

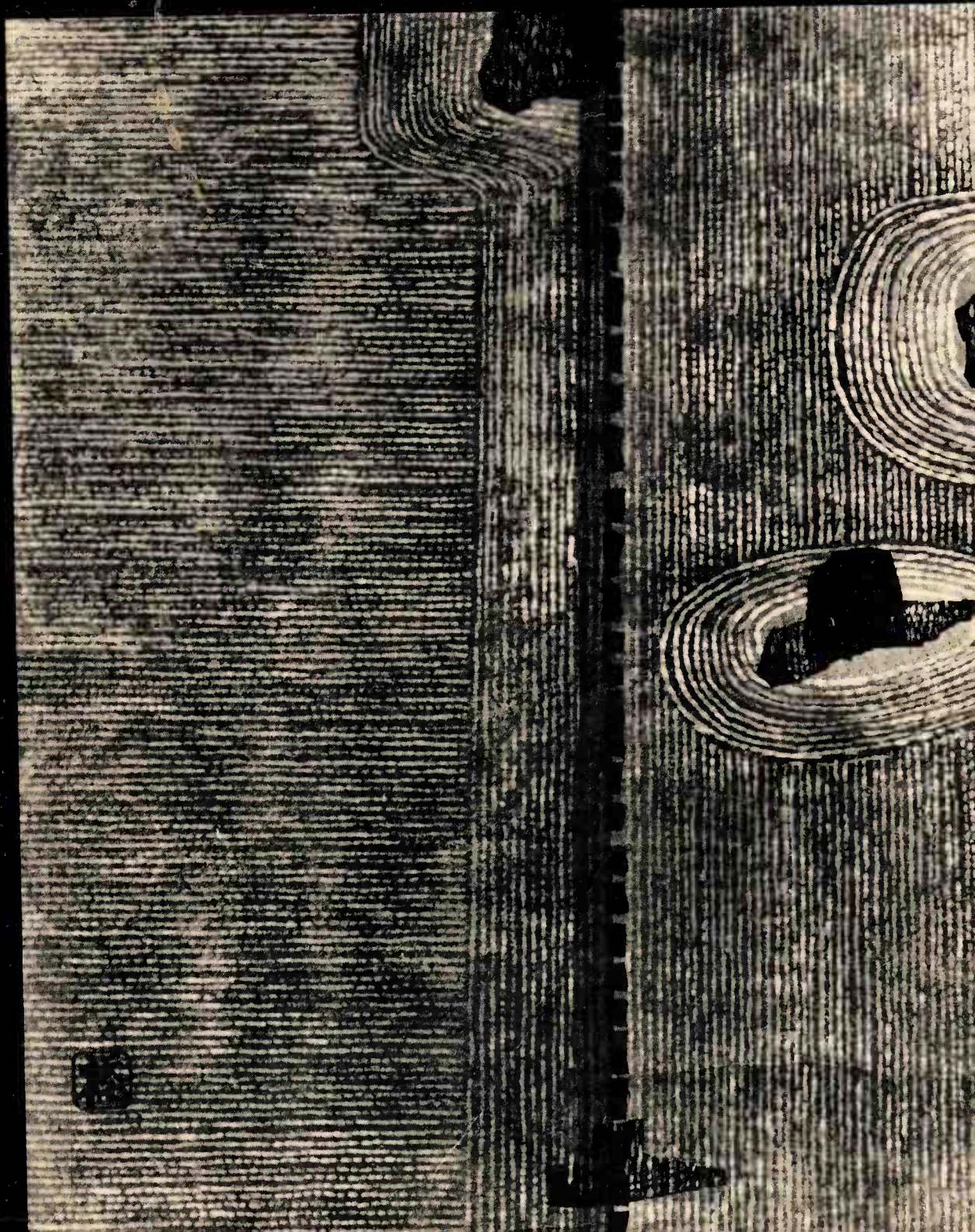
POEMS AND SERMONS

Musō Soseki

TRANSLATED BY W. S. MERWIN
AND SŌIKU SHIGEMATSU

SUN AT MIDNIGHT

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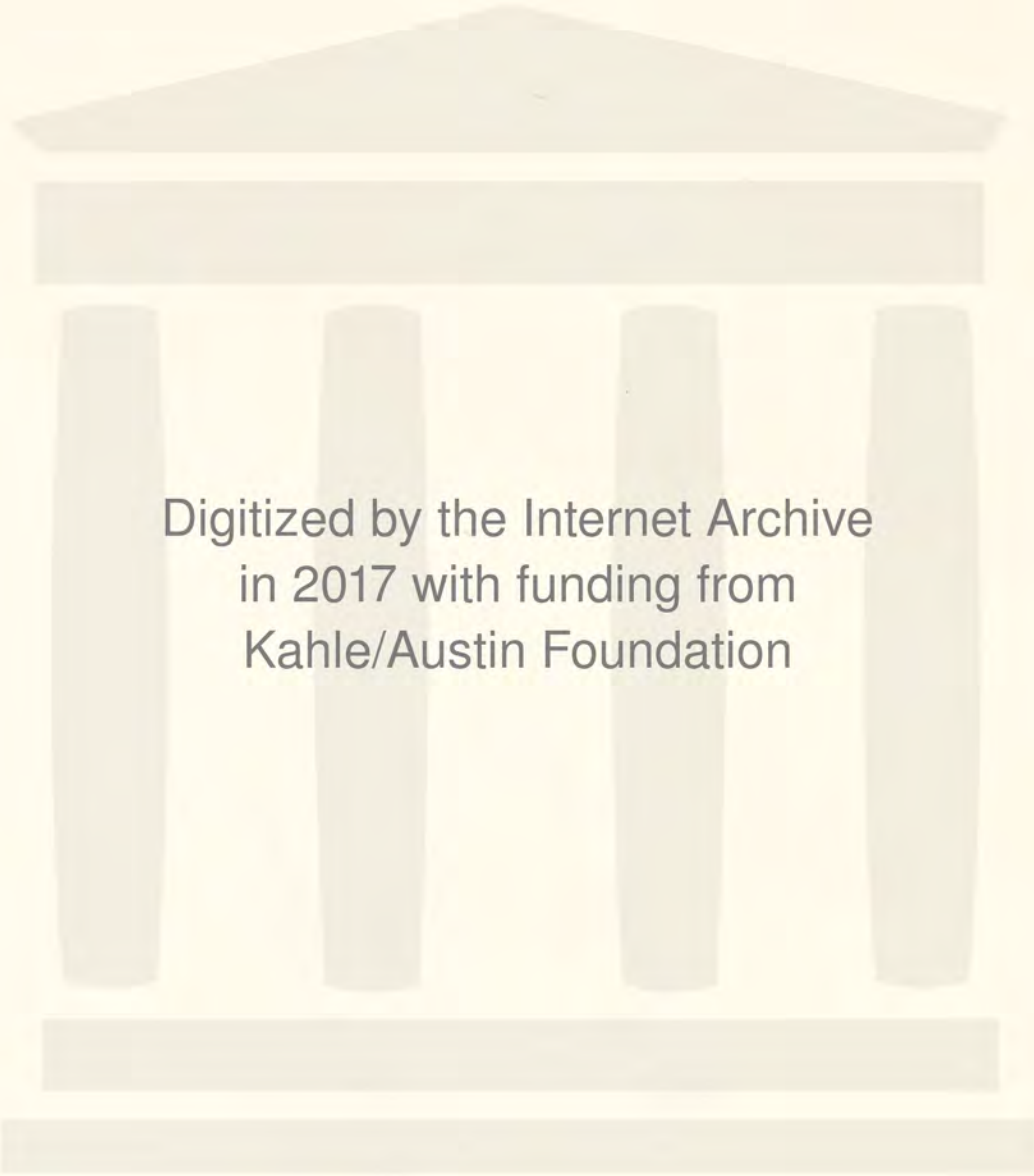


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Poems and Sermons

**SUN AT
MIDNIGHT**

by Musō Soseki

*Translated by W. S. Merwin
and Sōiku Shigematsu*

NORTH POINT PRESS

San Francisco 1989

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INTRODUCTION

Everything that remains to our world of the many talents of the man known to us as Musō Soseki is addressed to our most intimate nature, and yet we approach him now, from wherever we are, over vast distances.

He was born ten years after Dante, in 1275 according to our reckoning, which was not the reckoning in his birthplace in the province of Ise, on the coast far to the west of the capital of Japan, then named Edo. The forested province of Ise had been the home for over a thousand years of one of the most revered shrines of Shinto, the one that houses the legendary mirror of the sun goddess Amaterasu, a mythological ancestor of the emperor. The shrine itself and the compound are, as they were when Musō was born, a celebrated example of a pure form of Japanese architecture known as the Divine Style—plain, archaic, severe, and elegant, its origins linked to the worship of trees and the building of ships, and to the defining of enclosed clearings in the forest in order to establish, with a ritual use of space, gardens.

Something, and perhaps a great deal of this, and the legends that emanated from it, must have been part of the familiar world around Musō in his first years. He may have been taken to the great shrine as an infant. Certainly he saw, then or later, others built on the same pattern, and the images they presented to him would have made a deep impression on a child who was to become one of the great garden designers of Japan.

But his parents were Buddhists, his mother a devout worshiper of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the representation of compassion. The tradition of medieval Buddhist hagiography is stiff with conventions, as other hagiographical traditions are, and some of its accounts are legends. A few that came to embroider what was remembered of the life of Musō seem familiar, like recurrent dreams. It was told that Musō's mother had prayed to Avalokitesvara for a child, and had dreamed one night of a golden light flowing into her mouth. It was a full thirteen months later, however, before Musō was born.

His third year, according to the history, was one of loss. His family moved away from Ise to the province of Kai, and in August of that year his mother died. Those familiar with the life and writings of Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253) will recall that Dōgen's mother died when Dōgen was eight years old, and that her death—and the sight of the smoke of the incense burning beside her body—became the first recognizable step toward his own religious realization. Dōgen had lost his father at the age of three. There is a tradition in Zen, and in Buddhism in general, of children who were foundlings, or orphans, or who were given up to temples at a very early age, and Musō combined these. During the year after the death of his mother he is said to have shown a precocious religious fervor, reciting sutras and prayers before the Buddhist images. A religious life was predicted for him and then probably was expected of him. He was a particularly gentle child who avoided arguments and shunned contention of any kind, even rough games with children of his own age. When he was nine his father took him to the Shingon temple in Kai and gave him up to the religious life.

There Musō became a student of Mantrayana Buddhism, returning only on occasional visits to see his father and stepmother.

She cooked sumptuous meals to celebrate his being at home, and when he went back to the temple he took some of her delicious food with him to share with his friends, who probably subsisted most of the time on rice and tea. So she invited him to bring his friends home with him. One day he saw someone nearby eating a rich dinner while his servants ate almost nothing, and he resolved that if ever he had servants their food would not differ from his own.

At eighteen he went to Nara to take his vows as a monk and have his head shaved. After that he devoted himself entirely to the study of Buddhist texts, until one day he was present at the death of a learned Buddhist, in great anguish of spirit, who had been a noted authority on esoteric Buddhism and Tendai metaphysics, and had preached for years on Buddhist doctrine. Musō was shaken to see that all this man had known about Buddhism had helped him so little at the moment of his death. He had heard of a school of Buddhism that was based upon a “special transmission outside the scriptures” and he determined to learn about it. When he was not yet twenty he left the Shingon sect and became a student of Zen at Ken’nin-ji in Kyoto, and then at Engaku-ji and Kenchō-ji in Kamakura.

