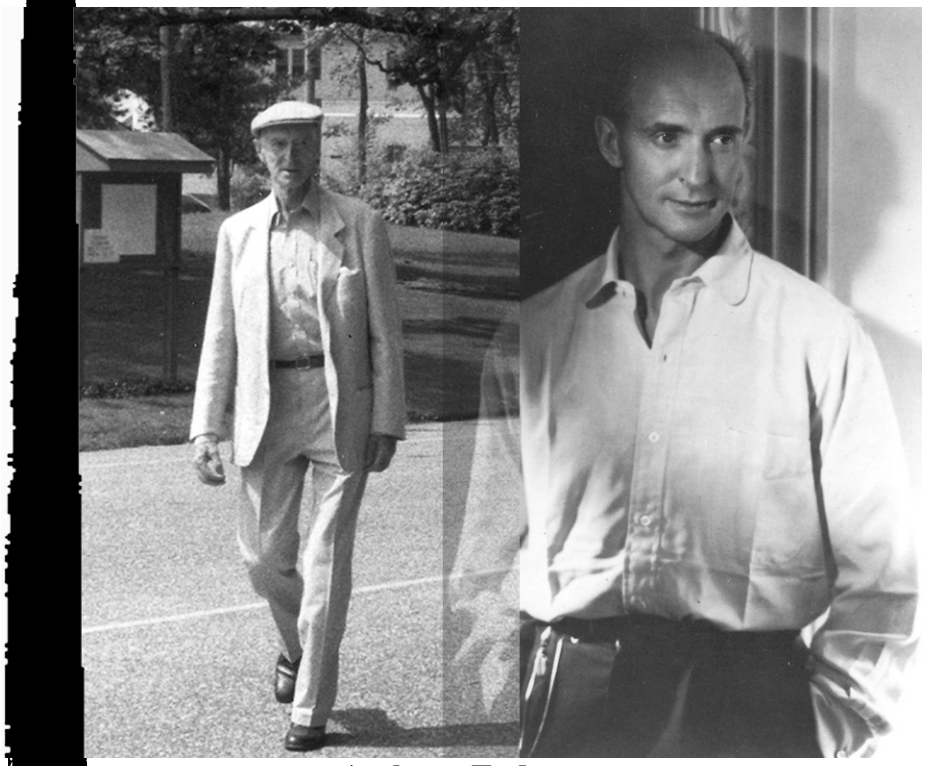
# Zen Notes

## Tudor Centennial



**Anthony Tudor**

# THE SUTRA OF PERFECT AWAKENING

## FORTY-FORTH LECTURE

Saturday, May 27th, 1939

*Thereupon Bodhisattva Maitreya arose from his seat among the multitude and worshipped the Buddha, reverently lifting the Buddha's feet to his brow and going round him three times to the right. Then, kneeling down and crossing his hands upon his breast, he said to the Buddha:*

*"O Lokanatha Mahakaruna (Most Compassionate One)! I entreat you to disclose your mystic knowledge to these Bodhisattvas and to permit the multitude assembled here to understand the profound meaning of transmigrating. Thus they will attain the intellect that discriminates between true views and false, and thus the sentient beings of the future world will attain the fearless eye of Dharma. Thus they will attain definite faith in great Nirvana and will never again hold the view of transmigration that depends upon the aspect of the recurring outside."*

**SOKEI-AN SAYS:**

The chapter of Vajra-garbha Bodhisattva, who asked the question about the nature of transmigration and the reason why the state of ignorance recurs after the Bodhisattva attains enlightenment, has come to an end. This is a new chapter; Maitreya is asking a question of the Buddha.

The name "Maitreya" is very familiar to every Buddhist. It is the name of an Indian tribe, as "Shakya" or "Kashyapa" or "Maudgalyayana" are names of tribes.

The Buddha who was born in the tribe of Shakya is called "Supreme Buddha." He is the Buddha Shakyamuni. And the Buddhist has faith that the future Buddha will be born in the tribe of Maitreya and called Maitreya Buddha.

But this Maitreya is a Bodhisattva. All the Bodhisattvas appearing in this sutra have the names of personified doctrines, expressed in metaphors and dramatized, so that people could under-

stand the appearance of the whole system of Buddhism.

*Thereupon Bodhisattva Maitreya arose from his seat among the multitude and worshipped the Buddha.* There were ten Bodhisattvas, the leaders of ten groups of monks and laymen surrounding the Buddha. One by one, the Bodhisattvas stood and asked a question, which the Buddha answered. This "seat" means his seat upon the ground.

*... reverently lifting the Buddha's feet to his brow,* We still perform this profound salutation. When I bow to this image, I too hold the Buddha's feet and press them to my brow.

*... and going round him three times to the right.* This is also an expression of adoration. In America there is no such expression. The expression of courtship is highly developed but the expression of adoration is very slight. In our country it is the opposite! This is not accident; there is a deep reason for this in the history of our civilization.

