



A First Zen Reader

COMPILED AND TRANSLATED BY
TREVOR LEGGETT

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■ A FIRST ZEN READER

WHEN ZEN Buddhism crossed from China to Japan in the twelfth century, it entered a phase of development that was not only to inspire a magnificent range of artistic achievement but also to exert a tremendous influence upon Japanese life itself and, eventually, to bring to the attention of the West a religious philosophy both unique and challenging in its power. "Yet," as one of the contributors to *A First Zen Reader* expresses it, "if asked what Zen is, to reply is very difficult." It is the purpose of this anthology to suggest an approach to such a reply.

In the words of Trevor Leggett, the compiler: "The texts here translated will give a general idea of Zen theory and practice. They are not technical Buddhist works but are for the layman. The backbone of the book is two series of lectures by two famous contemporary masters: Takashina Rosen, the present primate of the Soto sect and president of the Japan Buddhist Association, and Amakuki Sessan, a well-known master of the Rinzai sect." The book thus presents the viewpoints of the two main surviving transmissions of Zen Buddhism. It might well have for its epigraph this sentence from Takashina's contribution:

"What I am going to say about Zen is not an adaptation of formal lectures, but intended as a talk to people who wish to have a correct knowledge of Zen and to understand it."

(continued on back flap)

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Included in the volume are the following outstanding selections from the treasury of Zen literature:

THE ORIGINAL FACE, a sermon by Daito Kokushi (14th century)

A TONGUE-TIP TASTE OF ZEN, discourses by Takashina Rosen (20th century)

HAKUIN'S "SONG OF MEDITATION," a commentary by Amakuki Sessan (18th and 20th centuries)

THE TWO POEMS, a sermon by Oka Kyugaku (20th century)

BODHIDHARMA AND THE EMPEROR, from the Rinzaï and Soto koan anthologies (10th to 13th century)

To these, the anthologist has added a valuable NOTE ON THE WAYS, in which he lucidly points out how "the student keeps his Zen practice in touch with his daily life." The exceptional interest of the text is further enhanced by twenty illustrative plates.

TREVOR LEGGETT is an Englishman who has lived in Japan both before and after World War II. He holds the grades of sixth *dan* (a senior teacher's rank) in judo and of second *dan* in Japanese chess. He has published numerous magazine articles on judo, Zen, and other Oriental subjects. Since 1946, he has been in charge of the British Broadcasting Corporation's daily broadcasts in Japanese. He has also studied the spiritual philosophies of India under the late Dr. H. P. Shastri in London as well as in India. At present he makes his home in London.



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