The director of Kenchō-ji was a Chinese monk named Issan who had recently arrived (1299) in Japan to escape the Mongol occupation of China. He became Musō’s teacher, and Musō remained with him, practicing fervently, for a number of years. As he did, his doubt, his anxiety at his own lack of realization and clarity, grew until one day in desperation he said to Issan, “I cannot attain enlightenment. Show it to me.”

Issan said, “There is no word in our school. There is no rule to transmit.”

“Show me your compassion and your way.”

“There is no compassion. And there is not any way.”

Musō decided that there was no point in his remaining with Issan and he went to the nearby temple of Engaku-ji. Master Kōhō-Ken'ichi there, a pupil at one time of another Chinese master, was famous for his insight. Musō went to see him and repeated his final conversation with Issan to Kōhō, who answered, “You should have said to Issan, ‘Teacher, you have revealed too much.’” At these words Musō is said to have had a faint glimpse of the realization he was seeking, but he knew it was no more than that. He set out on a pilgrimage to the north. He spent the summer of 1305, his thirtieth year, in Zen practice in a hermitage in the province of Jōshū. One night he sat out in the garden where there was a cool breeze. Very late, he rose to go back into the hermitage. He had no light, but the place was so familiar that he thought he knew exactly where he was, and he reached out to steady himself against a wall. But the wall was not there and he fell. Suddenly he burst out laughing, as he felt the anguish and the intense searching of so many years suddenly dissolved. He wrote his *tōki-no-ge*, or satori poem, and in the autumn took it to Kōhō, who questioned him and gave the seal of his approval to Musō's realization. Musō remained with Kōhō and three years later Kōhō transmitted to him his own dead master's robe, making Musō his successor.

But Musō was not drawn to the courtly and hierarchical world of official Zen. He left Kamakura and spent most of the next twenty years in remote temples and hermitages in the provinces, practicing Zen to clarify and deepen his insight. Yet despite his avoidance of the centers of fashion and influence, his reputation grew, and in 1325 Emperor Go-Daigo appointed Musō to the temple of Nanzen-ji in Kyoto, one of the most important and revered Zen temples in Japan, and there the em-

peror himself became a student of Musō. In 1329 the shogun appointed him to the temple of Engaku-ji, and Musō returned to Kamakura.

Japan at the time was torn by civil wars. The imperial power had eroded and passed into the hands of the warlords of Kamakura. Emperor Go-Daigo was anxious to regain the lost power of the throne, and the result was a series of fierce and devastating campaigns. In 1334 the emperor brought Musō back from Kamakura to Nanzen-ji. But in the following years the warrior lords rose to power and the emperor took refuge in a temple on Mount Hiei. Musō retired from his position at Nanzen-ji and took up residence at the smaller temple of Rinsen-ji, by the Ōi River on the west of Kyoto. In June of 1336 Ashikaga Takauji entered Kyoto in triumph and became the first of the Ashikaga dynasty, which was to endure through fifteen generations, during almost two and a half centuries.

Musō was already known to the new ruler, who was himself a dedicated student of Buddhism. Takauji and his brother Tadayoshi both had consulted Musō on religious matters, and they continued to do so once they were in power. Takauji's written questions to Musō, and Musō's written replies, were later assembled and edited by one of Musō's successors to form the volume known as *Muchū Mondō*, *Dialogues in the Dream*. Takauji, like Musō's mother, was particularly devoted to the veneration of the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokitesvara. Not at ease in the world of power and conflict, he cherished a wish to retire from it altogether, and two years after his triumphal entry into Kyoto he turned over his duties to his brother Tadayoshi and devoted himself to the study of the Buddha dharma.

Takauji was tormented by the thought of the many who had suffered and died because of the civil wars in which he had

played so important a part. At Musō's suggestion he founded Ankoku-ji, "temples of peace," and his brother built Rishō-tō, a Buddhist stupa.

The wave of temple building brought into play some of Musō's own talents. In his mid-sixties, in 1339, he was consulted in the restoration of the temple of Saihō-ji and its garden in the western part of Kyoto. The original temple had been built 600 years earlier by a Buddhist monk, and at one time many buildings had occupied the site, but the entire temple had been destroyed during one of the periods of civil wars that had ravaged Japan.

The patron of the restored Saihō-ji and its garden was a nobleman named Nakahara no Chikahide, and the garden that Musō designed for the temple became famous in the history of Japanese gardens and of Japanese Buddhism.

In Japan gardens and religious observance had been closely associated for a very long time, and the boundary between architecture and gardens was indefinite. The formal compound of a Shinto temple, its ground covered with pebbles, is at once part of the enclosed structure surrounding the sacred tree and a garden, an ancestor of the raked gravel gardens of the Zen tradition. The art of gardening had assumed as natural a role in Japanese religious custom as the arts of painting and sculpture, architecture and chant. It was not conceived of simply as a decorative addition to a place of human use. In the settings of Shinto and of Japanese Buddhism it suggests, and is meant to exemplify, a view of being.

The gardens of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism, which had been established in Japan almost three centuries before Musō's birth, were intended to evoke the paradise of Amida [Amitabha] Buddha, the Buddha of the setting sun and the hereafter. The

eneration of Amida Buddha and the hope for his western paradise fostered an iconography that derived from images of the court and from the tantric mandalas of Shingon Buddhism; and the gardens of the Jōdo sect, as it came to be called (from Saihō Jōdo, the Pure Land of the West), were conceived as mandalas symbolizing paradise. Because they were also the residences of the noblemen who commissioned them, these wealthy and powerful few were already dwelling—at least in principle—in the paradise to come. The gardens were inevitably extremely formal and symmetrical; their shapes and their structures were manifestations of courtly elegance. Temple buildings and residences alike perpetuated traditional court architecture, and the gardens made characteristic use of bodies of water to provide, from different viewpoints, the illusion of distance and the sense that objects, perspectives, and edifices were floating on their own reflections.

This use of water in the Jōdo gardens in turn had its origin in the Heian court gardens, the “dream gardens,” of the ninth century, with their emphasis on artificial lakes and streams. And before the Heian lake gardens there were, of course, the formal lake gardens of China with their carefully composed views of water and islands, their bridges and standing rocks. In the mid-ninth century the nobility began to plan gardens that deliberately evoked the wilder landscapes of other parts of Japan. Peninsulas planted with trees reached out into lakes. Lake shores were covered with pebbles to represent ocean beaches. The attempt to suggest living landscapes worked against the urge for symmetrical formality and helped to lighten it and render its symbolism subtler and more complex. By the eleventh century the principles of the Heian gardens—conceived then, of course, as the correct principles for all gardens—were established con-

ventions that could be summarized in *Treatise on Garden Making* by Tachibana Toshitsuna, the son of an important political figure of the period. Toshitsuna set forth the rules for making ponds, lakes, and waterfalls, and for arranging and planting trees and growing things, all with a doctrinaire finality that includes his detailed predictions of the catastrophes awaiting heretics who might presume to do things in any other way. The rules of Heian gardening had become superstitions, and some of this development may have derived from elements of Chinese geomancy whose meanings, by Toshitsuna's period, were no longer clearly remembered.

We do not know what Musō had learned of the art of garden design by the time he undertook to design the garden of Saihō-ji, but he was surely acquainted with the main currents of these traditions and must have been familiar with many court and temple gardens. Saihō-ji combines aspects of the paradise gardens of the Jōdo sect with far fewer of the symmetrical inventions generally considered manifestations of the spirit of Zen. There is a lake with an island in it, and a wandering series of rocks. A path meanders along the winding lake shore.

One of the conditions, one of the materials, indeed, of the art of gardening, whatever gardeners may think of it, is the role of change, which makes gardening particularly appropriate to Buddhism. Nothing stays as the hand of the gardener leaves it or as the mind of the gardener originally conceives of it, and although Musō in his gardens made extensive and original use of such things as rocks, which change so slowly that they can be taken as symbols of permanence, those gardens of his which later generations saw and see are inevitably different from those he would have seen in his lifetime. Trees and all living things there have grown, died, been replaced. Shadows and leaves fall

differently even in those gardens that have been cared for and kept as close as possible to the way he designed them. Saihō-ji itself is famous, among other things, for something that has changed enormously since the time of Musō's original garden and, in the view of most commentators, could have had no place in his plan. The ground under the trees by the lake, and in other sections of the garden reached by stone steps, is covered with a profusion of different mosses that curl like waves around the arrangements of large stones on the upper levels. It is said that these celebrated mosses, or at least many of them, spread through parts of the garden only in the nineteenth century when the temple became too poor to be able to maintain the garden. Yet there may well have been some mosses in the original plan. For instance, up on the hillside there is a detail that recurs in a number of Musō's gardens, a dry waterfall in which large vertical stones suggest the cascading of water. And at the foot of the stone waterfall there is a basin brimming not with water but with moss.

In the same year that the garden at Saihō-ji was laid out, perhaps on the site of an earlier garden, Emperor Go-Daigo died. Musō urged the Ashikagas, Takauji and Tadayoshi, to build a temple dedicated to the spirit of the dead emperor whom they had deposed, a project that might help to restore harmony between the old dynasty and the new one. The site chosen had once been an imperial estate, with a Heian lake garden. Musō's plans transformed it into the present temple enclosure and garden of Tenryū-ji, a labor that took five years. Parts of the garden appear in some of Musō's poems—its dry waterfall; its lake, named Hui-neng's Pond after the Sixth Zen Patriarch; its West Mountains (Arashiyama). The garden combines a great sweep of landscape and a feeling of space with one of intimacy and sim-

plicity. Along with Zuisen-ji in Kamakura, with its cave and ponds, and the pond garden at Kenchō-ji in Kamakura, it is considered one of the works that best exemplifies Musō's conception and style of garden design. Perhaps appropriate to the vision of emptiness which he himself taught in all his arts, his very role in its plan has been disputed, though there is a record of Ashikaga Takauji's directive to him to turn the old imperial estate into a temple compound.

Musō's work on gardens filled the last decade of his life. He managed to combine it with teaching and advisory and administrative duties. In his late years he settled in the small riverside temple of Rinsen-ji, on the Ōi River at the edge of Kyoto. Once an imperial villa, Rinsen-ji had been converted into a temple by Emperor Go-Daigo as a shrine for his second son, who had died there. The emperor had made Musō the temple's first abbot, as Musō was later to become the first abbot of Tenryū-ji, and at Rinsen-ji too Musō redesigned the garden. But at Rinsen-ji his work has completely disappeared, as a result of war and neglect. The present garden there, a stone and gravel enclosure in the style of the famous one at Ryōan-ji, across the city, is a modern addition.

It was at Rinsen-ji, on September 29, 1351, that Musō wrote a final poem:

In the real world
 the pure world
 no separation exists
why wait
 for another time
 and another meeting
the teaching
 on Vulture Peak

is here today
who else
are you looking for
to preserve the Way?

He died on the following day, September 30, at the age of seventy-seven. Cremation was not then the invariable rule for the disposal of bodies, and Musō was buried at the end of the main hall of worship. The slabs of rock covering his tomb, which can be seen from outside the building, lie under the floor of the shrine; a rock formation beside them resembles a chain of mountains in a Sung dynasty painting. Over the tomb, two fluorescent light tubes have been attached to the beams under the floor. Above, in the raised shrine, is a wooden statue of Musō that looks life-size. He is seated in what is no doubt zazen posture. The carved robes flow down from the raised seat to the floor. His hands are in the meditation mudra and his eyes are half closed. One can see even in the likeness the gentleness that distinguished him as a child.