*Then, kneeling down and crossing his hands upon his breast, he said to the Buddha:* As I come out from the back room with my hands on my breast. This is another expression of profound salutation: "I enter you, I embrace in you and you enter me and you embrace in me." Or: "I embody in the universe and the universe embodies in me!" There is a religious expression in the Oriental salutation. Western people shake hands, the right hand. I am told that the origin of this is so that they cannot draw the sword!

"*O Lokanatha Mahakaruna!*" This is one of the ten different ways of addressing the Buddha.

"*I entreat you to disclose your mystic knowledge to these Bodhisattvas and to permit the multitude assembled here to understand the profound meaning of transmigrating.*" From this expression "mystic," everyone thinks that there is some mystery in the Buddha's knowledge. But the Buddha never thought so even when he said: "The principle of Buddhism cannot be explained by any word, cannot be demonstrated by any gesture; there is no way of conveying the mystery of Buddhism from one person to another. You yourself must attain it!"

From my view this is not mysterious. If you should ask me, "What is the taste of this water?" I will not try to describe the taste in words. I will say, "Drink it and find out for yourself!" Understanding Buddhism is like tasting water. It transcends all descriptions but it does not transcend experience.

There are not many things in the storehouse of the Buddha's

knowledge; it is like the empty sky. The "Mystery" of the Buddha's knowledge is Great Emptiness. But it is a solid and dynamic emptiness; out of this emptiness all things are produced. It is like a magician's pocket!

Emptiness is an attribute of Buddha, so the Buddha has this attribute. When I say "Buddha" and "the Buddha" I convey different meanings. The Buddha is Shakyamuni Buddha; Buddha is Buddha.

I am aware of the fact that I exist. That awareness is Buddha. Of course we call Buddha by many names; knowledge, consciousness, wisdom, intellect, cognition, etc. But this intrinsic ability of knowing is Buddha. Without this ability we are not different from this! (struck gong)

Fire, earth, air, water, are insentient, but we cannot deny that each has its own consciousness though the consciousness is in an unconscious state. It is from this latent consciousness that awakening consciousness will appear as you awaken to this present consciousness from sleep. So, from the Buddhist view, there is not sentient or insentient beings. The whole universe is a consciousness and this consciousness is Buddha.

The true nature of this awareness is like transparent water of the fathomless ocean; its characteristic is emptiness. Should the Buddha disclose this "mystic" knowledge, all the Bodhisattvas would see the empty ocean of consciousness.

But what are we talking about? Any monk who tries to talk about this attribute of Buddha, will go astray in that ocean! It is better to show it by meditation.

And "transmigration." In the empty ocean of Buddha's Nirvana, there is no transmigration! The state of transmigrating is in our own mind. We are existing every moment through these different ways, physically, mentally, and in time.

This body is born and it will die; and then "it" will take a new body and be born again die, be reborn, etc. This is called physical death. Thus a sentient being transmigrates from one world to another. The world which I am in is my world, I create it through my five senses; it is purely my own subjective world, my own great pie! And you have a world that is purely yours.

Perhaps you will ask a question such as, "Why is this fan, the color and form of it, exactly the same to every one of our eyes?" Who will prove it? We all see what we call "vermilion" but how do I know that your vermilion is like my vermilion? A queer subjec-

cive world! But we are the same subjective being, the same human being. Our consciousness is uniform but we have obtained different bodies. You as Occidentals and I as Oriental share the same consciousness; our worlds are almost the same. There are differences in our manner of observing outer existence, but our inner experience is the same. However-my world is mine, and your world is yours; we die and will be reborn in a different world. This is called "transmigrating."

Of course, everyone dies two or three times in this lifetime! The child dies and becomes an adolescent; the adolescent dies and becomes a young man; the young man dies and becomes an old man. These are timely deaths.

And then there is the death from moment to moment--the agonies of birth and death: I think of a cigarette, the Hudson River, battleships--this mind passes from state to state. This, too, is transmigration.

But the Buddha told the Bodhisattvas that their transmigration is their illusion.

When your body leaves you think you are leaving; when your train moves you think you are moving! But you are always immobile. It is like the growth of a bamboo shoot, appearing, reaching toward heaven and then dying,.

You die and you think your consciousness dies. You are living in your own illusion and this thought is transmigrating!

"*Thus they* (the multitude) *will attain the intellect that discriminates between true views and false,.* " What is the true view and what is the false view? The false view is this view of transmigration. The true view is this view of no transmigration. It is the True View.

And "the intellect that discriminates." When we are young, we go to the temple and hear that there is no transmigration. Then why do we weep when we lose someone we love? It is at such times that we show our "discrimination."

