesta of Zoroaster, sentences of S. Augustin, of Omar-i-Khajjam, of Paracelsus and others as near to the Present, getting verified today, others like Locke, Dume, Haeckel, Darwin, etc. seem to belong to a Past not heard of again.

Perhaps by this gets a little clearer, at least from one aspect, what I mean saying that not the quantity but only the quality of time is essential.

With astonishing generosity the Museum of Antiquities, Jerusalem, and the office of Prof. Y. Yadin handed over to me photos of archaeological pieces, some of which even were not yet published scientifically. The same happened to me at the Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem, from where I got photos of the landscape, new plantings and new housing projects.

These photos were necessary, because for us it seemed desirable to show within the frame of the planned exhibition above all the background of the country and its ancient cultures, the surroundings, against which the newly created pieces of arts and crafts stand out. It was striking to see at these new pieces the old symbols used, but changed into our feeling of style today, never warmed up by piety. Also by this the genuine and vital connection with the Past gets clear.

Although I had been impressed by the Israel-section at the Triennale, Milan 1954, and the Israel-pavillon at Brussels 1958 at the World exhibition, I was surprised to find such a quantity of good arts and crafts in Israel, partly by anonym craftsmen of different immigrated tribes, partly by individual artists like Menachem Berman, Gumpel, Julia Keiner, Finy Leitersdorf, Nahum Maron, Chaim Paz, David Colombo, Edith Samuel, Louise, Zahara and Bezalel Schatz, Gedula Schweig, Arie Sharon, Johannan Simon and many others.

All the mansided forms of expression, originating from many different cultures do not only peacefully exist together but are amalgamated to a great deal already to an Israelian style. Already at first sight in the shops of Jerusalem at my first day I saw among quite a lot of junk, as every country produces it as "tourist-industry" rather many very remarkable pieces. And thus it was not so difficult to fulfill my task, which had been asked from me by the "Handwerkskammer für Oberbayern" and its cultural referent Dr. H. Hofmann, to collect the pieces for the planned exhibition, especially because I was helped by very many Israelis.

When one evening I was sitting in my hotel-room I suddenly heard a very vivid music. Because not having eaten something in any case I went down and found out, that this music belonged to the folk-dances announced already earlier. But I do not belong to the enthusiastic followers of folk-dances, at least in Western coun-

tries (the eastern ones I do not know) , and so I had not cared for it. This however seemed to be something different. And this it was. There was nothing of sentimentality. Here was a wild, full, enchanting liveliness. The costumes were well cut and simple. Nearly all performances gave the impression of a spontaneous expression of a vital power and joy. At the end the performances proceeded to a general dance to the Hatikvah, which everybody joined by singing. To me it seemed like a festival of rebirth after all the sufferings of the Jews.

Wherever I met immigrants from the Hitler-Germany I asked for their fates. What impressed me with all the answers was that they all were given without hatred; they were full of a retained sorrow. Nobody voluntarily started to tell about it, everybody only after I had asked. But seen from my side, I do not think it right, to keep deadly silent about these horrible events. So I was all the more grateful, that a young Israeli artist lead me to the monument for the 6 millions of murdered Jews behind the Mount Herzl, Jerusalem. This broadly layed out building of stones already gives a very solemn impression, although still under construction. And it was deeply moving to walk around there.

When then I think of all my many German friends, full of warmth, kindness of heart and sense of justice all this horror completely gets to a diabolical riddle to me.

Very strange it was, after having been May 8 still in Jerusalem to find myself at May 15th in Berlin, another one of the divided cities. This was just at the time, that the top-conference had failed, which for the people of Berlin was especially oppressing. But when sitting with the newspaperers in the Cafe Kranzler, surrounded by people who read the news just as we did, I discovered that here in Berlin there was to be found the same calmness as I had observed it in the divided Jerusalem on the Israeli side. These divisions seem to be a special craziness of our time! Korea is divided, China is divided, India is divided, Jerusalem is divided, and Germany with Berlin is divided. This is all the more astonishing, because today on the other hand one is more inclined than ever to judge all events in a global way and to think global in every respect, as far as one gets aware at all of the spirit of

our time. Perhaps this is connected with the fact, that politics in general are usually an expression of the Past, because by way of elections it is produced by masses. And the masses nearly always belong to yesterday. Only single politicians in different positions may make an individual exception.

The political responsibility of Israel may be extraordinary great, first of all because evidently this place of the earth, where Israel is situated, not only religiously but also politically is especially full of tensions - in former times as well as nowadays.

But when I think back to Israel, it is in no way that these weighty things first enter my remembrance. I rather feel again the enchanting, very delicate smell, which I perceived everywhere and the origin of which I could not find out. It does not come from the pine trees, nor from the strongly smelling honey-suckle, not from the shining red hibiscus blossoms and not from the light violet blossoms of the jocolander trees with their silvery shimmering trunks and branches. It was as if the air itself was smelling like that. When I think back to Israel then I see again the many hens or the tracks of the longhaired goats crossing the way of our car; I see the Beduins looking across the desert with their dark, calm eyes, dressed in their beautiful garments, so much more adjusted to the climate than our dresses. I see the exceptionally individual and original workshops of the artists and I hear again the calls of the Muezzins across Jerusalem about 3 o'clock in the morning. Or I see the brilliant ocean at the bay of Tel Aviv and Yaffa, feel and see the hot pink-yellowish sandstone of the buildings of Jerusalem. There are hundreds of small things which are above all present to my mind, things however which one cannot catch in a few notes, if one is not a poet.

From all this I must make a jump to thinking and nearly force me to become aware of all the problems of this country on the social, economical, artistical or political field. But if one knows about these problems, one only may meet this country with its own beautiful greeting: shalom, peace be with you.

March 10, 61-6

Brigitte D'Ortschy

**The 75 th Birthday of the Ageless  
Roshi  
Brigitte D'Ortschy**



On the occasion of  
The 75th Birthday of the Ageless Roshi  
(Spotlights on the Transmission of Zen)

The transmission of Zen is an impossible task - yet here we are right in it.

Objects can be given and received. Objectified knowledge can be taught and learnt. Qualities can be demonstrated to some degree. But Zen?

IT is no object; IT cannot be given or received. IT is no knowledge of something; in fact, IT has no qualities. IT cannot be taught or demonstrated. And yet, the Roshi makes the impossible possible - now as throughout nearly two and a half millenia. How?