Musō had had some 13,145 recorded students: monks, nuns, and laity, including 7 emperors. Fifty-two of his students received his approval as successors and a number of them in turn became renowned teachers. He had founded fourteen temples in Kyoto, Kamakura, and other parts of Japan. Upon his death his writings, collected by his followers, included three volumes of conversations, which became *Dialogues in the Dream*, a volume of sermons, and the volume of poems from which the present translation has been made.

The arts that Musō practiced—poetry, painting, calligraphy, garden design—depended, as all arts do, on a balance of convention and control, on the one hand, and spontaneity on the

other. There is an inevitable tension between the two elements, and yet ideally the two seem to give life to each other and become one. The gardens with their varying evocations of what is considered natural are elaborately controlled manifestations of the conventions that Musō inherited and developed, though Musō is said to have favored a freer and less artificial style than was fashionable in his day.

His poetry was written both in Japanese and in Chinese, in two traditional forms, more than half of it in the *gāthās*—Chinese four-line verses—that had become conventional in the world of Zen in China before Zen passed to Japan. It was customary for students of Ch’an, as the teaching was called in China, to write a verse to express what they had understood, after they had had what they considered to be an experience of *satori*, or insight into the nature of reality. The custom was established by the time of the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* in the latter part of the eighth century. In that important Zen text a crucial turn of the story of the Sixth Patriarch depends upon two *gāthās*, the first composed by a monk at the Fifth Patriarch’s monastery, which translates:

The body is the Bodhi tree
The mind is a clear mirror
Always keep the mirror polished
Let no dust gather on it

The other *gāthā*, attributed by legend to the Sixth Patriarch, survives in various forms. The most famous of them might be translated:

Bodhi has no tree
The mirror rests on nothing
From the beginning not a thing is
Where would the dust alight?

Later, during the Sung dynasty, when several of the famous teachers gathered the Zen teaching devices known as kōans into books, the compilers, or later successors, appended gāthās to most of the kōans to confirm and extend the thrust of the teaching they embodied. The practice continued into Musō’s lifetime. Keizan Jōkin (1268–1325), a great teacher and a poet who lived earlier in the century during which Musō was born, composed a volume called the *Denkō-roku*, or *Transmission of the Lamp*, a purported compilation of the enlightenment experiences of each of the patriarchs, from Shakyamuni Buddha to Keizan’s own teacher, Dōgen. Each of the stories was followed, or “capped” by a poem, sometimes though not always a gāthā. And since Keizan was a gifted poet, some of the poems have a clear beauty that does not depend on context.

Musō wrote poems throughout the whole of his adult life, and some are Zen poems in this somewhat ritualized sense. The “Satori Poem” is an example. Some are poems on the deaths of friends, and like all Musō’s poems, they too express their subject from the viewpoint of Zen experience. His poems on the visits and departures of friends, which continue another convention of Chinese poetry, are written in the Zen spirit, as are his most obviously personal poems: the poems of reminiscence and those arising directly from circumstances in his own life, such as the ones about his hut in Miura. These seem to have within their ancestry the poems of the eighth-century Chinese poet Wang Wei, himself a Ch’an [Zen] student during the T’ang dynasty, the golden age of Ch’an.

Since gāthās have usually been translated into English as quatrains, perhaps it is necessary to explain the form used to translate Musō’s gāthās in this collection. The explanation is really my collaborator’s, who supplied the first literal versions of these poems in English, with the lines already broken into three

sections as they are here. When I asked him why, he wrote to me, “We Japanese Zen priests are expected to learn the traditional chanting of Zen poetry. Even Musō, I think, must have chanted his own poetry just as we do now.” He gave several examples, one from a poem of Musō’s, the “Satori Poem”:

多	年	掘	地	覓	青	天
<i>ta</i>	<i>nen</i>	<i>hotte</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>motomu</i>	<i>sei</i>	<i>ten</i>
many	year	dig	ground	seek	blue	heaven

which he said would be chanted in Japanese:

Ta-ne-n-n-n
chio-o-hot-te-e-e
sei-i-ten-n-n-o-o-o-moto-o-o-mu-u-u-u-u

“In chanting,” he said, “a pause matters much, I think. . . . Truly no translator has ever broken lines. Even D. T. Suzuki didn’t. It may be right so far as form is concerned. But I wish to hear Musō’s chanting. Unless you feel some awkwardness as English poetry, I myself would like to keep all the poems as they are. If forced to make a choice, I dare to prefer his unheard voices to his written form.”

I have since heard the chanting in Shigematsu-san’s father’s temple, but the broken line, in English, suggested something quite different to me, of course: the breathless rush of Mayakovsky (as it comes across in translation) and above all the delicacy, lightness, and penetrating plainness of the later work of William Carlos Williams. Whatever the original appropriateness of the innovation, I was happy to keep it and try to make it seem the right form for Musō’s poems in English.

As might be guessed from the fact that the translation is a collaboration, I cannot read the original languages: neither the classical Chinese of Musō's poems nor the formal medieval Japanese of his prose. The translation was meant to be as faithful a representation of Musō in English as I could provide with the help of those who could read those languages, but it was not intended for scholars or for those who could read the original. There have been, until now, almost no translations of Musō into English. He is mentioned, of course, in D. T. Suzuki's histories of Zen, but I made my more extensive acquaintance with his work in the biographical and critical writing of Masumi Shibata, and in the French translations Shibata has made with his French wife Maryse. They have published (Editions G. P. Maisonneuve and Larose, Paris, 1974) the whole of the *Muchū Mondō* in French, as *Dialogues dans le Rêve*. Soon after I had found that work, conversations with Sōiku Shigematsu led to him sending me, from Japan, the first literal versions of some of Musō's poems, and our collaboration began. We have worked on the versions sporadically over the course of several years, from the first exchanges of letters to a theoretically final set of marginal notes that we revised, sitting out the rain under the eaves of the abbot's quarters at Tenryū-ji, looking out at the garden that Musō had designed there, at Hui-neng's Pond, the West Mountains in the mist, the stone waterfall, the stone bridge.

Musō's prose is another venture altogether, and I have included only a few selections that seemed to be particularly helpful in providing a sense of his achievement as a whole. *West Mountain Evening Talk* is a brief collection of his teachings that has been used in Zen monasteries since Musō's death. It, and "Musō's Admonition," were given to me in English literal ver-

sions prepared by Sōiku Shigematsu. The passages from *Dialogues in the Dream* were translated from Masumi and Maryse Shibata's French edition.

His talent apart, Musō's resources as a gardener—the life of his tradition, the dedicated labor—are no longer available. Some of his teaching, like some of the teaching of his great predecessor Dōgen, seems to be almost exclusively relevant to the circumstances of Japanese medieval monasticism. But the vision of existence in gardens and the heart of his teaching seem to me to have survived the transition from one age, one culture—and, in the prose, one language—to another, perhaps not whole, but still, enough so that years of acquaintance with his writing, and what I have seen of his gardens, leave me grateful for what I have glimpsed.

As for the poems, I know only what I have been able to hear from—and, as it were, through—the literals. In such translations, as in all translation, one knows well enough what one was listening for in English, what one would like the translations to be: living poems in the new language, poems that manage to represent the life of the originals. It is too much to hope for, as we all know, and yet one goes on, out of the nature of necessity and of language, trying to put into words that life. Where is it? A poem of Keizan's in the *Denkō-roku* goes something like this:

The water is clear all the way down.
Nothing ever polished it. That is the way it is.

W. S. MERWIN
Peahi, Maui

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Mark Holborn, *The Ocean in the Sand*, Boulder, Shambhala, 1978.

For Musō himself, Masumi Shibata's *Les Maîtres du Zen au Japon* (G. P. Maisonneuve and Larose, Paris, 1969) provides a biographical essay, and the introduction to the translation of *Muchū Mondō, Dialogues dans le Rêve* by Masumi and Maryse Shibata (G. P. Maisonneuve and Larose, Paris, 1974) includes, besides the commentary on the dialogues themselves, a discussion of the cultural and historic milieu and the art of gardening that were the context of Musō's work. I have relied extensively on both for my own notes on Musō.

W.S.M.

**SUN AT
MIDNIGHT**

Poems

I

Wandering

A runaway son
will never come
into his own

My treasure
is the cloud on the peak
the moon over the valley

Traveling east or west
light and free
on the one road

I don't know whether
I'm on the way
or at home

2

A Lodging House in Town

Right among the people coming and going
I have a place to stay
I shut the gate even in the daytime
and feel as though I had bought
Wo-chou the great mountain
and had it with me in town
Never since I was born
have I liked to argue
mouth full of blood
My mouth is made fast
to heaven and earth
so the universe is still

Buddha's Satori

For six years sitting alone
still as a snake
in a stalk of bamboo
with no family
but the ice
on the snow mountain
Last night
seeing the empty sky
fly into pieces
he shook
the morning star awake
and kept it in his eyes

4

For Taihei Oshō

I won't let even
the Buddha and Patriarchs
through my gate
so I never thought
to welcome some guests
and roll my eyes at others
I open the gate a little
to thank you
for your visit
and at once the mountains
and the rivers stand up
and start the famous dance

5

Reizan Oshō Visits Me

I leave to the highborn
all the honors
of this dissolving world
A life of poverty
has taught me to love
haze and mist
Today in the spring
the friendship between us
adds warmth to the sunlight
Even a dry post
here on the shore
is blossoming

6

I'm not so deep in it

I'm not so deep in it
as that hermit who held up
his fist to the guest
but deep enough
Reizan Oshō
for us to be able to talk
Beyond my garden
the sea begins
level and boundless
Don't echo Chao-chou's
"the water's too shallow
to anchor here"

Reply to Reizan Oshō

I don't go out
 to wander around
 I stay home here in Miura
 while time flows
 on through
 the unbounded world
 In the awakened eye
 mountains and rivers
 completely disappear
 the eye of delusion
 looks out upon
 deep fog and clouds
 Alone on my zazen mat
 I forget the days
 as they pass
 The wisteria has grown
 thick over the eaves
 of my hut
 The subtle Way
 of Bodhidharma—
 I never give it a thought
 Does anyone know
 the truth of Zen
 or what to ask about it?