"*... and thus the sentient beings of the future world will attain the fearless eye of Dharma.*" The expression "Fearless Eye of Dharma" is used here for the first time. I shall explain something about this:

On some past Sunday morning, I explained about the Five Eyes:

1. The physical eye.
2. The eye of the intellect. (You know the sun is not going

down into the swamps of New Jersey! You can see the state of true existence.)

3. The eye to see the state of reality.
4. The eye to see the law of nature and of man.
5. The Buddha Eye.

When you attain the last two, the Eye of the Law and the Eye of Buddha, you will attain the Fearless Eye of Dharma. It is the Eye of God.

Immediately you will know where you are, what you are doing, and what you must do. You look at the whole world. You have attained the Fearless Eye of Dharma.

"*Thus they will attain definite faith in Great Nirvana,.* " When I was a child, someone told me, "When you die you awake from this dream within a dream now, and when I awake I will discover I am the crown Prince or the Mikado!" But now I know that when I die, there will be no dream.

"*... and will never again hold the view of transmigration that depends upon the aspect of the recurring outside*." You make this transmigration dependent upon the "recurring outside." So, you must meditate upon your consciousness. (I use the word "consciousness" because there is no word for this "Buddha.")

In the previous chapter, the Buddha explained the nature of transmigration. In this chapter, he explains how to eradicate this view of transmigration.

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# The Overgrown Path: Finding Tudor Through Zen

By Ian Spencer Bell

I am not a great Zen student. But Antony Tudor was. I learned this from Michael Hotz, president of the First Zen Institute of America. He sat me down in his office on the ground floor of the Institute's brownstone on 30th Street and Park Avenue and told me about Tudor's meticulous timekeeping and sitting and walking practices. I had feigned interest in the choreographer since I first heard he was a practicing Zen student and resident from 1963 until his death in 1987. The house members had brought Tudor up on several occasions during the tea service in the library that follows Wednesday night zazen, or formal seated meditation. But during the seven years I studied on and off at the Institute, I barely listened. I had grown up on Balanchine. And I was a neoclassicist at heart.

Hotz sat tall in his chair and kept a steady dialogue going about Tudor as he thumbed through old pictures and newspaper clippings. My favorite item was a glossy, black and white headshot of Hugh Laing, Tudor's life-long lover. There were other things too: pictures from the Kennedy Center Honors, good and bad reviews, and scores of Tudor's letters and writings on Zen.

Tudor had been timekeeper during the early morning and evening sittings, sounding a bell at the beginning and end of two 25-minute periods of silence. In between, Tudor led walking meditation, or Kinhin, around the perimeter of the Zendo for 5 minutes. Tudor could be terribly cruel then. The younger students' legs would often have fallen asleep, having been tucked underneath their robes in lotus position, and they would hobble and limp as if walking on needles to their place in line before the walking practice began. Tudor would walk quickly then, almost running. Eventually he would slow to a snail's pace.

Otherwise, Hotz told me the same anecdotes I had heard from my ballet teachers at North Carolina School of the Arts. They all amounted to the same three themes: Tudor fought passionately and frequently with Hugh Laing (they often could be heard throughout the entire four-story building); Tudor humiliated dancers and students in hopes of helping them find emotional truth in his choreography, and Tudor was unquestionably a genius, though the genius part bothered me. I wasn't sure why he was a genius or why bad behavior was, and is, considered a hallmark of intelligence.

The most interesting detail I learned from Hotz about Tudor

was his devotion to Zen. The Zeckendorfs had offered Tudor a fancy, furnished apartment downtown. But Tudor had refused it, preferring his modest living quarters at the Institute.

Peter Lamp, a longtime resident and former student of the master, caught me in the hall on my way out. Lamp is long and lanky and I was surprised when he swooped down in front of me and twirled balletically. He told me that he and Tudor often greeted each other that way when they met near the corner of 30th street or on the stoop in front of the building. I imagined Tudor smiling, and wickedly. The story he conveyed next was less charming and more in line with the man I'd come to know.

During a weekend sitting, the students gathered at lunchtime around the library table for soup. Lamp's was the only setting with a teaspoon instead of a soupspoon. Lamp asked the person who was serving him to bring a soup spoon which he did. But Tudor intervened, took the soup spoon, returned the small spoon to Lamp and said he was to use it. Lamp, still seated, took the spoon and flung it across the table splitting an empty tea cup in two with the spoon nestled between the fallen halves. Several people broke out in giggles. The students rebelled against Tudor that weekend and went out for pizza. Lamp concluded the story by saying Tudor often attempted to treat his housemates as though they were his "ballerinas," but with little success and finally gave up in the late 70's. Mary Farkas who more or less ran the Institute as Secretary and who they called their dragon mama, had cultivated a nest of young, zen tiger cubs who were not so easily intimidated by fame, fortune, masters or even her. But it took Tudor about 15 years to recognize their fiercly independant natures, Original or otherwise.