Through the way he is. It is rather the "how" of his multifarious activities for his disciples than the "what" which is effective. Just as it is not the scriptures which open the experience, but the experience which opens the scriptures, so it is in general with spoken words. "Who has ears to hear, let him hear", is said numerous times in the Bible. We can hear only according to our state of consciousness and nothing beyond that. However, the words of the Roshi, charged with his experience, touch us, the way they are uttered, beyond the meaning of the words - as freely written 'shuji' penetrate our heart without the necessity of our 'reading' the characters and understanding their meaning. It is the 'How' which is all-important. It is this charge, that ignites a spark in the heart of the hearer, stimulates a deep urge.

Now, does the Roshi reveal anything other than what is revealed by each being or thing, by the cry of a bird, by laughter or lifting the hand, by the wind or a stone? No! But while ordinarily man cannot see what is revealed to him instant by instant, he is strangely drawn to one who sees. The wind, the stone, a cat and most humans have not realized what is. The Roshi has. So our heart-mind is drawn to this realization as by a magnet. It starts to react as a liquid does in the presence of a catalyst. Happy the man who meets such a 'Catalyst'!

But when practice has ripened and we truly MEET the ROSHI, we 'meet' HIM in our deepest heart. "e do not see HIM 'face to face' - there are not two faces. What then is there? Nothing!

So all the patience of the Roshi and all the trouble to realize - - - nothing? Oh, this NOTHING : WIND, STONE, TIME - and wind-WIND, stone-STONE, time-TIME - each utterly different and unique and yet: the Same. There is TIME-time, there is I-i - no difference. There is MOVEMENT-movement - and all is still. Is that all? No, just a beginning.

Like a clown, on a trapeze, tight-rope dancing in seeming awkwardness, falling down alternately right and left, somehow holding on to the trapeze, we - not seemingly awkward but willy-nilly - fall down now to the Essential-Qualityless - then back up again - and over we go to the other side, falling to the phenomenal qualities. How comic! How sad!

To live 'on the trapeze' in perfect equilibrium, the trapeze even having vanished, just firm ground, our very Home, the Quality-Quali-

tyless, is possible for moments at best. At first the koan are our balancing pole, and by and by we become a bit steadier. To integrate experience into each cell so that we can live it, what a long process! But it can't be hurried up; there is no "go and get it". "Slowly! We have no time to make haste", decades ago our teacher of mathematics said. It certainly applies to Zen-practice.

Oh, the genius of the koan! A closed barrier to everybody-consciousness, each turns into an open entrance to our turned consciousness: barrier-entrance - signifying exactly the state of balance 'on the tight-rope'. By challenging us they create an emergency and --phuuuiit - we pass. No barrier, no entrance. Yes - afterwards.

Europeans, however, now and then manage to spoil this process in a similar way as Herrigel did who in Japanese archery manipulated his thumb instead of staying there without intention or interference until the arrow took off by itself.<sup>1)</sup> Those using this 'thumb-trick' come up with formally correct answers - yet, made-up answers, arrived at by the very means they are used to for so long. So the 'correct' answer is entirely incorrect. It is, as a Hasidic master once said to a Rabbi: "What you have expounded is correct. But your knowledge has no life."<sup>2)</sup> As the means, so the end. Path and goal are one.

The transmission to a culture as different from the Japanese one as the imperial summer residence of Schönbrunn is from Katsura Rikyū, as English 'high tea' from 'o-cha no yu', as Tizian from Sesshu, is beset with pitfalls, the consciousness of the respective people being as different from the Japanese one as their cultural expressions, their languages and ways of writing are. Since it is the ordinary mind with which we start this has to be taken into account. It affects e.g. the way the kyosaku is used.

Today, however, there are many indications that the western consciousness undergoes a deep change. The 'great track' to the East of thousands and thousands of Westerners is one of them. We also hear these days from western physicists and astronomers what sounds like words uttered by ancient Buddhists or Hindus; and the results of western science now point to a universe which resembles rather that of eastern sages millenia ago than the narrow earth-centered one which the West up to quite recently had insisted upon.

Be this as it may, the transmission as such goes through the ROOT-of-no-qualities, a ROOT which knows of no differences. In this ROOT-state everything falls into One. Here the disciple awakens to THAT which his master had awakened to before. Without that, Zen is just welcome as a useful 'method', a 'technique' for other ends. But when there is the slightest interference by any secondary aim, by any concept or plan, Zen evaporates for us - though IT never vanishes. But what then remains as process amounts to patching up this or that old garment, or, as the Rōshi often has said, "to binding the branches of different trees together".

Genuine transmission is impossible without having undergone the Zero-state and that of the Zero-Multitude. Even with this experience it cannot be undertaken lightly. When are we ever truly sufficient? Do we not hear e.g. that even Bassui Zenji in spite of his profound enlightenment hesitated at first to transmit Zen even within his own culture, again and again withdrawing from his would-be disciples. Lack of compassion? No! Just deepest compassion, based on profound

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- 1) "Zen in the Art of Archery", by Eugen Herrigel
  - 2) "Tales of the Hasidim" by Martin Buber

responsibility.

ZEN, beyond all names and terms, cannot be claimed by any religion, of course, also not by Buddhism. There is no such thing as 'Buddhist Zen' or 'Christian Zen' or 'Hindu Zen'. A scream in pain, a cry of joy - is that Buddhist? Is it Christian? Hindu? Islamic? Or what? Ha!

ZEN just IS : our very heart-mind: the graceful bamboo - the miaowing cat - fragrance of the plum blossoms - storm on the ocean - pain - laughter - ah, when is there a moment that IT is not? From where to where could Zen be brought, could Being be brought - BEING beyond "to be or not to be" ?

But since we are not aware of IT, there is practice, in the process of which obstructions, interference, delusions (our favourite toys) slowly, slowly fade away. (Only much later it dawns on us that not even the 'sickness' is outside the 'cure' - but to see that we have to be 'cured' somewhat). Patiently again and again the Dharma is taught - but who can hear it? When, after all, we have come to be aware of the Great-ORDER, going right through, unobstructed by being the numberless things and changes, changeless, empty, infinite, perfect - or rather: of no qualities -, in stillness and in chaos, nothing separate and outside of IT, we may exclaim: "So, that is what is called 'Dharma'!"

Indeed: "When it rains the earth gets wet" - just that - what a revelation! But the blind one considers this a platitude; it can't be helped.

When becoming aware that our insight coincides with what we had been told all along, deepest gratitude and admiration arise. Only now we can begin to truly esteem the treasure of the teaching. But now, to the degree we have grasped IT, IT is our own treasure, as if nobody ever had said so before. Ah, if only everybody could be aware of This, of his Treasure! But in guiding Zen-companions - now seeing it 'from the other end', so to speak - it is evident that there is no 'giving' as there was no 'taking'. All that can be done is to utter this own Truth in the certainty that it tallies with the age-old, ever new Dharma and to see to it that at any given time each according to his state is in the best position to discover IT in his practice.