8

Thanks for Daisen Oshō's Visit

Here I have enough to eat
and I have taken root
far from the world
People who like to find fault
can melt even gold with their talk
why should I listen to that
My mind is weightless
and without color
like the lingering fog
The sound of the evening waves
wakes me
from my afternoon nap
Cradled in the breast of this mountain
I have forgotten
its original wildness
Day after day
watching the sea
I have never seen its depths
If I cannot attain
the very heart
of Zen
a wave a thousand miles long
will rise up and heave
on the sea beyond my gate

9

Chick feed is what I eat

Chick feed is what I eat
a quail's nest is where I live
here by the sea
It's all so cramped and huddled
the waves almost touch
the fishermen's huts
It's certainly no place
for entertaining
the rich and famous
and yet a single bubble
contains the whole
limitless sky

Loud thunder

Loud thunder
 rattles the mountains
 around this remote village
All at once
 my seclusion my quiet—
 where are they
Don't say that my mouth
 is too small to tell
 of the beauty of the world
In the corner of the garden
 in the winter the plum trees
 are announcing spring

II

Thanks Sent to Taihei Oshō

I have been lazy
 ever since I was born
 it would be hard to change now
so I've hidden
 my lump of a body
 near the edge of the sea
Today Taihei Oshō of Ungan-ji
 surprises me
 with a visit
I shake his hand
 and we smile
 in the one wind

From My Hut in Miura

Leaving my footprints

nowhere

south or north

I go into hiding

here by the bay full of moonlight

and the misty hill

I love the life that remains to me

here out of sight in the water

my scales dimmed

I have no wish to leap

up the Dragon Gate falls

to turn into a dragon

In these mountain villages and harbor towns

In these mountain villages and harbor towns

I'm happy to have found

good company

a crowd of fishermen

in and out of my hut

the whole time

Since I have never held out

the least thing

by way of bait

I've managed not to betray

the fish who have approached

at the risk of their lives

I4

From the beginning

From the beginning
the crooked tree
was no good for a lordly dwelling
how could anyone
expect the nobles
to use it for their gates
Now it's been thrown out
onto the shore
of this harbor village
handy for the fishermen
to sit on
while they're fishing

East of the strait

East of the strait
beside my hut
I fish in silence
no more chatter about
pure land
impure land
don't get the idea
that I'm hoarding salt
from the black market
I can't cheat the public
like the one
who dozed on the bridge

My thatched hut

My thatched hut
the whole sky
is its roof
the mountains are its hedge
and it has the sea
for a garden
I'm inside
with nothing at all
not even a bag
and yet there are visitors
who say "It's hidden
behind a bamboo door"

All on my own I'm happy

All on my own I'm happy
in the unmapped landscape
inside the bottle
my only friend
is this
wisteria cane
Last night
we stayed up talking
so late
that I'm afraid
I was overheard
by the empty sky

Heaven Peak

Blue blue the summit
soars above
fog and cloud
steep and rough
it stands against
the empty sky
Everyone who looks up
gazes in awe
it seems to go on forever
and each one sees
the mountains of the earth
holding it up

19

Gem Mountain

It towers
 from the beginning
 without a flaw
The rain beats upon it
 the wind cuts it
 it only shines brighter
Even fog and cloud
 cannot hide the path
 to the summit
Lin Hsiang-ru was wrong
 running his errand
 to the Ch'in castle

Another Summit

It soars alone
its power stands apart
from the other mountains
Those who see it
feel their eyes
widen
Ever since the boy Sudhana
was bewildered
by Meghasri
the blue haze
the red mist
have not come to rest

Bamboo Garden

The third one crooked the second one leaning
bamboos have grown
by the stone steps of the garden
every year
there are more of them
until now they are a forest
At the clack of a stone on a bamboo
Hsiang-yen shattered
the uncountable worlds
but this garden
continues in its green shade
just as before

To the Emperor's Messenger

The affairs of the world
are nothing to me
I am tired of coming and going
this poor hut is perfect for me
the one possession
of a monk who does nothing
In the stove
there is no fire
and no potato
so I have no time
to wipe my mouth
to greet the emperor's messenger

Old Creek

Since before anyone remembers
it has been clear
shining like silver
though the moonlight penetrates it
and the wind ruffles it
no trace of either remains
Today I would not dare
to expound the secret
of the stream bed
but I can tell you
that the blue dragon
is coiled there

Snow Valley

Each drifting snowflake
falls nowhere
but here and now
Under the settling flowers of ice
the water is flowing
bright and clear
The cold stream
splashes out
the Buddha's words
startling
the stone tortoise
from its sleep

Dry Tree

Leaning all by himself
on the icy rock
 he has lost all his warmth
His skins have peeled away
 but still he has not seen
 the wonderland
Now flowers
 have opened
 outside of heaven and earth
and spring winds are blowing there
nobody knows
 where they are

Old Man in Retirement

I stop worrying about anything
I give up activities
I'm full of my life
I no longer
go to the temple
evening and morning
If they ask me
"What are you doing
in your old age?"
I smile and tell them
"I'm letting my white hair
fall free"

Strange Peak

Looming up
rough and steep—
what force
The trees look like works of magic
and all of the stones
are possessed of powers
Once you climb the peak
your eyes
will start from your head
but until then
it stands veiled in unbroken
fog and mist

Poem on Dry Mountain (A Zen Garden)

A high mountain
soars without
a grain of dust
a waterfall
plunges without
a drop of water
Once or twice
on an evening of moonlight
in the wind
this man here
has been happy
playing the game that suited him

At the Nachi Kan'on Hall

The Milky Way

pours waterfalls

over this human world

the cold

rushing tumbling sounds

echo through the blue sky

Veneration

to the Great Compassionate

Avalokitesvara

How lucky I am

to have no trouble

hearing

Spring Cliff

Everywhere
 soft breeze warm sunshine
 the same calm
even the withered trees
 on the dark cliff
 are blossoming
I tried to find
 where Subhuti
 meditates
but suddenly in the shadow
 of mist and fog
 the path split a thousand ways

Reply to Gen'nō Oshō's Poem

You climb
 Mount Hiei
 on ladders of cloud
I walk
 out of Kyoto
 with a wisteria cane
A thousand miles apart
 like the stars of the east
 and the stars of the north
and this is our one chance
 to remind each other
 that we are friends

For the Death of a Monk

They say that an accident
is like
a bellows
but isn't it better
to go directly
to the town of Nirvana
Now a spring wind
is playing for you the tune
"Return to the Origin"
and even the Buddha's hands
cannot interfere
with your homecoming

People's abuse

People's abuse

has melted what was golden
and it has gone from the world

Fortune and misfortune

both belong to the land
of dreams

Don't look back

to this world
your old hole in the cellar

From the beginning

the flying birds have left
no footprints on the blue sky

34

To Kengai Oshō of Engaku-ji

Old Man Ho

once paid the master of the hut

a surprise visit

Nowhere in the universe

is it possible to hide

one's idle everyday life

Yesterday you came

from Deer's Joy Mountain

all the way to my hut

and as it happened

I was not even

on this mountain

Moon Mountain

The light of awakening
appears when it has been
forgotten

High and vast the mountain
lifts forth
the moon

I myself
have climbed to
the summit

In the world outside of things
there is nothing
to get in the way

Free Old Man

His original way
is plain and simple
not caught up in things
He preaches the Dharma
at liquor stores
and fish shops
He pays no attention
to sacred rituals
or secular conventions
Thick white eyebrows
in his old age
signs of enlightenment

Visiting My Old Hut in Late Spring

At one time I lived
for several years
on this beach
now I come
wandering along here
as a visitor
The trees around the hut
still remember me
and the green
that returns after the flowers
offers me once more
what is left of the spring

On the blue waves

On the blue waves

the sun glitters

the mist is burned away

then the mountains appear

soaring close to the shore

each one the most beautiful

Already I have loaded the boat

to the sinking point

with the joy of the passing spring

Even Confucius

who smiled at his disciple's laughter

would envy what I see

39

Laughing Mountain

Originally it does not need
to have Ma-tsu step
on its foot
Ageless cliff with brushwood grown
never changing
from the beginning
It doesn't look high or rugged
at first nobody sees
how dangerous it is
But the cloud and mist around it
hide a forest
of swords

Inauguration of Fukusan Dormitory

Sacred and secular
originally live
in the same house
With compassionate hands
the Great Master has opened
the gate for the first time
Don't ask who
or how many
are in the hall
These tiles and rafters
contain all
of heaven and earth

Cloud Mountain

Living secluded
above the cloud
at the top of Mount Sū
abiding in your origin
you demonstrate
the truth of Zen
The sharp sword of wisdom
raised between your eyebrows
rests in your palms
You have moved far from town
from now on you renew
the Way of Bodhidharma

At Gen's Embarkation for Yuan China

Deep grief wringing the heart
 promising over and over to meet again
 you leave Deer's Joy Mountain
The colors of spring
 in a hundred castle gardens
 all live in your staff
Now that you have known
 the great death
 once and for all
may the original sail
 bring you east
 again to this land

43

At Kan's Embarkation for Yuan China

Setting out over the sea to the south
looking for the truth—

but it's too late

Sailing all that way

what do you hope to find
over the ocean

Right here and now

I'll spare you thirty blows
for a while

and wait for you to come back
some day

in brocade robes

At Iku's Embarkation for Yuan China

Whale billows
 thousands of miles
 all the way to the end of the sky
don't betray
 the boundless clear wind
 and the bright moon
When you have
 worn out
 your straw sandals
you will be back
 leaping free
 of the pit of Nang-yang

Mourning for the Layman Named Cloud Peak

In your old age
giving up your career you lived
free of the concerns of the world
you gave no more thought
to your own achievements
that had cost you such sweat
In the hollow night
the ship sails on
but where is it going
Age after age
you will raise a green peak
through the clouds

Patriarch Peaks

Twenty-eight Indian Patriarchs
six Chinese all reveal
the subtle working of Zen

Higher and higher
they soar into the blue sky
dwarfing the five summits of Mount Sumeru

Naturally their successors
come and try
to climb their peaks

The Dharma that has reached
its golden summit
never falls away

East Peak

From the beginning
people have gazed in awe at Taigaku
the East Peak
It shoots up into the heavens
on it the sun rises
the moon rises
Its original blue and yellow
are not among the colors
of other mountains
It will hold the spring sunlight
year after year
after year

Old Hut

A handful of thatch
has sheltered its master's head
since before time began
Now some new students
are gathering to wait
outside the gate
Don't say
there's nothing
new at all
Year after year
in this garden
the trees blossom

Tengan Oshō's Visit to Erin-ji

With your tall
 golden staff tinkling
 you have come all the way down
 Talking for days
 about things not of the world
 our words have been all we needed
 Sumptuous the colors
 of the halls
 and the temple buildings
 Lush and dense around them
 the serene beauty of the forest
 and the arbored walks
 Lovely! Our hearts are open
 Not a grain of sand
 in our friendship
 May it go on just like this!
 In the floating world of things
 needles hide in the carpet
 The memory of this visit
 should be handed down
 forever
 There is something beyond happiness
 inside the gate
 of this mountain

**LIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS:
TEN POEMS**

In this small hut

In this small hut
 are worlds beyond number
Living here alone
 I have endless company
Already I have
 attained the essence
How could I dare
 to want something higher

Among rocks and valleys

Among rocks and valleys
 deep in the folds of this mountain
the Dharma does not go
 up or down
Having seen through
 old Huang-lung's mind
I plant vegetables
 around my meditation seat

Very high this mountain

Very high this mountain
and few find their way up here
Only puffs of cloud
drift up and past
As I meditate my original self
empties all of heaven and earth
not at all like the lantern
in broad day

All worries and troubles

All worries and troubles
 have gone from my breast
and I play joyfully
 far from the world
For a person of Zen
 no limits exist
The blue sky must feel
 ashamed to be so small

A curtain of cloud hangs

A curtain of cloud hangs
before the meditation seat
an ice wheel of moonlight
turns through the railing
Don't say I have erased
all trace of attainment
Behind me there are still
heaven and earth

Don't ask suspiciously

Don't ask suspiciously
why I have shut the gate
and remain alone

Hiding light
is the way
one gives light

Thunder roars and roars
until nobody
hears it

On the other hand people say
that the valley is so deep
the dragon comes out late