I once heard Amanda McKerrow, a former principal dancer and longtime lead Tudor ballerina for American Ballet Theatre, relate a brief anecdote about working with the mastermind. She was having trouble with a role. And Tudor with a loud, commanding voice stopped rehearsal and asked her partner if he thought she was a virgin. Her partner didn't answer. And the room was silent for some time. McKerrow was horrified. And Tudor broke the silence: "The character, I mean. Do you think she was a virgin?"

I felt cheated when I left the Institute. I had no great insight on Tudor's life or choreography as I had hoped. And I felt depressed. All that remains of any choreographer's life are scraps of documentation, not the actual work.

At home, I went straight to YouTube and looked up Tudor's ballets. I started with *Jardin aux Lilas*. (It has since been removed.

Now only *The Leaves Are Fading* exists online.) And I thought about Balanchine's work and my teachers who had quoted him frequently, "Just do the steps, dear." Here the dancers were thinking. And it registered on their faces, not only their bodies. The music served as a score underlying the dramatic intent. It was if the dancers could have sung the Ernest Chausson *Poeme*, not only moved in time with it. And the action was centered in the stage space, not giving the impression of being larger than or moving beyond the wings. It was classical ballet with some difficult, awkward steps and dramatic gestures. And the dancers seemed to enjoy it.

And then, in the last moments of the ballet, I was thrilled. The dancers stopped moving. And in their total stillness something happened: a shift of consciousness on stage and in the audience. There was something Zen about it.

And it made me think of the stillness, the quiet, in the opening of *Serenade* and in the dramatic diagonal in *Symphony in Three Movements*, two of my favorite Balanchine ballets. I felt enlightened. Tudor's composition had been brilliant, if not emotionally honest and insightful. And I felt like I had been sitting, asleep, for many years.

Tudor, like Balanchine, made ballets that spoke to all kinds of people. He made ballet democratic. But where Balanchine focused on time and space and energy—ideas that can be understood by all people regardless of class, race, and education—Tudor often focused on types of people that had not generally been included in ballet libretti—the working class, prostitutes, murderers. He made ballets about the common man.

This fall American Ballet Theatre honored Tudor, one of the company's founding choreographers, in what would have been his 100th year, throughout their New York City Center season with several revivals including *Jardin aux Lilas*. I saw as many performances as I could. I wanted to find that stillness, that single-mindedness that permeates much of Tudor's work—and the work of my other favorite genius.

*Ian Spencer Bell is a member of the Zen Institute as well as a choreographer and teaching artist for American Ballet Theatre.*

# Anthony Tudor Centennial, 1908-2008

By Ian R. Chandler

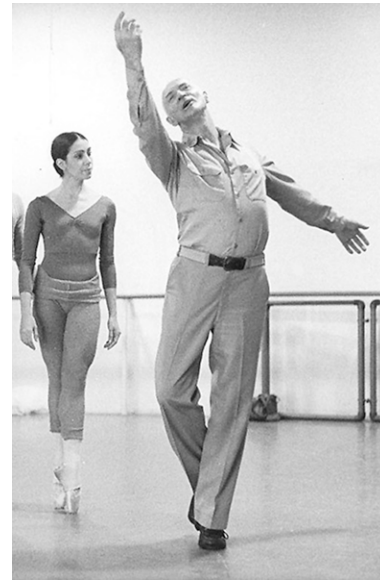
On October 31, 2008, the American Ballet Theater hosted an Anthony Tudor gala at the City Center, giving full or partial performances of several of his ballets, including *Continuo, Jardin Aux Lilas, Romeo and Juliet, The Judgment of Paris*, and *Pillar of Fire*. I attended this celebration with some enthusiasm. Tudor choreographed more than thirty ballets, of which half a dozen were considered to be absolute masterpieces, but prior to the gala celebration, I had never seen any of them.

When I first arrived at the First Zen Institute, I saw a dancer on the cover of the April, 1983 issue of Zen Notes. A few weeks later, I met Tudor and said to him – "I recognize you—you're the dancer who was on the cover of Zen Notes." He replied: "Yes, that's me." Later, in the Spring of 1985, I started conducting monthly weekend Zen meditation retreats at the First Zen Institute—coming to New York once a month from my home in New Haven, where I was enrolled in Medical and Graduate School. I expected to be alone during the 4:30-7:30 A.M. meditation period, but Tudor joined me at that early hour on Sunday morning. Tudor sat with perfect posture—absolutely stable and unmoving. They say that there are ten basic postures in dance: bending, twisting, squatting, leaping, etc., but the tenth is stillness. The stillness of the early morning is the best time of day to meditate, and Tudor joined me at that hour – just the two of us together in the Zendo, during three hours of silence. Mary Farkas said that Tudor was delighted to participate in my weekend meditation retreats because he could see members of the younger generation preparing to carry on the First Zen Institute's tradition.