The telephone rings - I get up. How? Unexplainable by ever so many volumes. A 'miracle' has occurred: I got up! Nothing has changed. No intention - just happenings - facts of no quality - - - and we glance the world where words like 'good' or 'evil', like 'sacred' or 'profane' have no meaning whatever. How fragrant the earth now in Spring!

Glimpses of the Second-Naturalness, i.e. the Primordial-Naturalness to which the Path leads us 'back' - glimpses of THAT which walks the feet, inclines the head, moves the fingers on the typewriter, puts the blankets in order in sleep, awakens us on the minute, an 'inbuilt alarmclock' working to perfection - ah, of THAT which works to perfection each aspect of our life. No interference - no intentions - no Emptiness - no things - yes, no Dharma, no God - - - glimpses of "being rid of God", as Meister Eckehart says<sup>3)</sup>, the state of "the Buddha killed".

Yes, only by being rid of 'Buddha', forgetting Buddha, we find BUDDHA; and we find HIM to the very degree that we find ourSelf. Only by

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3) Meister Eckehart "The Poor in Spirit", Math. 5, 3 (translated from German)

being rid of 'Christ', forgetting Christ, we find CHRIST. Is this not what Jesus-Christ tells us by "... it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you..." (John 16,7) ? As long as there are superimpositions by any attachment, any clinging to Himself, by any ideas about Him - or about anyone or anything else, for that matter -, the Spirit, THAT, cannot be realized, and we are far from the Reality.

"Thou shalt make unto you no idols and erect no graven images...", we read in the Bible (Lev.26,1). But making idols, erecting graven images, images deeply engraved in our consciousness, is what we are constantly doing. All our concepts, ideas, dogmas, imaginations are nothing but 'graven images', and the more closely man is involved in a cultural set-up, the more difficult for him to tear himself loose from those.

'Buddha', 'Christ', 'Buddha-Nature!', 'God' - what we conceive of under these terms in our everybody-consciousness are projections of this consciousness and thus necessarily as limited and conditioned: idols.

Isn't it the physicist's consciousness, the way his attention is directed, which determines whether light appears either as waves or as particles ? So it is with everything: characteristics of our mind.

This fact cannot be stressed enough with western Zen-companions with whom the subject-object split is far more radical than with the Japanese. But finally it has to be experienced - no other way to overcome our delusion.

Buddha, Buddha-Nature - Christ, God, Holy Spirit - they are not objects of our knowledge or non-knowledge. In fact: nothing whatever is! Even when all is said, described, explained about a blackbird, we don't know the blackbird at all, and this is not the living, chirping reality: BLACK BIRD !

How much more evident is this fact with the Supreme NAMELESS ONE, with THAT which by its very nature offers no hold for any thought. But our understanding of any being or thing which we - wrongly - regard as 'object' is only a seeming one as well.

Western scientists slowly become aware of this fact. "It is a question whether scientific man is in touch with 'reality' at all - or can ever hope to be", says L. Barnett <sup>4)</sup>, and more and more scientists tell us now "We don't know" - words indicating a significant change, an insight which provides soil for Zazen.

Without knowing ourselves we don't know anything; is an ancient wisdom. But when about seven hundred years ago Meister Eckehart said: "How may man recognize God without first having recognized himself", Europe was not ready. Is it ready now to follow e.g. his demand "You shall love him (God) as he is a non-God, a non-Spirit, a non-person, a non-shaped: but rather pure, clear Oneness, far from all duality." <sup>5)</sup> Quite a shock to a dualistic culture, to one also where it is heresy to this day to regard God or the Holy Spirit not as persons. But here everything is transcended. "Pure, clear Oneness", the 'loving one' included, himself not separate of That, "far from all duality" - - - How far have we strayed from the awareness of That!

Without passing through the 'dark night' of St. John of the Cross, without utter deprivation and loss, without the Great Death, as said in Zen, there always remains a clinging to names, forms, terms, i.e. to

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4) "Dr. Einstein and the Universe", by Lincoln Barnett, p.16

5) Meister Eckehart "On the Renewal in the Spirit", Eph.4,23 (translated from German)

the surface, the objectified. But when, stripped of any attachment, THAT is experienced, there suddenly arise deep veneration, gratitude and faith - such is the paradox. Now being bare of all clinging, everything freely can be set up again, freely we can utter names, have pictures and statues. Now everything is new and very natural.

Who is anchored in THAT from which all religions spring and to which they lead back, feels an equal respect for each of them, while he ~~ham-~~  
~~sabōse~~ the expression through his native religion. But having been 'soaked' to some degree in the One-Reality of which all names, forms, terms of whatever great religion are equally valid expressions, he discovers THAT under each guise. Now it is evident that the very names, forms and terms which for our everybody-consciousness hide the Reality are revealing it now.

It is death which presents us with LIFE. It is death which makes us transcend the duality of life and death. This gives the scale for dokusan: each of us inevitably goes through suffering and must surely die his own death; so it is urgent to go beyond some puny experience. This implies severity. Our everybody-consciousness has a terrifically strong hold on us, and there is resistance, not rarely caused by the fear of the Unknown. However, death knows of no negotiating - and is impending any time. So we better 'die' now.

Nowadays, that the dualism of the Mediterranean cultures with its ensuing deadly technology has brought mankind to the verge of extinction, more and more Westerners try to turn in upon themselves. They join this or that Path of spiritual training, Zen among them, searching for something, not quite knowing what, but which, no doubt, is unconditioned peace.

Weren't it always the troubled times which were especially apt to bring forth spirituality or even spiritual genius? In this respect we live in the best of all times. A unique chance and happy the man who has found a Path which is endless, an inexhaustible, unsurpassed Treasure, leading him to discover IT by direct experience as his own inexhaustible Treasure, the very Treasure he IS.

But the more we 'see' of IT, the deeper the longing finally to be able to live IT right through in full awareness, and with it to come to ultimate freedom and peace in joy and in suffering. So we 'more' on and on in this fathomless depth . . .

This small sketch, poor as it is, I offer to Go-Roshi Sama who, never sparing himself, has given me whatever he only can give, even aside of hundreds of dokusan and numerous go-Teishō. It is offered in deep gratitude for his guidance throughout many years on a Path to which I owe a 'second life' .

Gasshō

Kamakura, March 18, 1982

( Kōun - an )

# **Zen Practitioner In Kamakura**

**PENNY HOWSON**



MISS BRIGITTE d' ORTSCHY .

. ZEN PRACTITIONER IN KAMAKURA .