I wake from my noon nap

I wake from my noon nap
and see the shadows
moving in the afternoon
Mist fades from the old cedar
and I am face to face
with Haku Mountain
Thirty years
so many events
have come and gone
Now I let them all go
and sit in the stillness
and am still

Green mountains

Green mountains
 have turned yellow
 so many times
the troubles and worries
 of the world of things
 no longer bother me
One grain of dust in the eye
 will render the Three Worlds
 too small to see
When the mind is still
 the floor where I sit
 is endless space

Time for a walk

Time for a walk
in the world outside
and a look at who I am
Originally I had no cares
and I am seeking
nothing special
Even for my guests
I have nothing
to offer
Except these white stones
and this clear
spring water

59

With compassionate hands

With compassionate hands
Buddha and Patriarchs
 constantly save those who are lost
Crimes and errors
 fill the whole sky
 and who knows it
Is there anything better
 than to stay at the foot
 of this misty cliff
watching in meditation
 the calm clouds
 on their way home to the cave

Pine Shade

A hedge

of a thousand trees

standing in the cold

The green haze

so deep and dense

it keeps out the light

Don't blame me

for staying alone

with my door shut

The guidepost

always stood open

for anyone who passed

Plum Window

The flowers on one tree have opened
and six houses
are full of the sweet scent
I have managed to transmit
the Sixth Patriarch's
fragrant teaching
Now all the counties
are made happy
by the coming of spring
What monkey
still hangs back
in dreamland

Jewel Field

I have cultivated
a piece of overgrown
wasteland

All the soil now
is beginning
to shed light

Autumn
is the time
of harvest

Each grain gathered
is worth
several castles

Truth Hall

First the outer gate
 then the inner gate
 under the high roof the low roof
Deep within
 there is no argument
 to be heard
Each of you be sure
 to find the deepest truth
 in yourself
and say "Maitreya
 Buddha of the future
 no more, thank you!"

No Precedent

Beyond any
link with the world
he really is
To him the Buddha's and Patriarch's
preaching is
a waste of breath
He has gone now
leaving behind nothing
nothing at all
The great roc
will never rest
in the green paulownia branches

Old Man To-The-Point

No inheritance

is like that from a true

heir of the Dharma

and there is no other school

or different sect

with which to quarrel

In your old age

you have gone deeper

into the truth under everything

and your eyebrows

have grown down

over your chin

Old Man Advancing

Beyond the point where the rivers
end and the mountains vanish
you have kept on walking

Originally

the treasure lies
just under one's feet

You made the mistake of thinking
that now you would be able
to retire in peace

Look: in your own hut
the meditation mat
has never been warm

Abiding Mountain

A violent storm
 beats against it
 but it never moves at all
Wild and solitary
 sharp and full of power
 it soars like a bird's feather
I give my assent only
 to one who has climbed
 to the summit
Walking sitting lying down
 he does everything as though
 he were out for a stroll

Snow Garden

Flowers with six petals
have covered the whole ground
and frozen everywhere
Heaven and earth have disappeared
into this one
pure color
A pine and a cedar
by the stone stairs
are still green
Shen-kuan
must have lost sight of the mind
of the great vessel

One Hut

The endless worlds
 have all gathered
 in this small hut
In the four directions
 and above and below
 there is no neighbor
All living beings
 secular and sacred
 live in here
Old Man Ho
 why do you go off visiting
 somebody else

Moon Tree Cliff

The moon trees keep growing and growing
their blossoms sweep
the wide ribbon of cloud

No one
has ever climbed the high branches
hidden in leaves

Subhuti has sat in his cave
for years on end
with his mind far away

not knowing that he is
in the moon tree cave
on the moon

Gem Creek

The mysterious valley fountain
is originally bright and clear
it was not made by humans
The banks on both sides
and the stream between them
all shine with one light
Without ruffling the surface
look carefully
into the depths
You'll see the uncountable
legendary jewels
of the Kunlun Mountains

No Word Hut

I left my locked mouth
 hanging
 on the wall
With the brushwood
 door shut tight
 I delight in my own freedom
Inside
 my secret talk resounds
 like thunder
Even the bare
 posts and the lamps
 can't pretend they don't hear it

Old Mountain

Out of the green of spring
and the yellow of autumn
all by yourself you went
into the numberless mountains
and you have stayed there
hidden for many years
Even the clouds
shun those peaks
nothing obstructs the view
The eternal landscape
of no season
is spread before you

No End Point

The whole world is clear and empty
to the ten directions
 There is no end point
And yet when we
 look carefully
 there is one after all
You fly out of this world
 looking backward
 riding the giant roc
into the hollow of a lotus thread
 to live there where heaven and earth
 were never divided

Lover of Mountains

Your compassionate mind
soars like a summit
there is your true effortless nature
some places smooth and gentle
some places rugged and
unapproachable
The mountain has
no wish to be
looked up to
It is only people
who look up
in wonder

Sūzan Oshō's Visit

Mountains on all sides
rivers looped around it
there's no trail to my hut
When the dragon-elephant approaches
a path opens
all by itself
In the hour of soaring talk
neither has to think
of meeting the other halfway
though all of you
keep wandering into
yes and no

77

Reply to Sūzan Oshō's Snow Poem

In one night
 ice flowers have filled
 all the forests and rivers
There shining clearly
 is Bodhidharma's guidepost
 a thousand years old
Inside the one color
 there is no
 stir of Zen
Shen-kuan stands in vain
 in snow
 up to his waist

The Pure Sound Pavilion of the Riverside Temple

The monastery

like the moon in the water—
heaven and earth are wide

The pavilion is reflected

a hundred pavilions
a thousand

A complete existence

nothing missing nothing left over
no need for the water to wash the ears clear

Day and night

outside the gate
the wide river flows

79

For Gen the New Head Priest of Erin-ji

Not leaving your
 Zen practice behind
 in the dreams of the Heavenly Palace
all by yourself
 you realize the elegance
 beyond elegance
Your old staff tinkling
 in the chilling dew and frost
 pierces heaven
In the Temple of the Forest of Wisdom
 the fruit is ripe
 now is the time

For Myō's Departure for Anzen-ji

Now the splendor of the Patriarch's Garden
is smudged with the rising
dust of war

Everywhere
Zen students are sitting
on mats of needles

No doubt your visit
will bring good fortune
upon the Temple of the Joy of Zen

The chill wind of wisdom
from one tinkling staff
is worth worlds beyond number

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For Myō's Departure for Shōfuku-ji

A single true man
appears in the world
and all falsehood vanishes
No need to worry
that the Way of the Patriarchs
seems to be declining
This time
your axe of wisdom
has found wings
Some day
surely it will rise up
and fly

For Tetsu the New Head Priest of Erin-ji

For a long time
the world
has been decaying
The Way of the Patriarchs
declines day by day
nothing to do about it
Good! Now the one monk
whose hands are never
tucked in his sleeves
enters
the Forest of Wisdom
with his axe held high

For Shō the New Head Priest of Erin-ji

Actions to save the world
 have their ups and downs
 depending on circumstances
You have to be as careful
 as though you were dragging half a ton
 by a hair
Spare no efforts
 to bring the Dharma rain
 to this countryside
The Forest of Wisdom
 will grow dense
 and cover the world

At Whole-World-In-View Hut

The heavens allowed me
to settle myself
on a small piece of land
Looking into the distance
digging far down
I delight in my own freedom
All who come here
feel the lids fall
from their eyes
This view
of the world without end—
there is nowhere to hide

Ashikaga Tadayoshi's Palace

When the blind is raised
at the clear window
one is facing the East Mountains
The magnificent landscape
stretches away
from the edge of the table
Everyone feels the silk veil
drawn back
from before his face
Illusions carried
through many lives
vanish in one moment

Climbing Down the Snowy Mountain

From inside the room
you can't tell whether it's snowing
outside or not
Don't judge
Zen students
sorting them into three piles
Sometimes one of them
will bolt suddenly
out to the endless mountains
kick over a peak
and grind it
under foot

Snow at Rōhatsu Sesshin

I have slept by the cold window
and come back
from the land of dreams
The eye of my mind
has opened by itself
with no need of the morning star
All of heaven and earth
hold up this mountain
covered with snow
Where in the world
is there a place
for Shakyamuni to practice

It

One by one many leaves
the colors of autumn
let go of their twigs and fall
The cold cloud full of rain
passes above
the hollow of the mountain
Everyone alive
is born gifted
with true sight
How do you see
these kōans
with your own eyes

Magnificent Peak

By its own nature
it towers above
the tangle of rivers
Don't say
it's a lot of dirt
piled high
Without end the mist of dawn
the evening cloud
draw their shadows across it
From the four directions
you can look up and see it
green and steep and wild

Reply to Bukkō Zenji's Poem at Seiken-ji

I remember that once
 my Dharma grandfather
 was happy to visit here
I feel ashamed sometimes
 to be inferior still
 to the seagull he saw then
But I'm lucky
 to hold in one phrase
 all the words of all the ages
Above the sea
 the full moon
 is shining on the shore

Snow

Flowers of ice

hide the heavens

no more blue sky

a silver dust

buries all the fields

and sinks the green mountains

Once the sun

comes out on the one

mountaintop

even the cold

that pierces to the bone

is a joy

Gem Forest

Long shadows
woven with light
dispel all trees but these
Even the bead trees of Japan
even gardenias
are not worth admitting
Polished by wind
buffed by rain
a forest without a flaw
each leaf
each branch
a treasure alone of its kind

Withered Zen

Both sacred wisdom
and ordinary feeling
have completely fallen away
no craving
for success and fame
rises in my mind
Don't tell me that I've fallen
into the cave
on Stone Frost Mountain
Inside my heart
I keep three thousand
prancing chestnut horses

The Fragrance of the Udumbara

Once in a thousand years
the Udumbara blooms
It has opened its auspicious flowers
Many labored
to bring it
from India to Japan
Its heady fragrance
lingers
without fading
and is not lost
among the thousand grasses
the countless weeds

House of Spring

Hundreds of open flowers
all come from
the one branch

Look
all their colors
appear in my garden

I open the clattering gate
and in the wind

I see
the spring sunlight
already it has reached
worlds without number

No Gain

Virtue and compassion
together make up
each one's integrity
Nothing that comes through the gate
from outside
can be the family treasure
Throwing away
the whole pile
in your heart
with empty hands
you come
bringing salvation

By the Sea

Stretching into the distance
the sea
swallows a hundred rivers
for thousands of miles
the spray joins the waves
to the sky
What is true
of the time you put up
the old sail
Right here
you come to know
where it is

For Ko Who Has Come Back from China

A brief meeting today
but it seems to gather up
a hundred years
We have exchanged
the compliments of the season
that's word-of-mouth Zen
Don't say that
your wisdom and my ignorance
belong to opposing worlds
Look: China and Japan
but there are not
two skies

**TEN SCENES IN THE DRAGON
OF HEAVEN TEMPLE**

The Gate of Universal Light

The great light of compassion
illuminates this world
in every part
As a boy
Sudhana stood
before the gates
When your eyelids
have fallen across
the whole of the empty world
the gate will open
at the snap of a finger
as it did then to let him pass

Incomparable Verse Valley

The sounds of the stream
 splash out
 the Buddha's sermon
Don't say
 that the deepest meaning
 comes only from one's mouth
Day and night
 eighty thousand poems
 arise one after the other
and in fact
 not a single word
 has ever been spoken