Is the First Zen Institute a monastery? Well, it's fair to say that the First Zen Institute has some monastery-like qualities: we practice meditation on a daily basis and host meditation retreats. Several in-house residents have written books and articles about Zen Buddhist history and practice, including original translations from classical Chinese and Japanese texts. The building is decorated on the inside with classical Buddhist artwork and statuary, some of it donated by Anthony Tudor. However, Mary Farkas and the other influential members of the First Zen Institute – including Tudor – did not want to transplant a hidebound, ossified oriental monastic system to America. Over the years, we have had extensive interactions with Japanese Roshis—themselves lineage holders in the Daitoku-ji and Myoshin-ji lines of the Rinzai monastic system. However, the First Zen Institute is a little bit too free-wheeling to be a monastery in a traditional sense. Instead of an abbot and a priestly hierarchy, the First Zen Institute has a board of di-

rectors, on which Tudor was serving as President at the time of his death.

Tudor studied Zen Buddhism with Isshu Miura Roshi when he was in residence at the First Zen Institute. He did not study extensively with Joshu Sasaki Roshi, but donated his living space so that Sasaki Roshi could stay at the First Zen Institute and conduct Spring and Fall Sesshins while Tudor was in residence in Laguna, California. The First Zen Institute moved into its current location at 113 East 30th Street in 1961. Tudor moved in at that time, when the place was still under construction, and Tudor was one of several people who made important contributions in paying off the original mortgage.



In contrast to his public persona, Tudor was generally quite shy, at least among residents of the First Zen Institute. He was also a gossip, particularly with Mary Farkas, who adored him. He could be a stickler for form – for example, he would leave a matchstick somewhere in the Zendo and later check to see if the person responsible for cleaning the Zendo had removed the matchstick. He complained if residents failed to do their chores. However, none of our members were particularly bothered by this kind of thing. We have heard reports of professional dancers who worked with him being left in tears, but that was not a problem with anyone at the First Zen Institute. At the First Zen Institute, Tudor was really just one of the guys, and I think that he liked it that way.

Tudor could also be quite charming if you just happened to meet him on the street or subway. One time Peter Haskel bumped into him at the corner of Park Ave. and 28th street, and Tudor, upon seeing Haskel, without saying a word, leaped into the air and clicked his heels together!

Anthony Tudor was born on April 4, 1908, and since his birthday was close to April 8, the Buddha's birthday, the First Zen Institute residents sometimes tricked him into celebrating the Buddha's birthday, only to turn it into a Tudor birthday celebration as well, which he did not want. Tudor supplied our statue of the baby Buddha – which many people agree looks a lot like Tudor himself.

They say that the people you meditate with are people who you get to know well over the years. It came as a surprise to me to learn that this guy who I had been meditating with was a famous choreographer, and a teacher at Juilliard. He also had famous friends—Baryshnikov, for example, had been a guest of his at the First Zen Institute. One frequent visitor was Tudor's lifelong friend, companion and fellow dancer Hugh Laing. However, apart from our early morning meditation, I never really got to know him personally. Unfortunately Tudor died just a few years after I had met him, of a heart attack, on April 19, 1987. His funeral was conducted at the First Zen Institute with Baryshnikov in attendance, and his ashes were buried at the First Zen Institute's gravesite at Woodlawn cemetery. A year later his friend Hugh Laing also died and his ashes were buried alongside Tudor's at Woodlawn.

Tudor and Hugh Laing

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Tudor at FZI's annual visit to Sokei-an's grave at Woodlawn cemetary.

# BANKEI AND HIS WORLD

**by Peter Haskel**

*Like Bankei, many of his contemporaries in the priesthood in seventeenth-century Japan believed that the authentic transmission of Zen in their land had been debased and finally destroyed during the preceding two or three centuries. If Zen was to continue, such reformers argued, it had to be thought through again from the beginning, not only revitalized but reinvented. The Zen of Bankei's age, the Tokugawa period, was in many ways a rejection rather than an extension of the Zen that came immediately before. To fully understand Bankei and seventeenth-century Zen, it is therefore necessary to start with a discussion of Japanese Zen in the late Middle Ages, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the latter part of what is referred to as the Muromachi period (1333-1573), after the Muromachi district of Kyoto where the reigning Ashikaga shoguns had their palace. Much of the information cited below is drawn from the pioneering research of Tamamura Takeji, a leading scholar of medieval Japanese Zen history. The discussion here focuses on the two principal groups identified by Tamamura as dominating Muromachi Zen: the sorin, the official Gozan temples patronized by the shogunate; and the rinka, those temples like Daitokuji, Myoshinji, Sojiji, and Eiheiji that remained largely outside the official system.*