It is delightful, heartwarming and annoying to meet someone like Brigitte d' Ortschy . Delightful because Miss d'Ortschy who , though German born, has a marvellous command of English, is a gay, comfortable looking lady in her middle years with merry yet knowing brown eyes. Heartwarming because it is seldom one meets a person as quietly happy with her life as she is and yet it is a bit annoying . Why? Eight years ago Miss d'Ortschy gave up a an architectural career in the West -- she was at one time associated with Frank Lloyd Wright --- left family and friends, a lifetime in a Christian culture to come to Kamakura and become a student and practitioner of Zen Buddhism. Not only has this change worked out well for her on all counts but it was accomplished , it seems , without any strain. This does not appear quite fair to most of us who, for good and bad reasons , keep trodding the same old path! The piper must be paid we are taught. For the opportunity of turning one's life around should'nt one give in exchange some years of unrest and mental anguish? Apparently not. Not in the case of Miss d'Ortschy who says the change in her existence came about flowingly, as if preordained. If there was an irritant, the proverbial grain of sand to start her on her way around the globe and into another world , it was microscopic in<sup>d</sup>eed. The past is a worn out and useless cloak for Miss d'Ortschy and she speaks little ~~and~~ about it and when pressed on the subject she can only volunteer one contributing factor to her decision : a small book read years ago. "When I read 'ZEN IN THE ART OF ARCHERY' by Eugen Herrigel it intrigued me. Very much," she admits. " I thought at the time there is something very special in this for me "

In any case, in 1963, when she stood on the dock in Yokohama, greeted the friends whose invitation was a contributing factor in her visit to Japan, she had no idea how long she would stay, what she would do. However the small grain of sand was still with her and within months she had been introduced to her Roshin Zen Master and she had begun her training as a Zen Practitioner. " And I didn't know a word of Japanese" says Miss d'Ortschy " and I had read no other books on Zen"

Now Miss 'Ortschy speaks and reads Japanese and is even able to translate some difficult Buddhist texts. She still has yet to read much on Zen written by Westerners." It bores me stiff after three or four pages" says she. She made an exception when she translated into German " THE THREE PILLARS OF ZEN" a book, compiled and edited by a friend, Philip Kapleau.

" If you think Zen is something for you, and it isn't for everybody," advises ~~me~~ Miss d'Ortschy, "don't read too much about it. In a way it's useless and it can be a hindrance if, ~~when~~ you really begin" One gathers Miss d'Ortschy has little patience with the dabblers, the kookie California types who talk "good Zen", martini glass in hand. But even if you are quite seriously interested it is difficult to explain Zen Buddhism. "How are you going to explain the color red to a man blind from birth?" she said. Zen, its practice, is such a process of unlearning for the Westerner ruled ~~and~~, even tyrannised, by his intellect, semantics erect so many thorny fences around the simplest (thus most difficult) words, that in this interview Miss d'Ortschy was happier to tell of her latest experience, the Sesshin, a week long retreat and meditation, a yearly occurrence for her <sup>and</sup> from which she had just emerged.

Quite fit and bright after this rigorous period when each day begins at four, when each moment is scheduled with light work and meditation, when the three daily interviews with the Roshi are the only things that break the silence, Miss d'Ortschy finds nothing in the routine too arduous. "The cold? I dress for it. One can wear anything as long as it's subdued. I wear hakamas for comfort, some woolies. I go barefoot, I like to, but some people wear ski socks... anything goes. Some the Japanese keep their business suits and" she added, "I think they might feel cramped, but it's up to them". One of the many, many things that Zen is not is a hair shirt approach and Medieval ascetism is not the idea at these Sesshins.

The simple vegetarian diet is ~~is~~ also to her liking. "It's ample enough for me. In days of old, no supper was served. The absent evening meal was called Yakuseki, literally :Medecine Stone. The poor monks would tie a flat warm stone to their middle to ease the rumblings of their empty stomachs", she laughed. "Things are easier now. In some Zen temple one is allowed to bathe. This means a lot to me on a summer day."

The sleep, about six hours a night is also long enough for her. "I don't feel tired. I feel fine. Not unduly keyed up yet I am always awake before the morning bell.. However there is one thing Miss d'Ortschy isn't used to .."and I doubt I ever will be" she lamented. "The pains in my leg!. You use cushions sitting in 'zazen' (sitting on the ground meditation) and the half lotus position. but its hard for me. A consolation of sorts is that the young Japanese, untrained to it, also find it very painful after a while." Miss d'Ortschy <sup>thinks</sup> that being a Westerner and a woman has never been a handicap in her life as a Practitioner of Zen. "Westerners often are at these sesshins, I couldn't tell you what they look like

however. You sit day after day close to another person but you concentrate so much he ceases to exist!"

Naturally there is much more to a sesshin than can be told here or that Miss d'Ortschy could talk about that day. Only once when she described the deep voices of the monks and laymen united in reciting the sutras (sacred texts that are chanted somewhat like the Christian litanies) did the blind lift and one received an inkling of a very private world. \* She will speak of that world at the New Otanai Hotel when she is one of the ten weekly speakers in a series of lectures that will run through March 20 ~~21~~ <sup>which</sup> are sponsored by the College Women Association of Japan. Her title will be: "ZEN, WAY OF LIBERATION". She agrees with historian Arnold Toynbee who believes that the influence of Eastern and Western religions upon each other is of great importance for the human race and a movement that will have more lasting effects on the world than the confrontation of communism and capitalism. This interest in Eastern religions is an hopeful trend she thinks and she added that since being a practitioner of Zen she can read the Bible with deeper insight, a natural effect of her new awareness. As she got up to leave she quoted with a smile something that comes up time and again <sup>in</sup> the Scriptures. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." She made her point.



**Transmission, Ancient and  
Contemporary  
Brigitte D'Ortschy**

無一物中  
生春苑



昭和十二年五月

鎌倉三雲禪堂

八十一翁

耕雲軒山田禪



## Transmission, Ancient and Contemporary

(Spotlights on Zen)

This writing comes forth from profound gratitude and deep concern and responsibility. In fact, it is this gratitude which induces me to reveal a concern which has been growing through more than ten years. It is an act of concern for Zen and the Dharma of my Master, and one of responsibility also regarding Westerners who enter this Path of spiritual training. Moreover, it is an act of trust in my Master, to whom I owe so very much.

The subject is so important, in my eyes, that it has to be dealt with somewhat thoroughly. May I be forgiven that it has become lengthy.

23 years ago, Yasutani Hakuun Roshi accepted me into the Zen practice and later I have received also the guidance of Yamada Kōun Roshi. To both Masters, I am deeply indebted and grateful. It is more than I ever could deserve.