Hall of the Guardian God

Inside the temple enclosure
a place was set aside
for a Shinto shrine
Wish with your whole self
for the divine wind
to help the Way of the Patriarchs
Don't ask why the pine trees
in the front garden
are gnarled and crooked
The straightness
they were born with
is right there inside them

Hui-neng's Pond

The Dharma spring of the Sixth Patriarch
has never run dry
it is flowing even now
a single drop
has fallen and spread
far and deep
Don't be caught
by the decorations at the edge
and the wall around it
In the dead of night
the moonlight strikes
the middle of the pond

The Peak of the Held-Up Flower

On Vulture Peak

once the Buddha

held up a flower

It has been multiplied

into a thousand plants

one of them is on this mountain

Look: the fragrant seedlings

have been handed all the way down

to the present

No one knows

how many spring winds are blowing

in the timeless world

The Bridge Where the Moon Crosses

It arches like a rainbow
dividing the stream
joining the shores
one line
a road bringing life
crosses the quiet waves
It has carried
donkeys across horses across
but there is more to come
In the middle of the night
the moon is crossing it
pushing a cart

Three-Step Waterfall

At dangerous places

 awesome ledges

 three barriers

The loud water rushes

 The spray of the fall hovers

 It's hard to find the way

So many fish

 have fallen back

 with the stamp of failure on their foreheads

Who knows that this

 wind of blood

 is lashing the whole universe

Cave of the Thousand Pines

One heaven and earth
 deep in
 ten thousand pines
Green haze
 flickering
 hides the mouth of the cave
The heaven of a hermit
 belongs originally
 to a hermit
Don't say
 this place is not
 the earthly heaven

Dragon Gate House

With no help
from the Giant Spirit's
mountain-shattering fist
the two peaks allowed
a wide river
to flow between them
Late at night
no one
is coming
Beyond the railing
of the hut
a few puffs of passing cloud

Turtle Head Stupa

A pine tree
with long needles
has grown behind it
On top of the tower
there is a Buddha image
of eternal happiness
Now the doors and windows
are all open
and nothing inside is hidden
Dharma worlds
beyond number
are there for you to see

Tiger Valley

Steep mountains
 deep valley
 no one finds the way there
Tigers gather
 and fight
 fiercely together
The three saints
 crossing the bridge
 hand in hand
have mistaken the sound
 of the water
 for laughter

Tōki-no-Ge (Satori Poem)

Year after year
I dug in the earth
looking for the blue of heaven
only to feel
the pile of dirt
choking me
until once in the dead of night
I tripped on a broken brick
and kicked it into the air
and saw that without a thought
I had smashed the bones
of the empty sky

III

The Garden at the General's Residence

The beautiful landscape
of the three famous god-mountains
has all been reproduced here
Rough standing stones
a stream meandering
delight without end
How lovely! The setting
for elegant play
and serene pleasure
No doubt the Dharma stream
from the Sixth Patriarch's valley
runs through here

Temple of Eternal Light

The mountain range
the stones in the water
all are strange and rare
The beautiful landscape
as we know
belongs to those who are like it
The upper worlds
the lower worlds
originally are one thing
There is not a bit of dust
there is only this still and full
perfect enlightenment

Mugoku Oshō's Snow Poem

Everyone sees
 only the falling
 scentless flowers
No one has yet understood
 where the flakes fly
 and where they fall
Now you excellent monk
 are sitting
 in the meditation hall
You know that the mind
 rises from the origin
 in the eighth consciousness, doesn't it

Sūzan Oshō's Visit to My West Mountain Hut

A few puffs of white cloud
drift around the mouth
of the cave
without hindering
my Dharma friend when he comes
to knock at my door
I've never found a way
to hide my doing nothing
day after day
We join hands
and walk back and forth
back and forth

On the Wall of Cloud-Friend Hut

The cliff

towers beside the cave
shutting out the light

Half the space

in the six-foot bamboo hut
is given over to cloud

Living alone

a person takes
pleasure in such things

not regretting

the absence
of swarming visitors

Digging Out the Buddha Relic

From under the ground
it emerges into the world
offering enlightenment
The small circle of light
spreading around it
holds the numberless worlds
It is hard
to measure and weigh
its rarity
Clear and light unmistakably
there it lies
by the hoe

Reply to a Friend's Poem

Our karma led
 you and me
 to live on separate mountains
It is hard to speak
 as the wind does
 across a thousand miles
But nothing comes between
 the cloud in Ch'u
 and the water in Yueh
Meeting in our old age
 we are happy to talk
 day and night

Ox Turned Loose

Ignoring lash and rope
 he moves along following
 the Original Nature
He is playing outside the fence
 he won't look back
 at anyone
There is no way
 that I could have found
 his tracks anywhere
but look he shows his whole body
 in worlds
 countless as dust and sand

Clear Valley

The water that can't be muddied
with any stick
is deeper than depth
The sky and the water
are a single
deepening blue
If you really want to find
the source of the Sixth Patriarch's
fountain
don't look for it
on the one bank or on the other
or in the middle of the stream

Old Man at Leisure

Sacred or secular

manners and conventions

make no difference to him

Completely free

leaving it all to heaven

he seems like a simpleton

No one catches

a glimpse inside

his mind

this old man

all by himself

between heaven and earth

Ancient Origin

One drop of Dharma water
from the Sixth Patriarch's valley
was there before the first legendary Buddha
it comes from a great distance
and I know that its source
is far within
Pity the one who has not yet
come home
from over the sea
and goes on looking somewhere else
for the great subtle mind
of the Buddha of India

Old Man of Few Words

The silent old man
asked me to write
a poem for him
The silly contradictions
in the one I composed
made people laugh to death
Look carefully again
at the truth
of nonduality
then even Vimalakirti's
jaw will drop
like bark on a birch tree

Jewel Cliff

Sharp facets

 a brightness

 not made by cutting

Eight faces

 clear and bright

 no stain anywhere

Good! Here is

 the very form

 of transcendent wisdom

Day and night

 all the gods in heaven

 will rain flowers upon it

Joy Mountain

Grasses and trees
 look different
 and the auspices are good
Puffs of cloud
 delight in trailing
 around the peak
A thousand mountains
 a million hills
 look up to its virtue
Is there anyone
 who has never been blessed
 with its shelter?

For a Monk Going West

For many years
 our friendship
 has ripened
One morning
 you say good-bye
 and start down to the west
Stop trying to find the secret
 of succeeding
 as head priest
Look the sharp axe
 has been in your hands
 since the beginning

Flat Mountain

Broad and flat
it emerges
beyond height
Seven shoulders
eight hollows
all shelve to one plane
No one
knows where
the summit is
From the beginning
there was never
a path to it

Beyond the World

This place of wild land
has no boundaries
north south east or west
It is hard to see
even the tree
in the middle of it
Turning your head
you can look beyond
each direction
For the first time
you know that your eyes
have been deceiving you

Beyond Light

The clear mirror
and its stand
have been broken
There is no dust
in the eyes
of the blind donkey
Dark
dark everywhere
the appearance of subtle Zen
Let it be
The garden lantern
opens its mouth laughing

Hut in Harmony

When the master
 without a word
 raises his eyebrows
the posts and rafters
 the cross beams and roof tree
 begin to smile
There is another place
 for conversing
 heart to heart
The full moon
 and the breeze
 at the half-open window

Lamenting the Civil War

So many times since antiquity
the human world
has barely escaped destruction
yet ten thousand fortunes
and a thousand misfortunes
and in one void after all
Puppets squabbling
back and forth
across the stage
People brawling
over a snail's horn
winning or losing
The ferocity
of a snipe and a clam
glaring at each other
only to arrive after death
before the tribunal
of Yama the Judge of Hell
When will the horses of war
be turned loose
on Flower Mountain
It would be best
to throw their bits away
to the east of the Buddha's Palace

Sermons

WEST MOUNTAIN EVENING TALK

When the Master was living at Nanzen-ji as a head priest, Gen'nō Oshō said to him, "For the last twenty years, ever since you finished your study in the monasteries, you have been moving from one place to another. By now you have changed the place you live more than ten times. I think this is harmful to a Zen student. It exhausts him and interferes with his practice. But recently I read the *Sutra for the Period of the Imitative Dharma* and according to that, the Buddha said, 'Students must stay at one place for no more than three months. Anyone who accuses those who move on of being flighty will go to Hell.' That disposed of some of my concern."

The Master answered, "It was not because of the Buddha's words that I kept moving on. I think of his enlightenment as my home, and I never left that whether I went off to the east or stayed behind in the west. Some people stay at one monastery for a long time but they do not always sit on the same Zen mat. Sometimes they leave it to wash their hands or faces. Sometimes they walk in the garden or climb a mountain to look out over the country. You might say that they too were rather frivolous. But because their minds are fixed on the one point even when they are moving around it is not correct to say that they are somewhere else. If they can free their limited minds and play in the boundless world, there is nothing to reproach them for, is there?"

A monk said to the Master, “You are a descendant of Lin-chi [in Japanese, Rinzai] Zenji, but you do not teach your students in the traditional Rinzai way. Instead you always give lectures on the sutras. Why is that?”

The Master answered, “For a Zen student, knowledge-understanding and practice-understanding must go together. Even then the student will not be able to benefit everyone until he has found the right person and the right circumstances. I am still no more than a fledgling, and my ability is only partly formed. I have not met the one teacher or found the best circumstances. So it is a mistake to be too critical of me.

“Nowadays there is a tendency among Zen followers who cannot see into themselves or into the subtle workings of Zen to memorize old saws just to keep a dialogue turning like a wheel, and sometimes they push or pull in some manner that’s supposed to look like Zen. They flatter themselves that in doing things like that they are manifesting the heart of the Dharma. None of that amounts to anything. They’re deceiving themselves. It’s not hard to imitate the manners of the ancients, but it’s very difficult to attain their virtue. I don’t think much of those who set such store by externals and never notice their own lack of virtue.”

The monk went on, “Then why do you preside over a sangha, comment on the sayings of our predecessors, and expound the sutras?”

The Master replied, “Those who do evil do it not because they want to go to hell but because of an earlier karma. I myself would not dare to aspire to the title of ‘Master.’ Just the same I lead a sangha only because some remnant of virtue enacted in a former life impels me to do it. I don’t wish to enjoy a retired life with my gate shut. And it follows, just as my arms swing when

I walk, that I expound the sutras, comment on the words of the Patriarchs, and in that way allow those who do not believe in the law of cause and effect to learn that it exists, and help people who know nothing of Mahayana and of Zen to learn the truth. Once a Zen master served tea to travelers beside the road for the purpose of sharing the Dharma with many people. My purpose is the same when I talk about the sayings and teaching of the Buddha and the Patriarchs.”

The monk asked, “Many priests and laypeople nowadays believe in Zen, so why do you say that you have not had a chance to meet someone suited to you?”

The Master answered, “I don’t mean that no one has Zen insight, but only that no one’s view accords completely with mine.”

The monk went on, “Even a dull student, though he may not attain satori, will grasp something of the Dharma if you show it to him directly. Why do you ignore someone like that?”

The Master answered, “Haven’t you heard the saying, ‘A thousand-pound bow and arrow won’t hit a mouse’? The Buddha came to this world and his silent words and his long sermons have filled the sutra storehouse to overflowing. Why didn’t he simply show the truth? You should consider that. Yuan-wu says, ‘First deprive students of their preconceptions, and then they will be ready to undergo the ordinary rigorous Zen practice.’ And Ta-hui says, ‘Zen teachers should only preach Dharma according to their students’ levels of Zen understanding. The Master’s way of teaching, sudden as a flint spark or a flash of lightning, can be grasped only by those who are ready for it. To use Zen methods of that kind with novices would be like pulling up young shoots that have just been planted out.’”