## ZEN IN THE MUROMACHI PERIOD (Part 1, #14)

(Continued from the Summer '07 Zen Notes)

### The Soto Keizan line

Like the Rinzai school, the Soto school in Medieval Japan never constituted a coherent sect. Generally referred to as Toshu or Toka, it comprised what was, in effect, a collection of distinct schools, fragmented in turn into numerous smaller groups having little contact with one another. Similarly, it is difficult to isolate any distinctively "Soto" teaching in Medieval Japanese Zen. The influence of Rinzai teachers remained important throughout the Medieval period, and sectarian feeling, overall, seems to have been weak. Dogen himself studied with Rinzai masters before and after his stay in China, and leading figures in the Eiheiji line continued to study under both rinka and sorin Rinzai teachers. Even Dogen's teachings failed to provide the sect any unifying identity. While not actually ignored, Dogen's position in Medieval Soto Zen remained

obscure, and his chief work, *Shobogenzo* was barely read, stored in secret in provincial temples. Only with the Soto revival of the early Tokugawa period, did *Shobogenzo* become the focus of Soto scholarship and the sect begin to establish its present identity as the school of Dogen.

It was Dogen who was responsible for the first transmission of Soto Zen to Japan. The Zen he espoused was the pure Sung Zen he had studied under his Chinese teacher Juchinq, and although he attacked the degeneration of the large Rinzai temples of Southern Sung China, Dogen never rejected koan Zen. *Shobogenzo* contains numerous references to the *Pi-yen lu*, or *Blue Cliff Record*, and koans appear frequently in the text. What Dogen did advocate was an orthodox Zen uncorrupted by syncretic practices, such as repetition of the *nembutsu* or the performance of esoteric rites. As previously mentioned, it was this refusal to compromise the pure Zen character of his teaching with elements from Heian Buddhism that resulted in Dogen's expulsion from Kenninji at the insistence of the Hiei soldier monks. In the end, Dogen and his disciples chose seclusion in the mountains of Echizen, where he founded Eiheiji and continued to teach his nonsyncretic brand of Zen free from interference.

After Dogen's death in 1253, his successor Koun Eijo continued the founder's teaching at Eiheiji. But with Koun's passing, the temple was rent by dissension between his principal heirs, Gien and Tettsu Gikai. As noted earlier, Gikai had visited Yuan China and favored introducing at Eiheiji the sort of syncretic practices then becoming popular on the mainland and in the Kyoto Gozan. Gien, however was adamantly opposed to this approach, which he considered a heterodox distortion of the founder's pure Zen teaching, and Gikai and his followers were finally forced to leave Eiheiji. Under Gikai's heir Keizan Jokin, this breakaway faction quickly outstripped the original Eiheiji line and emerged as a powerful and independent sect, centering around Sojiji and Yokoji. Contact with Eiheiji, however, remained severed. Not until the late Muromachi period, when the Keizan line emerged triumphant and reclaimed Eiheiji as its own headquarters temple, was the schism between the two groups, known as the *sandai soron,* resolved.

Like his master Gikai's teaching, Keizan's Zen embraced numerous syncretic elements. Keizan had been strongly influenced by his early studies with Rinzai masters involved in Pure Land and *mikkyo,* or Esoteric Buddhist practices, and the success of his own style of Zen lay in freely incorporating popular elements derived from the older Buddhist sects. Of particular importance in the expansion of the Keizan line was its close relationship with Hakusan Tendai, a branch of the Tendai sect. The teaching of Hakusan

Tendai, like that of Mt. Hiei, itself, was Taimitsu, or Tendai Esotericism, and it was linked in turn with Shugendo, a Japanese form of Buddhism that was an amalgam of mikkyo and native Shinto beliefs, emphasizing mountain pilgrimage, ascetic practice, and the worship of the the native gods, or kami, as avatars of particular buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Intimate connections between the Soto sect and Hakusan Tendai existed from the time of Dogen, and worship of the Hakusan central divinity, Kannon, the principle bodhisattva revered on the mountain, was practiced at Eiheiii, along with the Shinto god regarded as Kannon's indigenous manifestation. Keizan's teacher Gikai had himself originally been a student of Hakusan Tendai. It was only with Keizan, however, that the relationship with Hakusan Tendai became an important instrument in promoting the expansion of the Soto school in provincial Japan, where Shugendo commanded a strong popular following. Keizan seems to have adopted a policy of deliberately encouraging Hakusan Kannon worship within the Soto school, absorbing into his assemblies Hakusan priests and related Shugendo followers. As a result, Hakusan temples throughout Japan began to change their affiliation to the Soto school, while others, such as Sojiji, were restored by Keizan-line teachers.