During all these years, I have heard about the transmission from India to China, from China to Japan through the generations of Zen masters who are the living "Sutra", i.e. "guiding threads", to whom we owe that the most precious Path of the Buddha is still alive today.

Thanks to the koan, we get some insight also into the ways and means of guidance and transmission, starting with Bodhidharma who, when he had not found the understanding of the Chinese Emperor, Wu of Liang, went to the monastery Shao Lin (Shōrin) and sat there for nine years. There was no external activity to spread Zen, just full trust in the strength of the Inner Way. Even when Eka came to him for guidance, Bodhidharma was not eager to accept him. Only after having severely tested Eka's endurance and resolution and when being convinced of the deep urge that had driven Eka to him, Bodhidharma accepted him. Finally, after six years of training under Bodhidharma, Eka was authorized as the Second Patriarch in China. After Bodhidharma's death, Eka, as we hear, stayed on for a while and then went to live, withdrawn from the Zen scene, among simple folk for some time, before he finally settled down and accepted disciples, who came in large numbers.

China was indeed fortunate to receive the transmission at such a high level. Quite a number of great masters appeared in the succession, the greatest probably being the Sixth Patriarch, Enō.

Enō was not given robe and bowl because he wished to receive them to be able to guide others. The Fifth Patriarch, however, recognizing Enō's outstanding spiritual depth, appointed him his successor - and that against any practical considerations. Would it not have been so much easier and more practical to appoint e.g. Myō, who seems to have been so eager for it? The Fifth Patriarch even had to admonish Enō to stay in hiding for some time, which turned out to be fifteen years. The Fifth Patriarch knew of no haste and was not

motivated by any utilitarian concern, it seems. There was just the trust in the Inner Way. As we may see, it was fully rewarded.

Nangaku Ejō trained under the superb guidance of the Sixth Patriarch for fifteen years, and it is said that it took him eight years to come to deep realization (see Bankei).

We hear about Nanyō Echū, disciple of the Sixth Patriarch for many years who, after having been appointed Dharma successor, lived for forty years in solitude until he finally at an advanced age, following the call of the Emperor, agreed to guide people. He is known also as Chū Kokushi.

We hear about Nansen Fugan who, after having received "inka shōmei", stayed in solitude for quite some time before he started to guide people, among them the outstanding Joshu.

As we hear, Jōshū Jūshin, after his first breakthrough at the age of eighteen trained himself for forty years under Nansen Zenji and then twenty more years by "mondo" with many masters all over China. After sixty years of training he settled down in Jōshū, ready to guide disciples. His koan "Mu" has become world-famous and since then has helped thousands of people to a breakthrough. Veneration and gratitude to this outstanding master!

We hear about Mumon Ekai, author of the "Mumon Kan", that it took him six years of arduous practice with just this koan "Mu" to come to realization.

We hear about Isan Reiyū that he had experienced deep realization under the great master Hyakujō Ekai with whom he stayed for about twenty years. When authorized and sent to found a new monastery, he just went to that mountain and sat there in a small hut all by himself for seven or eight years. "Of course, he made no effort to advertise", we read in our Master's Teishō. There was no haste, just trust in the Inner Way. - Later, when a monastery had grown around Isan Zenji, among many others the learned Kyōgen came to him for guidance. When Kyōgen could not respond to Isan's demand, "Show me your face before the birth of your father and mother" and also had searched the Sutras and commentaries in vain for an answer, he came back to Isan, saying "I don't know the answer. Please, tell me, what it is." Isan, "It would not be difficult for me to tell you. But if I did, you would doubtless reproach me afterwards." No hints, no explanations. Kyōgen left, dejected, and started to live in a small hermitage. When later he suddenly experienced deep enlightenment, he profoundly thanked Isan, bowing in Isan's direction, "...If you had explained to me those things at that time, I would never have had this wonderful joy!" Yes, Isan had not deprived him of his development. Later, Kyōgen became Isan's Dharma successor.

These are just a few spotlights on guidance and transmission in Chinese Zen, and they may suffice here.

- - -

As we hear, through Esai Zenji and Dōgen Zenji Zen was transmitted to Japan.

Esai Myōan, since his boyhood living at a monastery, went to China after having become well-versed in the Tendai tradition. According to my Master, it took him about 8 - 9 years in China until he received "inka shōmei".

Dōgen Eihei as well entered a monastery as a boy. With fifteen his real search is said to have begun. Under Esai, he experienced a first breakthrough. Esai having died shortly afterwards, Dōgen was trained for eight years by Esai's Dharma successor Myōzen, and finally received Myōzen's "inka shōmei". Far from being content with his experience so far, Dōgen went to China where he spent four or five years as a whole. After having experienced deep satori under Master Nyōjō, he stayed on for two years before returning to Japan.

Japan was very fortunate indeed to receive the transmission on a very high level by these two masters. Consequently the Zen tradition began to spread and flourish there.

About a hundred years later, we find e.g. the remarkable Master Bassui Tokushō who, though having received "inka shōmei" from his Master Koho, proceeded with travelling around. For quite a while he withdrew from all would-be disciples, feeling not ready yet to guide anybody in spite of his deep satori - or, maybe, because of it.

Among many renowned masters, there is e.g. Bankei Eitaku. After having received "inka shōmei" from Master Dosha Chogen, he lived a number of years wandering around, withdrawn from the public, until he finally started to act as Zen-master. Then he guided hundreds of people, monks and laymen, men and women for their sake.

One of the well-known masters of Japanese Zen is doubtlessly Hakuin Ekaku, who in spite of several breakthroughs seems to have never received an official confirmation by his Master Dōkyō Etan. Yet he is considered to be his Dharma successor. Hakuin Zenji, regarded as the renewer of Zen in the Japan of the 17th, 18th century, is said to have left certain instructions for his line. In those, as we hear, it was also demanded, that a monk, after having received "inka shōmei", should live some years in solitude to deepen his experience before starting to guide disciples.

That seems to have been the tradition. Myōshō Shūhō, known also as Daitō Kokushi, after having received "inka shōmei", is said to have wiped out his traces on instruction of his master and have lived for years among beggars and simple folk in utmost poverty, before he settled down to guide people.

And so it has been with many others in China and Japan as with Bokushū, the master of Ummon in China, or with Ikkyū Sōjun in Japan for instance.

In modern times we can see that e.g. in the line of Harada Sōgaku Daiun Roshi via Yasutani Hakuun Roshi to Yamada Kōun Roshi the transmission was handled with great care, maintaining the Dharma through deeply enlightened masters generation by generation. As far as I am informed, our Master started to guide others only about

seven or eight years after his "daigo tettei", then often acting in Yasutani Roshi's place.

