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The
TRAINING
of the ZEN
BUDDHIST
MONK

by DAISSETZ TEITARO SUZUKI

Illustrated by Zenchu Sato



\$5.00

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ZEN (*Ch'an* in Chinese) is the Japanese word for the Sanskrit for *dhyana*, which is usually translated in English by "meditation." When Buddhism passed through the crucible of Chinese psychology, it became something altogether unique. It is based on the philosophy of Buddhims. But Zen itself is a discipline and not a philosophy; it directly deals with life. Hence, the special designation "Zen Buddhism."

Dr. Suzuki is rightly regarded as the greatest living exponent of Zen Buddhism. By the time he came to write

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ILLUSTRATION ON FRONT OF JACKET

*Śākyamuni descending from the 'Mountain'
of his awakening* BY LIANG K'AI

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Travelling nowadays is done by railways or air-line, and all the charm, all the experience, and all the education one gets from travelling on foot as in ancient days are entirely lost—which is one of the great moral losses we moderns sustain in this mechanical age. When mountain-climbing is made too easy, the spiritual effect the mountain exercises vanishes into the air. The moral benefit the modern monk thus forgoes together with the picturesqueness of his life is to be greatly regretted. We must somehow find ways—the sooner the better—to compensate all such losses inevitably arising from science, machine, and capitalism.

2

In whichever way we may travel, on foot or by train, life itself is a form of *angya*: “Whence?” is the name of our starting station and “Whither?” is that of the arrival. Hence this admonition by Ta-hui¹ given to one of his lay-disciples:

“Whence is birth? Whither is death? He who knows this ‘Whence and Whither’ is said to be the true Buddhist. But who is the one that knows birth and death? Who is the one that suffers birth and death? Who is the one that does not know whence birth is and whither death is? Who is the one that suddenly comes to the realisation of this ‘Whence and Whither’? When this is not thoroughly understood, the eyes rove, the heart palpitates, the viscera writhe, as if a fire-ball were rolling up and down inside the body. And who is the one, again, that undergoes this torture? If you want to know who this one is, dive down into the depths of your being, where no intellection is possible to reach; and when you know it, you know that there is a place where neither birth nor death can touch.”

The object of the Zen monk’s pilgrimage as well as that of our life-*angya*, is to come to the understanding of all these questions set up by Ta-hui; for this is “seeing into

¹ Ta-hui (大慧) was one of the greatest characters in the Sung history of Zen.

one's own nature." Mere visiting one holy sight after another is not in the programme of the Zen travelling, *angya*.

As Life carries its own bundle in the form of the body, so does the monk carry a travelling bundle over his shoulders. How happy we might be—so we imagine quite frequently indeed—if we were freed from this inevitable “bundle” known as the body or the flesh! As this is impossible, all we could do is perhaps to reduce the amount and weight of the bundle to a minimum. The less the bundle the freer will be our movement. For this reason, the monk limits his luggage to the contents of a papier-mâché box about $13 \times 10 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches called *kesa-bunko*. In it we find a priestly robe (*kesa*=*kashāya*), a razor, the home address, some money (which is to be used for burial in case of his unexpected death), a book or two, a set of bowls (which are tied outside to the box), and other little miscellaneous things.

The worst passion we mortals cherish is the desire to possess. Even when we know that our final destination is a hole not more than three feet square, we have the strongest craving for accumulation, which we cannot ourselves make any use of after death. The monk mutely protests against this human passion by limiting his possessions to the last degree.

3

In ancient days when there was yet no railway travelling, the monk had to pass many nights on his way to the monastery where he decided to study Zen. Since he had no money, those nights were to be spent under any shelter he would come across, generally in a Buddhist temple where hospitality was most generously extended, but, if such was not available, in the open field or in a lonely roadside shrine. This was indeed a good practical education for the young monk who has now decided to give final solution to the

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the present book, he had become a master stylist in the English language. This is perhaps the best introduction to Zen that he has written. He is concrete, as Zen itself is concrete. By means of a direct and succinct description of the training that a Zen Buddhist monk undergoes, he has given us the most precise picture possible of Zen in life.

The forty-three illustrations give a unique value to the book. The artist, Zenchu Sato, has depicted here the record of his own experiences in going through all the disciplinary measures pertaining to the life of Zen.

Zen is still a living spiritual force in Japan. The Zendo (Meditation Hall) is by no means an institution exclusively meant for the monks. It is visited by youths of character and intelligence; many devoted followers can be found among businessmen, statesmen and intellectuals. The sale of books on Zen is substantial and grows.

"Zen ought to be studied not only in its theoretical aspects as a unique product of the Oriental mind, but in its practical aspect as it is to be seen in the Zendo life. This is the chief motive for my writing this book."