Under Keizan's heir Gazan Shoseki, this process continued; but it was Keizan who was chiefly responsible for the dramatic growth of his sect during the Muromachi period. By spreading worship of the Hakusan Kannon throughout rural Japan, Keizan was able to broaden dramatically the appeal of the Soto school, drawing into its ranks not only many former Tendai and Shingon monks, but large numbers of ordinary men and women. At the same time, Keizan's approach indelibly altered the content of Soto Zen, which became strongly esotericized and popularized, incorporating the worship of various kami, avatars and sacred mountains, along with divination, exorcism and other quasi-magical practices particularly associated with Shugendo.

In this way, within a short period after Dogen's death, the orthodox character of his Zen was already being seriously compromised. Certain Japanese scholars and apologists for the Soto school have viewed Keizan's fostering of syncretism as a 'progressive' tendency, aimed at "democratizing" Medieval Soto. While questions of motivation are always difficult to assess, the longterm results of Keizan's policy are clear: whatever the original intentions of the early leaders of the Keizan line, by the late Muromachi period the process of assimilation had produced a Soto Zen dominated almost exclusively by syncretic practices and at times indistinguishable from the teachings of the Heian Buddhist sects. One must therefore question whether Keizan's transformation of the Soto school ex-

panded the practice of Zen as such or merely the influence of the Soto organization. Generally speaking, the success of the Soto school in provincial Japan, like that of the Rinzai rinka, seems to have been achieved largely at the expense of orthodox Zen.

For the Soto temples, this approach was dictated chiefly by the need to appeal to the rural masses who formed the bulk of their parishioners and upon whom they depended for survival. The activities of provincial Soto centered on wooing the support and participation of this group, for whom Dogen's brand of pure Sung Zen was probably unsuited. The recorded teachings, of Muromachi-period Soto masters abound with talks for funeral and memorial services, highly simplified presentations of Buddhism aimed at the lower-level warriors and peasants who were the sect's principal supporters. Soto *goroku*, or Zen teachers' records, of the earlier Kamakura period had dealt exclusively with zazen, not even touching on funeral or memorial services, but during the fourteenth century, the latter gradually gained in importance, and by the mid-fifteenth century, the original emphasis had been reversed, with those portions of the goroku devoted to zazen declining steadily. By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Soto goroku were almost entirely given over to funeral and memorial talks, and zazen was mentioned barely, if at all. The goroku of the Rinzai rinka followed a similar pattern of development, but though funeral and memorial talks tended to predominate here as well, it was never to the total exclusion of zazen, which remained a permanent, if steadily diminishing, element of their overall content.

Though economic factors were crucial, efforts to disseminate Soto Zen among the rural masses were not wholly lacking in idealism. Certain Muromachi Soto monks adopted a direct, personal approach, living in intimate contact with their parishioners. The most celebrated example is Senso Esai ( d.1475), the founder of an active Gazan teaching line. Senso, who in many respects resembled his famous Rinzai contemporary, the Daitokuji Master Ikkyu Sojun, combined a diversity of elements. The content of Senso's teaching remains unclear, but it was probably a fusion of Zen and Tendai esotericism. We know that Senso was an accomplished scholar and writer of Chinese poetry and was sufficiently prominent in the Keizan line to have served a term as abbot of Sojiji. But he apparently led an otherwise humble existence, living and, at times, working together with the local farmers and fishermen, occasionally even joining them in drinking and eating fish. In contrast to Dogen, who asserted that priests alone were qualified to achieve realization, Senso's career and writings reflect a strong conviction that, in the study of Zen, the worldling's life is in no way inferior to the monks. "My body," he writes, "dwells in the monks' quarters of a Zen temple. My heart is in the wineshop and

the brothel." Women, too, in Senso's conception of Buddhism, were the full equal of men, and his disciples included many lay followers of both sexes. Although it is difficult to judge how representative Senso was of Soto country priests in the late Muromachi period, his personal affirmation of the unity of Zen and ordinary life reveals an unusual side of Medieval Soto's penetration of rural Japan.

In the century following the Onin War (1467-1477), popular support of the Soto school was particularly encouraged through participation in public assemblies known as *jukai-e* and *goko-e*. Jukai-e were mass meetings for receiving the lay precepts, offered in the form of a transmission referred to in the Soto school as *kaiho chimyaku*. *Goko*-e, were mass meditation training sessions bringing together large numbers of monks (sometimes more than a thousand) but open to the general public as well. Both jukai-e and goko-e proved enormously successful during the sixteenth century, when they were widely promoted by the Sengoku daimyo and helped to spread the Soto sect through every province of Japan. These assemblies gained an enthusiastic following among all levels of provincial society. They not only injected a certain vitality into the Soto organization, but represented important sources of material support, with their proceeds helping to restore and maintain Soto temples.