The same care we find in the line of Yamamoto Gempō Roshi via Nakagawa Sōen Roshi to Suzuki Sōchū Roshi.

These days, we see that our Master is deeply and most carefully considering the succession at the Sanun Zendo, and almost none of his and Yasutani Roshi's disciples of long standing - some for more than thirty years and with genuine insight - seems to be regarded as sufficiently up to the standard. Is it not said, "the succeeding disciple should not only equal his master but even surpass him; else the line will decline"?

- - -

For the first time now in its long and renowned history, Zen has come into contact with the countries of the West, i.e. for the first time it encounters people of those cultures which are the most dualistic ones on earth. What will come of it?

23 years ago, Westerners in Japanese Zen were few and far between. Thanks to the guidance of both my Masters, I had the opportunity to undergo a regular training of about nine years - and then further in another way; and I cannot be grateful enough for that.

About 21 years ago, young Americans arrived, flung themselves into zazen almost in a fury, then left after two, three years and were never seen again.

By the end of the sixties, Europeans started to come and also Americans of a different kind than those young ones before. In the seventies more and more Westerners arrived, and also the clergy began to discover the usefulness of zazen.

While all these people have come for zazen, their purposes varied - and vary - widely. There were - and are - some who follow a deep urge, a blind drive to discover THAT what they really ARE. Some of them have learned some Japanese, a few to an outstanding degree. This gives them the possibility to enter to some degree the Japanese culture, the consciousness of the people of this country, i.e. the soil from which zazen has grown.

During the eighties, more and more Europeans have arrived, several ones as a kind of visitors. They never have let go of their solid hold on Western ground, never have given up any security. Solidly anchored in the West, they - so to speak - occasionally stretch an arm across to Japan.

When we hear from our Master - and other spiritual masters - that poverty of some degree is helpful for the practice, to me it seems that the basic and important factor of poverty is insecurity; and insecurity is beneficial: it helps us to abandon ourselves. But most of the visitors are not interested in abandoning themselves. They also make no effort to enter the Japanese culture, being convinced that their own culture is the best. However, here they have the possibility to "get something", a method, which can well be used for

a purpose of their own. And this purpose, as far as I can see, has in many cases hardly anything to do with the Dharma of my Master.

The koan often give laconic remarks such as "when Tōzan came to Ummon...". Looking it up on the map, we find that it is a journey of about 2000 miles - and that mostly on foot and through the wilderness of ancient China. That, however, did not make any difference to Ummon - or to other masters with disciples having come from afar. Ummon e.g. deals very roughly with Tōzan. But thanks to Ummon's rough compassion, the end of the story is "Tōzan experienced great realization." (M-K 15)

In Shōyō-roku 87 we read: "...Sōzan said, 'I have made an arduous journey of 4000 ri and even sold my clothes. Why, Master, do you treat me like that?' Isan called his attendant and said 'Get some money and give it to this monk.'" Is Isan cruel? Just the contrary! It would not have been compassion to pity the monk and to try to explain things to him.

We hear about Hindu- and Sufi-masters or of those of Tibetan Buddhism who test their would-be disciples as severely as Bodhidharma did with Eka. And is not the custom that an applicant to a Zen monastery has to lie prostrate for days in the "genkan" a remnant of this?

These days, Westerners, having come by airplane to Japan, the return ticket often paid by their institution, are very differently dealt with and immediately accepted. Sometimes during their short stay they are rewarded by a quick "kenshō".

On January 11th, our Master said in his Teishō:  
"By zazen, the ego slowly is diminished and finally vanishes. But there are also people who seem to build up their ego on it." (Quoted from memory.) In fact, that belongs to what is called "spiritual materialism" (as mentioned in my letter June 1986).

At the same Teishō our Master said:

"Maybe, I am too mild in admitting kenshō... But I am old..."

There is probably nobody who doubts the great kindness and warm-heartedness of our Master and his wish to give, to give. But the "mildness" mentioned has its dangerous side.

How would it be, if the renowned head of the medical department of a German university would say, "As to the Japanese and Korean students of medicine who come from afar - some each year for a few months - let us quickly have them pass their first examination, then rush them through the further training, give them the Dr. med. (M.D.) as quickly as possible and send them back to their countries to treat the patients there. If they treat patients in the Far East under the headline of 'Classic German Medicine' while in training here, all the better." Would there not be severe damage? Is that mildness not ultimately ruinous? Well, this concerns the body. But is the human heart-mind less important than its physical aspect?

The same day, our Master also read to us from Yasutani Roshi's book on the "Genjō Koan", p. 91:

"..... This is because the person's spirit of seeking the way is not sincere. It might be a desire to make a big show of having practiced Zen or a haughty heart-mind of wanting to become a Zen-guide in a hurry. Both are vicious thoughts connected with the desire to become well-known and they allow a person to be content with a false experience."

With Westerners, there are still other unessential desires in this respect, but they come down to the same thing.

In most lines of spiritual training, people whose first and foremost aim is to teach are not even accepted by the master. Why not? There is clearly not the dominating urge for the most Essential, for the "Great Matter", other secondary aims being in the foreground. From the outset, there is rather the tendency towards external activity. With Westerners, as our Master writes in "Kyō Shō" 203 p.5:

"The strong point.... is to relentlessly pursue the external world." All too true! The dominating desire from the outset to teach others belongs to "pursuing the external world", and not to the urge to "grasp the pursuing heart-mind in its living essence". Of course, while in training, no teaching is permitted.

When Prince Siddharta, later to become Buddha Shakyamuni, felt the overwhelming urge to find a way that would liberate mankind, all beings, from suffering, he left all and went deeply into himself, totally interiorized, until his Supreme Enlightenment resolved his profound quest. To help mankind, he first had to forget mankind.

This seems to be the general pattern. All the spiritually great ones and also all genuine seekers, of whatever Path, were in no hurry to teach. Rather, they were totally engaged in solving the fundamental questions within themselves. The more shallow a person, however, the more eager to teach right away, just as our Master has pointed out by quoting Yasutani Roshi's text.

But people "in a hurry to become Zen-guides" are welcome at the Sanun Zendo, and our Master exerts himself especially for them - and that in spite of his advanced age. Our Master, I am sure, did not start his own Zen practice decades ago dominated by the wish to teach.

Now, it seems strangely enough, that the intellectuals of the most dualistic cultures, desiring to teach right away, are the most apt to quickly come to "kenshō", i.e. to realize to some degree the world of Emptiness.

What was wrong with the renowned ancients in China and Japan, that it took them such severe practice for many years until they came to a breakthrough, and not rarely decades until they started to guide others? And that even under such superb masters as Bodhidharma or the Sixth Patriarch and other great masters - and though living in a culture far more congenial to their strivings, far less dualistic than the Western one?