The monk continued, “Are you saying that the Buddha’s teachings really are not true?”

The Master replied, "All of your questions miss the point. So the answers I've been giving you can't be worth much either. I have made mud pies of words just to try to help you understand. A man once wrote to Yuan-wu, 'Please give me a kōan.' Yuan-wu answered, 'I hear you have always read the *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment*. My kōan for you is in that.'

"Yuan-wu usually gave his students kōans such as 'Mount Sumeru,' 'The Dry Shit-Stick,' and 'Chao-chou's Mu.' What kind of kōan is 'Read the Sutra'? But if you understand what Yuan-wu really meant, you will see that not only the *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment* but the other thousand sutras and ten thousand sayings, and even secular gossip and idle chatter, all of them without exception, are precisely the kōans of the Patriarchs and the teachings of the Buddha. How dare you say that this is not true? Do you still criticize me for lecturing on the sutras and insist that I am not competent to be a Zen teacher?

"Once a master said, 'Before the days of Ma-tsu and Pai-chang teachers put much emphasis on *richi* [in intellectual learning] and little on *kikan* [in Zen practice].' What did he really mean? That the earlier teachers displayed nothing but intellectual understanding because they were without true insight? Or that those of later times lacked insight and so guided their students from the point of view of practice only, contradicting their predecessors? The teachings of the Patriarchs, as you know, are very different from the elucidations of Buddhist scholars, who never get further than 'one foot is one foot and two feet are two feet.' To be able to make one's actions really accord with circumstances, watching the movements of the opponent and breaking through them, this is the meaning of the well-known Zen phrase, 'family broken up, house ruined.' Today people divide up into two groups, those who believe in practice

and those who put their trust in intellectual understanding, but neither of them has got out of the scholars' gate. The Buddha said, 'From my first sermon at the Deer Park to my last one by the Hiranyavati River I have not preached a single word.' If you can see what he meant by that you may praise me or abuse me as you please."

The Master used to say to us when we were his students, "When I was twenty I became a novice at Ken'nin-ji. I never left the zendō at all but gave myself up completely to my practice. The next winter I went down east to enroll at the zendō of Kenchō-ji. An old priest there gave me this advice: 'The records of the phrases and sayings that have been saved from the satori experiences of the Zen masters of the past have been written down only in order to help Zen students to reach satori through the contemplation of those words. But many people today trade secondhand Zen stories, gossip, rumors, and they use the collections any way they please. And there are people besides who call themselves Zen monks but do zazen in an absentminded way, without bothering to learn from the great teachers or read the records of the Patriarchs. All of them are ignorant of why those books were preserved for us. In this degenerate latter day of the Dharma it is very hard to find true teachers. But if we read the records in order to encourage our own earnest aspiration, we will come to see that the forerunners' satori experiences are really our own, here and now. Where in the world, then, is the difference between past and present?'

"I followed his advice and in the hours outside zazen time, back in the sleeping hall, I read the records. At that time Issan Kokushi was in charge of both Kenchō-ji and Engaku-ji. For some years I became his disciple. From morning till evening I

learned directly from his teachings and from the Zen of the Five Schools. I began to flatter myself that I had grasped the whole truth of Zen Buddhism. But when I looked back into my own mind I found the same old uncertainty there. It had never changed. Finally I realized that 'nothing that is brought through the gate from outside is the real family treasure.' A master once said, 'The light of the spirit must always be clear. That is the unalterable rule. Once you have entered the gate of Zen, do not put your faith in intellectual understanding.' I had left Buddhist theory only to lose myself in Zen scholarship. The two kinds of study may appear to be different, but both of them are based on intellectual understanding. If I had gone on that way I would have dimmed the light of my own spirit. So I gathered up all the odds and ends that I had treasured up until then and put them in my satchel, and without a moment's hesitation threw them into the fire.

"As it happened, Bukkoku Zenji was then in charge of Manju-ji. I entered his room for the first time and told him what I was trying to find. Bukkoku sighed and said, 'When I was sixteen I became a Zen student at Tōfuku-ji, under the guidance of an old priest. He told me to read the Zen classics. Each line that I read I asked him about, and he said to me, "The words that are used in Zen are different from those of the other sects of Buddhist doctrine, and I would not dare to say anything about them." I went on, "But how can we understand what they mean if there is no explanation?" He said to me, "Satori is something you must arrive at without help from anyone." I said, "If I try very hard to understand the Zen classics, will that lead me to satori?" He answered, "If you really want to attain satori you should do your best without relying on books." As soon as I heard that I stopped reading, and instead I devoted myself en-

tirely to zazen, back in the zendō. Several of my friends came and kept advising me: “While you are young you must study, first of all. Your momentary zeal for the Dharma cannot be expected to last. In your old age you will surely regret what you are doing.” But my mind was firmly made up, and I continued my zazen harder than ever. Now I am over sixty years old but I have nothing to regret.’ My teacher laughed as he said it.

“Once he had given me his advice I made up my mind to do the best I could. I practiced zazen every day whatever the weather. My practice did seem to advance a little but I did not arrive at any final breakthrough. So I decided to look for a retreat deep in the mountains and try to see my Original Self. I left Engaku-ji and went to the Deep North to build a hut far out in the mountains. I made a vow to myself. I said, ‘I will either come to see my Original Self clearly or I will die among the grass and trees.’ As a *keisaku* [warning stick] I kept three books on my table, Yuan-wu’s *Essential Principles of Mind*, Ta-hui’s *Letters*, and Chueh-fan’s *Forest Life*, but no other possessions. I spent three years in my secluded life in the mountains but I had not yet reached a final view. One day I remembered Bukkoku Zenji’s parting words: ‘If a Zen student makes the slightest distinction between the secular world and priestly world, satori will remain unattainable.’ I realized that although I had coveted nothing at all in this secular world, my desire for the Dharma had ensnared my mind and stood in the way of enlightenment. When I realized what my mistake had been even my craving vanished, and from then on I could spend every day with my mind empty. And one night I happened to kick over the nests and dens of delusion that I had kept clinging to, and at last I saw that Bukkoku’s words are true.

“So I gave those three books that I had treasured to my

friends. I stayed away from books, and never let my back or my sides rest on the bed. In that way I spent twenty years doing nothing special. But as I grow older my body is growing weaker, and now it is a little hard for me to sit zazen for very long at a time. The winds of karma have led me to preside over a few temples and to teach students, and to run back and forth, east and west. My daily life is not what I wanted at the beginning, but I have not clouded over my own original light, even in the dusty world, and that was because I had practiced zazen as hard as I could, sitting persistently and not sleeping in bed. My teachings and sermons in the Dharma Hall, my talks on the records of the Patriarchs, and my lectures on the sutras in response to people's questions may sound a little unusual, but I am not concerned about that. That is all because of my turning away from intellectual interpretation years ago. Now I have come to understand what a Zen master meant when he said, 'The more is hidden, the more appears.' Hide it, and hide it, and hide it! When there is nothing more to hide, the original, inborn 'great function and great working' appears all by itself. Never, never doubt that."

The Master said, "Bukkō Zenji's advice to his disciple Bukkoku goes: 'I doubt that many students in Japan will attain satori in their lifetimes. Some students in this country tend to admire intellectual understanding instead of trying to attain satori. It is a pity that students with great capacity waste their whole lives reading widely in the native and foreign classics, cultivating the art of composition, and in that way leaving no time for coming to see clearly into their Original Nature. There are students of another kind who do not have this wide knowledge and culture, but think it best to sit in zazen absentmindedly, never making

any real effort to seek the Way. People like this will never reach satori, either, however long they remain in the world.'

"When my teacher, Bukkoku, told me this, I said, 'Apart from those who are born with the capacity for immediately perceiving the truth, which of the two you have described is superior?' My teacher answered, 'Even students with little ability can attain satori in this life. If they continue diligently in their zazen until the last day of the last year of their lives, a single word will be enough for them to attain satori a thousand times over. On the other hand, those who rely on their learning will not only waste their lives in this world, but in their next lives too they will fall into a world that they would rather avoid.'"

A monk said to the Master, "Those who use their scholarship to seem superior to others are beyond consideration. But why do you criticize those Zen students who have studied the Zen classics and so give off the light of wisdom?"

The Master answered, "Second-rate and third-rate students cannot go back at once to their own Original Home. So out of pity for them the Patriarchs built temporary inns for them, which are like the classics you mention. In a sense these inns are good to have. Everyone needs sermons on the sutras at the sutra inns, sermons on the precepts at the precept inns, commentary on the records of Zen at the commentary inns. So there is no reason to rule out Zen preaching entirely.

"But a priest once said, 'Bodhidharma came to China from India. And without relying on words and letters he pointed straight at the mind and brought students to realize satori.' And he went on, 'If looking into the true self is merely a matter of words, the whole of Buddhist scripture is nothing but

words. Then what is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming to China?' Huang-po says, 'If any of you students wishes to be a Buddha, there is no need at all to make a study of any Dharma whatever. Just learn noninquiry and nonattachment. There is no mind that is born unless you seek for something. There is no mind that dies unless you are attached to something. To be without birth or death is Buddhahood. The eighty-four thousand gates to the Dharma are there only to attract the students' attention.' This is only a teaching of ours, who are followers of Bodhidharma. All the teachings of the Great Vehicle [Mahayana] follow the same path.

"The *Lotus Sutra* says, 'Once at the Void-King's palace a craving for enlightenment awoke in me and in Ananda at the same time. He set about acquiring wide learning, whereas I devoted all my energies to practice. That is why I have attained enlightenment.' The *Surangama Sutra* says, 'When he saw the Buddha, Ananda cried out in grief, lamenting the fact that he could acquire no Dharma power because he had devoted himself from the beginning to seeking knowledge only.' The *Sutra on Perfect Enlightenment* says, 'Whatever they may desire, students with no enlightenment who do not practice have no chance of attaining satori. They devote themselves to acquiring more knowledge, and in so doing simply make it harder than ever for themselves to see their true natures.' No one, even though he were to emit the light of wisdom as a result of reading many books, could compare his learning with Ananda's. It is much better to find the Buddha's way to enlightenment than to rely on scholarship. I am reluctant to speak of the sayings of the Patriarchs and to lecture on the sutras. Because what I really want is to make my students understand that the core of the

teachings of the Buddha and the Patriarchs is never found in words and letters.”

The monk inquired further: “Zen masters welcome the students of the first kind, and guide them with words and with direct presentations of mind, and they think most highly of those who have mastered both. So it is only natural that some gifted students should try to master mind and words at the same time. Do you say they are wrong?”

The Master answered, “One of our forerunners once said, ‘Students who have had no glimpse of enlightenment would do better to study mind first rather than words. Those who have attained some enlightenment should study words first and then mind. You have called mind and words into question, but you know nothing of their real workings.’ Another master said, ‘Words polish mind and mind polishes words. It’s best when you can use them freely, just as you please.’ Do you really understand what he is saying? You must realize that the original state of satori has nothing to do with either of them, but that mind and words are separated simply as a means for teaching novices. Beginning students try to understand their teachers’ words by analyzing them, and as a result they block their own way and lose the pointer that was guiding them toward satori. That is why the master said, ‘Students who have had no glimpse of enlightenment would do better to study mind first rather than words.’ On the other hand, someone who has attained enlightenment but has not mastered words will not be recognized as a master and will not be able to teach and guide students. So one may have a high regard for a perfect command of both mind and words without directing beginners to study mind and words at the same time.”