As is evident from the popularity of goko-e, even amid the welter of syncretic influences, the basic forms of Zen practice never altogether disappeared from the Soto temples. The Soto masters of the latter fourteenth century, like their counterparts in the early Gozan, appear to have continued orthodox Zen practice even while freely adopting elements of Esoteric Buddhism. We know, for example, that koan study formed a part of Keizan's teaching program, and his disciple Daichi Sokei (1290-1366) reportedly studied the koan "Pao-chang's fox" under Keizan for five years before experiencing enlightenment. Zazen practice, in particular, was emphasized by many teachers, including Keizan's disciples Sotetsu Myoho (1277-1350), Daichi, and Tsugen Jakurei (1321-1391), Gazan's principal heir. Muromachi Soto teachers also observed the tradition of *kessei ango*, the biannual three-month intensive meditation retreats common to all Zen temples, as well as the standard daily periods of meditation. In addition, Zen classics such as *The Transmission of the Lamp* (J: *Keitoku dento roku*), *Zen Forest Collection* (J:*Zenrinruiju*), *Blue Cliff Record (J: Hekigan roku*) and *The Jeweled-Mirror Samadhi (J: Hoky0 zammai)* were as popular in Soto as in Rinzai temples. The last two were especially revered, and commentaries on them proliferated throughout the Muromachi period.

The continuity of such traditional features of Zen temple life

in the Soto monasteries is to some extent misleading. Although Muromachi Soto preserved much of the basic framework of Sung Zen, these elements often survived in name only, voided of their original meaning. Gradually, Soto teaching seems to have been stripped of all but the veneer of orthodox Zen, becoming progressively more assimilated with aspects of esoteric practice and ritual, including the performance of kito, or Esoteric Buddhist rites, and the use of kirigami. As authentic sanzen and koan study declined, they were replaced by the secret oral transmission of missan, or *missan denju*, which represented the virtual transformation of Zen study into a mikkyo-style initiation. In Soto, the missan denju may have begun as early as Keizan's period and eventually swept the entire school along with the other rinka lines. The earliest dateable missan documents are Soto school missancho, and the most successful formulation of missan Zen, that of the Rinzai Genju line in the sixteenth century, may have been based on the system of missan study practiced in the Medieval Soto school.

As with the Rinzai rinka schools, it was probably the Keizan line's various modes of rapprochement with Heian Buddhism which enabled it to survive in the provinces and to become one of the leading Medieval Zen organizations. Under Gazan, the expansion initiated by Keizan continued, with Sojiji becoming the headquarters of the Keizan line. Gazan's line emerged as the line's principal power, gaining the support of leading provincial clans in founding new temples as well as in amalgamating and restoring the temples of the older Buddhist sects and Shugendo-affiliated establishments. During the sixteenth century, eminent Sengoku daimyo became patrons of the Keizan line and, influenced by the example of the Ashikaga Shoguns, appointed Keizan-line priests as *soroku*, monk superintendent, to oversee the Soto temples and monasteries of their growing domains. This provided an administrative link between previously disparate Soto groups, as well as placing the Keizan line in a favored position which enabled it at times to overwhelm the other Buddhist sects. The Sengoku daimyo were also active in promoting gokoe, which united a wide variety of Keizan-line priests and offered formerly isolated groups another point of lateral contact within each domain. It was such developments that probably laid the groundwork for the eventual nationwide unification of the Soto sect in the early seventeenth century.

drawing by Seiko Susan Morningstar

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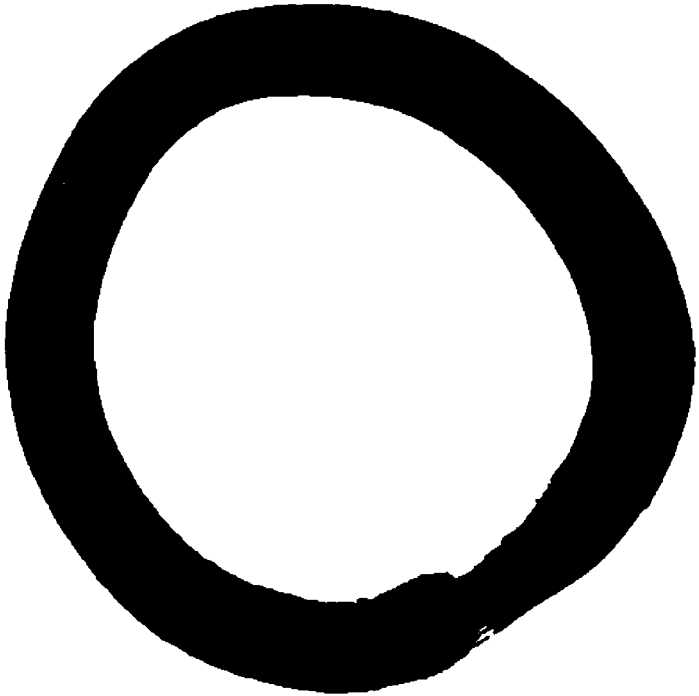

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