When going to transplant a tree from one area to another, one carefully studies the soil and climate of the area into which the sapling will be planted. In my eyes, this applies also to the transmission of a spiritual Path: how about the old "soil and climate", and how about the new ones?

As far as I can see, Japan so far has been an exceptionally artistic country (which does not mean that there were no great scientists). Europe, the West, has been dominated by science so far (which does not mean that there were no great artists). What is measured and explained - that, one is convinced, one knows. It is ignored that this kind of knowing is based on agreements about certain "isolated closed systems" and it is ignored that there is an entirely different way of knowing by Direct Knowledge, which does not resort to discursive thinking and which transcends the subject object split.

All scientific knowledge so far has been objectifying. Significantly enough, since some decades this shows signs of changing (s. Louis de Broglie, Heisenberg, Schroedinger, etc.). But the people in general have not yet taken this step. (This is a vast and most important subject, and I cannot go into it here any further, but have done so in other papers years ago.)

This scientifically dominated consciousness is quick to jump at hints and explanations and ends up with the "thumbtrick" of Herrigel (s. "Zen in the Art of Archery"), which his "kyūdō" master was quick to discover and, regarding it as cheating, to dismiss Herrigel.

For the honest ones, i.e. for those with a true feeling for value, however, hints and explanations rather block the Way, since they address the agile Western intellect and with it become an additional obstacle.

If there is nothing in a person to warn him, a Westerner can go through most koan intellectually. It sometimes happens that someone comes to "dokusan" with a "correct" answer and yet has to be dismissed since it is clear that the answer is mostly intellectual. To accept such an answer would be depriving the person of his/her true development. Alas, the Western mind is a highly endangered and dangerous one...

Since most of our Master's Western teaching disciples are members of the clergy, some other differences probably should be touched.

Certainly there was no Japanese or Chinese Zen master who professed and was obliged to profess any equivalent to the numerous Church dogmas. Here just one example of these dogmas:

"God's existence is not merely an object of natural rational knowledge, but also an object of supernatural faith. (De fide)"<sup>1)</sup>

("Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma", by Dr. Ludwig Ott, p. 17)

"God's existence" - an object of knowledge and even an "object of supernatural faith". Here it becomes evident that the "supernatural" is regarded as in the realm of the subject object split.

1) De fide: dogma in all form through the Pope or a General Council.

Throughout Ott's classic on dogma, which is part of the education of theologians and priests, there is the division into "natural" and "supernatural". In my eyes, the natural itself is the supernatural, the supernatural itself the natural. Moreover, who can fathom nature? The one who could, could fathom life. Without overcoming this dualistic view about the difference between natural and supernatural, how can one readily chant "form is nothing but Emptiness, Emptiness nothing but form"?

Ecclesiastical literature is full of the "merely natural" versus the "supernatural". Here an example:

Fr. Dumoulin in his book "A History of Zen Buddhism" calls Zen "natural mysticism" in contrast to "supernatural mysticism". He writes, "Christian mysticism is a matter of grace and is essentially supernatural. As a supernatural manifestation, it belongs to a higher order than natural mysticism." (p. 282/283) Frequently, I have heard other priests in the West classify Zen as "merely natural mysticism" and among them even some who themselves practice zazen somewhere.

Fr. Dumoulin's saying is interesting in another respect. More often than not, the Church has persecuted just those who had come to an experience of this "supernatural mysticism".

Several times, when speaking about those persecutions of deeply enlightened Christians in the West, my Master added: "That would be dangerous for me." Probably - our Master being in accord with the words of just those who were persecuted.

But now, he receives kind and flattering letters from this or that top clergyman. Does this not tell him something, I wonder. In my European eyes, it says: 'We are happy to have found a renowned Oriental Master who willingly and quickly attests the enlightenment of almost each priest or nun who comes his way. Since no dangerously deep spirituality is involved with them, zazen serves us as a useful method.'

In my opinion, it almost indicates the death of my Master's Dharma in the West. Truly heartbreaking...

Another dogma may be interesting in this context:

"Membership of the Church is necessary for all men for salvation (De fide)."  
(ibid. Ott, p.312)

In recent years, this dogma was modified, exempting those who never had heard about the Catholic Church. But:

"...Those men cannot be saved who know about the Catholic Church and her by God through Christ established necessity for salvation..."

("Handbuch des katholischen Kirchenrechts" by Listl, Mueller, Schmitz, 1983, p.46 [= "Handbook of Catholic Canon Law"])

And Dogma: "Fallen man cannot redeem himself. (De fide)"  
(ibid. Ott, p. 17)

Alas, it is clear that our Master cannot be saved... But under certain conditions, one evidently may overlook such a shortcoming.

Frequently I have heard my Master say that Westerners in general are less gifted with regard to the main Zen experience. We also read in "Kyō Shō" 203, p.5:

"Here (Sanun Zendo) there are many priests and scholars of repute from abroad. However, to say it d i s t i n c t l y, foreigners - with certain exceptions - do not know the world of Zero..."

So it is; this is as I see it. More than ten years ago, I considered deeply the difference between Oriental and Occidental consciousness as revealed in everyday life - customs, habits, language, physical movements, buildings, etc., etc. - and this was also the subject for my conversation class at the Tōdai. Each of those observations manifests the difference that we find at the roots of the respective cultures. For me there is not the slightest doubt that the subject object split is far greater with us Westerners than with the people of the Far East. However, there are exceptions, and to name them would make a rather long list.

Now I wonder: if, according to the words of our Master, those Western "priests and scholars.....do not know the world of Zero", how can they teach Zen?

In my eyes: without any experience of the "world of Zero", of the "Unborn", of the world of no-qualities, of Emptiness, there is no Zen.

While Westerners in general are less talented regarding this main Zen experience according to my Master's and my own view, being steeped in objectifying knowledge, they are evidently the most gifted ones to arrive at a quick "kenshō" at the Sanun Zendo, to pass through the koan at a rapid pace, and to teach Zen.

With my Zen companions, I go through different experiences. A breakthrough does also not predominantly occur with members of a certain profession or standing. Many years ago, my Master had asked me several times, "Which Westerners, do you think, are the most apt for Zen?" The answer, "People with an artistic mind" - which must not necessarily reflect in their profession. And so it is. (Isn't it also revealing that so many Zen masters of ancient and modern times found an artistic expression of their inner state?)

But among those of my Zen companions who have broken through the imaginary wall, there are also scientists and priests of repute - not rarely after having gone through quite an inner ordeal and "dramatic transformations", (to quote an abbot's saying concerning a practicing monk-priest of his monastery). I have great respect for such people.

Though the Japanese, no doubt, are more talented, we do not see a single Japanese who has accomplished the same feat<sup>1)</sup> of rapid "kenshō", rapid "shitsunai", rapid "teaching Zen". The "kenshō" of

1) In my eyes, Zen is not teachable; there is a very different process of guidance at work.

Westerners at the Sanun Zendo, as far as I can see, outnumber those of the Japanese, and Western teaching disciples are far more numerous than the Japanese ones. Why? Because the standard is different.

What is the effect on the West?

During the last few years, I have heard several Westerners of depth, education and insight (priests and scholars among them) reveal their deep disappointment concerning the present Zen scenery. For instance:

"So far I had great respect for Zen. But most of what I see going on here recently under the name of 'Zen' has changed that. If this is Zen, my respect is gone."

Or:

"Most of the so-called Zen here comes down to the same old stuff we have always had in this or that form. Now again there is another form under other terms - but for the rest... It is like a new game played by the old rules."

Or:

"What a pity that Zen, in general, has not come to the West at a high standard!"

Yes, Zen escapes haste. Some years ago, our Master has said very clearly, "Prematurely ripened fruits never have a good taste." The "Zen chūsha" (injection) is quickly changed by the body of Western systems into something very different. What "arrives" abroad is hardly Zen any more. It is not the "Zen chūsha" which changes the establishment, but the establishment which changes the Zen injection to something hardly recognizable as Zen.

It is evident that the saying that the "succeeding disciple should not only equal his master, but surpass him" is not applied to Westerners. There is nothing of "equal", let alone "surpassing". That means, Zen has entered the West in an already diminished state. Starting out like that, what can we expect of it later? Deplorable Europe! Deplorable West! You have missed your chance regarding Zen at an extremely important turning point in history. You have distorted Zen from the outset, as you have distorted other paths of spiritual training since ancient times. What a pity! What a pity! I pray, that this will not have the consent of our Master. This kind of "Zen" will not have any significant influence on the transformation of consciousness at stake these days.

I wonder, whether our Master thinks so little of us, that the standard for Westerners is so strikingly lowered - whether in Canada, the U.S.A. or Europe - that e.g. also a person "whose eyes are not straight" on his request is given "san motsu", because, as our Master told us all at the Zendo, "he wanted to be able to perform wedding ceremonies etc. fully authorized".

Many Westerners quickly are authorized to "teach Zen" in the West, i.e. they are entrusted with our Master's most precious Dharma - but in most cases they are not really trusted (which seems quite justified). So far it was my impression: when fully trusted, then authorized - when not fully trusted, then not authorized. This understanding of mine seems to have been an error.

On January 25th of this year, at "question-and-answer", our Master said that through zazen, "nayami" (suffering) is lessened and finally vanishes. True, no doubt! But for me in recent years, there has arisen deep sadness about the deterioration of my Master's Dharma in the West. This suffering has helped to drive me deeper and deeper, and so I can be grateful for it.

But this is not the whole picture: to be aware that hundreds and thousands of Westerners are - and will be - deprived of their true development regarding the "most important matter", drives the tears to my eyes.

One may say: Well, if all these people are content with what is offered, isn't it all right? But, maybe, one should not overlook the fact that for centuries Westerners have been educated in a way which has diminished the intuition of many (by far not of all) for true spiritual value. So they cling to labels: "authorized Zen teaching" - that must be good.

One may say: These people are just victims of their own consciousness. But there is also what is called compassion. If I "love my neighbour as myself" (in fact as being myself), one hardly can lean back, saying: so they reap what they have sown... It is rather a very painful sight. What makes it even more painful is the fact that the Western line of my Master to a good deal is responsible for that. What a terrible pity!

From the bottom of my heart I pray that our Master may re-consider our Western situation, so that from now on at least there will be the same standard for the transmission as in the Japanese line. Else my Master's Dharma will be mostly lost in the West, used as a method for other ends. It will be close to a miracle if only a thin thread of it will survive. For the rest: Zen may be a stillbirth in the West.

My Master's ears and eyes are not those of an ordinary man which are open only to praise and closed to everything else. So there is much hope.

The French Benedictine monk-priest, Henri Le Saux, known as Swami Abhishiktananda, who went to India, experienced deep enlightenment and stayed there for decades until his death, writes in his book "The Further Shore":

"Unfortunately those who are searching for spiritual experience are all too often attracted by mere substitutes like the European version of Zen, Yoga..." (p. 98)

Yes, the "European version"...

And further:

"But in fact, its experience (= that of non-duality) as a means of liberation and joy for mankind will only be possible at the present juncture in human history if it is interpreted by seers who are at home in two languages: the language of the Upanishads... and the language of the seekers themselves." (p. 100)

"Seers", that is: deeply realized people.

What Henri Le Saux - Abhishiktananda hints at by "at home in two languages", as far as I can see, comes down to "at home in two cultures", familiar with "soil and climate" of two cultures.

The diary of Henri Le Saux - Abhishiktananda tells us what he had gone through on his Path away from the dualism of the Western establishment to the Indian "Advaita" (non-duality, Oneness). Among my Zen companions, I see similar things happen - slow, deep-going transformations, until finally in an instant a breakthrough may occur.

The "transmission" first happens within oneself, set off by the Zero-experience of some degree into which in an instant everything is sucked - and from which each and all emerge again - no, not from IT, but as IT ! This, of course, includes and concerns as well the two cultures involved in the transmission. Though One, each keeps its particular uniqueness - in fact, this uniqueness is even seen more clearly now. There is no "binding together of the branches", to quote what my Master often had said 16, 15, 14 years ago - no mixing things, no wishy-washy, no "aku-byodo". EmptyOneness-Uniqueness! This then is the Zero-multitude - this then is "form-Emptiness" - the quality-Qualityless. It is time-TIME, it is i-I, it is world-WORLD, - it is japan-JAPAN, it is europe-EUROPE. TIME-I-WORLD-JAPAN-EUROPE - the same; time-i-world-japan-europe - each of particular uniqueness, different. But: TIME-I-WORLD-JAPAN-EUROPE-time-i-world-japan-europe.....

Where this vital direct experience is lacking, there is no transmission, no Zen, but only "nise mono", a Zen corpse.

In my eyes, this vital direct experience is the intrinsic basis of any genuine transmission, which ultimately is not a transmission "from here to there", but a transmission "on the spot". So it was in ancient times, and I wish this spirit would pervade Zen today.

Kamakura, February 15, 1987

消除三垢冥  
廣濟衆厄難



神力演大光  
普照無際土



鎌倉大佛殿