The monk asked, “Zen masters these days give a kōan to their disciples. This makes students study words, doesn’t it?”

The Master answered, “No it doesn’t. Yuan-wu said, ‘Students who have just started Zen practice have no idea about it. So out of compassion the masters give them a kōan as a signpost, so that the disciples can devote themselves to discovering oneness and dispelling random illusions, and to realizing finally that the Original Mind is not something that comes from outside. After that, all the kōans turn out to be pieces of tile for knocking at the gate.’ Do you consider this explanation of Yuan-wu’s a deception? You must understand that Zen masters give their disciples a kōan simply in order to guide them through the Gate of Satori into their own homes.

“Ta-hui used to cite a passage from some forerunner’s sermon, to his own students: ‘Don’t try to use your intellect to grasp the truth. Don’t just swallow everything that has been preached. And don’t lock yourself up in the storehouse, where nothing happens.’ This teaching is a sign of Ta-hui’s deep, grandmotherly kindness. With it he blindfolds your eyes to let you see with your mind. You can understand from this that it is not words at all that Ta-hui wants you to study. Any students who have succeeded in returning their minds to the Original Silence by sitting on the zazen cushion but are still content with their marvelous skill with words are still a long way from the true study of mind.

“Yuan-wu says, “The phrase “This mind, the Buddha” shows the truth as plainly as though it were seen through a wide-open gate. The other one, “No mind, no Buddha,” forces one to face the truth directly and see through it. Without getting stuck in these words, pass right through them and then you will see clearly the whole mind of the Patriarchs, unveiled. If you get

stuck in the words you will never attain enlightenment.’ He says besides, ‘If you are someone with great inborn genius there is no need to make a study of the old words and kōans. When you wake up in the morning, make your mind clear and calm. Whatever has to be done then, do it as well as you can. Afterward, think it over carefully, and see what you have done and what it amounts to. When you have done these things thoroughly you will find yourself right there in the monastery of purity and no-happening.’

“These two masters set forth the very core of Zen practice. But most students these days fish words and dialogues of the masters out of books and store them in their heads until they have a chance to spar with others, using their cleverness in Zen talk, and they flatter themselves that they have attained the subtle way of the Patriarchs. But this is just what Yuan-wu calls conceit and delusion.”

The monk questioned him again: “Those students who repeat Zen stories secondhand, and swallow hearsay and gossip, and convince themselves that they have attained satori are of course full of conceit and delusion. But there are some very gifted students who have penetrated to the core of Zen words. Are they not to be called people of satori?”

The Master answered, “Even those who have a keen insight into Zen words are to be called people accomplished in words but not in mind unless they have attained clear satori. As for those who merely pass on secondhand stories, swallow rumors, and gossip, they are not worth commenting on. A master says, ‘Just grasp the essence, don’t concern yourself with the results.’ Attaining genuine satori is the essential. The manifestation of its great working is the result. It’s like planting a tree. If the root

goes deep, the leaves and flowers and fruit will be sure to flourish.

“Ta-hui says, ‘In Zen practice generally, result is not everything.’ And he tells this story:

Yun-kai Shou-chi on Cloud-Covered Mountain was a master known for his penetrating insight. One day the governor of the province came up the mountain and stopped for a rest at Talking-Void House. He asked, “What is the Talking-Void House?”

Shou-chi answered, “This is the Talking-Void House.”

The governor was disappointed at this answer. So he sent for Yun-kai Chi-pen and asked him the same question.

Chi-pen answered, “I just preach the Dharma at the House. Why am I supposed to talk about the void with my mouth?”

The governor was delighted, and appointed Chi-pen to preside over the monastery on Cloud-Covered Mountain.

If you compare the two, Chi-pen and Shou-chi, the former is far behind the latter. But satori is not merely a matter of results.

Pao-feng Ch’u-yuan on Treasure Peak was another master who had attained deep satori, but his handling of Zen dialogue was clumsy. Chueh-fan nicknamed him ‘Yuan Fifty Liters.’ Ch’u-yuan merely breathed with his mouth open until the fifty liters of rice came to a boil, and only then would he answer a question.”

The monk asked, “If words and letters have a bad influence on students at the beginning, why did the masters in the past leave so many words of different kinds—the *daigo* [substitute words], *betsugo* [supplementary words], *nenko* [short com-

ments], and *juko* [poetic comments] which are now widely used?”

The Master answered, “Those masters of discerning insight had a perfect command of words, and they used their skill to teach their disciples. Each word and phrase may show a different aspect of Zen, but each is no more than a means—like the woman’s call for her maid, not for an errand but simply so that her lover would hear her voice and know that she was there inside the window. The masters’ words did no harm to their students, and some bright ones grasped the essential beyond those words. But with the passage of time, misunderstandings inevitably occurred. Many stupid people came along, like the man who spent all his time watching the old stump into which a rabbit had run and killed itself—he was waiting for it to happen again. Or the one who dropped his sword into the current from his moving boat and marked the side of the boat to show where it fell, and then searched in the water underneath. Then every five hundred years or so a great master appears in the world who can wipe out all these accumulated evils. That is what is called ‘breaking the deadlock’ or ‘family broken up, house ruined.’

“Once Yuan-wu, when he was living on Chia Mountain, prepared lectures for his disciples, called *Hsueh-tou’s Hundred Kōans with Verse Comments*. Later the lectures were compiled and published under the title of *The Blue Cliff Records*. But Fochien, a Dharma brother, wrote to him reproachfully, saying, ‘When I served Wu-tsu Fa-yen he encouraged us by saying, “Each of you, when you become a Buddha some day, a teacher of the world, be sure that you devote yourselves entirely to ‘this matter’—I mean the attainment and deepening of satori.” I was so impressed by his words that I have never forgotten them. I hear that you have added many comments to *Hsueh-tou’s Verse*

Comments, with a view to helping your students to understand. When I learned that I could not help shedding tears. I thought that you were a man of true satori. Why on earth have you been doing such a thing? Why don't you show your disciples the one Original Truth that was there before Bodhidharma visited China? And so on. . . .' According to *Ta-hui's Discourses*, 'When my teacher read Fo-chien's letter he gave up the undertaking.'

"But some meddlesome fellows published Yuan-wu's lectures in book form and so they came into general use. Later, Ta-hui burned the printing blocks. That was an example of 'family broken up, house ruined.' In 1304, two hundred years after the blocks were burned, Chang Ming-yuan republished the book, which was then widely read. A man named Old Man San-chiao wrote a preface to it. He said, 'Someone asked me whether it would be better to keep the copies of *The Blue Cliff Records* or to burn them. I answered that either would be good. . . .' The writer of the preface maintains that there is a good reason for both of the contradictory things: for Yuan-wu's lectures and for Ta-hui's burning them. This official is ignorant of the fact that the masters' intention was neither to keep nor to burn the book.

"Before the days of Ma-tsu and Pai-chang, masters put much emphasis on *richi* and little on *kikan*. Later they paid a great deal of attention to practice and little to theoretical study. Later, in the days of Feng-hsueh and Hsing-hua, they resorted to higher expressions of Zen experience, and this tendency made it more difficult to grasp their teachings. This is another example of 'breaking the deadlock.' After all, we should remember that the Patriarchs' aim is neither study nor practice, but that both are merely means, like the woman calling her maid for no errand. So the Master says, 'If I meet someone who is ready for my

Dharma I will hand it on to that person. Otherwise, I will leave everything to the way of the world.' He adds, 'Face the Buddha's teachings as though they were the enemy you will never forgive, and then you may learn something of them.' ”

The monk went on, “Well, then, would it be best to spend one's time in complete silence, without reading anything?”

The Master answered, “One master said, ‘The truth can be attained neither by words nor by silence.’ The Patriarchs and the descendants of the Bodhidharma are not supposed to rely on words and letters. Is that supposed to mean that silence is to be preferred and words are to be avoided? On the contrary, the one thing they want is for students to see that the real truth lies neither in words nor in silence. Once this fact is clear to you, all the teachings of the Buddha and the Patriarchs are matters within your own house. So if you want to understand their teachings, please let go of whatever knowledge and wisdom you may have acquired up until now, and forgetting about yourself entirely, devote yourself completely to the one kōan. Those students who are naturally gifted will not only go beyond kōan study but will also escape falling into mere silence. They always go straight to the essential. Those are the ones that are unquestionably my disciples. Everything that I have said up until now is for their sake. I am unwilling to teach those scatterbrained students who have no sincere wish for the truth but only a restless urge to collect knowledge. But some who are aware of the unremitting law of cause and effect, and live a modest life, or who try to learn something from Zen monastery life, and practice to make something of their lives, may be able to accomplish a kind of Zen in their own way. I cannot turn aside from such people either.

“One of Pu-tai's ‘Ten No-Uses’ goes, ‘If both practice and learning were to be abandoned, even priesthood would be

meaningless.' This may reflect on what I have been saying. Lately some priests have turned their whole study to scriptures other than Buddhist. But there they really learn neither mind nor words. Do they in fact deserve to be called Zen priests? Such people have been dealt with already in a number of the sutras. Since they have become disciples of the Buddha, why do they pay no attention to his teachings?"

The monk's questions continued: "There are people who have learned Zen talk and flatter themselves that they have fully understood what is meant by 'Bodhidharma's reason for coming to China.' What makes you assume that they have not attained enlightenment?"

The Master answered, "Once a master said, 'Bodhidharma came to China from the west but he never preached a word of the Dharma to anyone. All he did was to show that everyone without exception is endowed with the Dharma and is already accomplished and perfect, and that there is not the slightest gap between each individual and the Buddha and the Patriarchs. Since everyone is no different from the Buddha and the Patriarchs, it is pointless to argue about superiority and inferiority between you and me. If someone is so conceited as to insist that he is enlightened but others are not, it is quite obvious that this person is not enlightened and has not understood the meaning of 'Bodhidharma's reason for coming to China from India.' Those who have grasped the mind of Bodhidharma know perfectly well that the sutra-studying school's theories of the relative and absolute, phenomena and noumena, and Zen's *richi* and *kikan* are after all nothing but fingers pointing at the moon, or tiles for knocking at the gate. Students get together nowadays to measure each other's fingers or to guess the dimensions of each other's piece of tile, and they manage to persuade themselves that

they have attained satori. This is nothing but 'lip Zen.' How could we call people like this descendants of Bodhidharma?

“Ta-hui was a wandering monk in his youth, and he learned 'lip Zen.' He flattered himself that he had attained complete satori, but he realized at last that that was not true. He visited Yuan-wu and finally had his lumps of illusion smashed to pieces. After that he always spoke of his mistake as a way of warning his disciples. Today's students, too, must keep this teaching in mind. The masters with true insight hold out their hands to offer guidance, sometimes seizing their disciples, sometimes turning them loose, sometimes snatching everything away from them, sometimes giving them everything. They do it all as quickly and with as little trace as a flint spark or a flash of lightning. This is the art of the great masters, the art of blind-folding one's distracted eyes. Yung-chia says, 'Sometimes I say yes and sometimes no; nobody knows which beforehand. Upside down or right side up: even Heaven cannot predict.' Those who have not reached his level of satori but merely imitate the art of the masters deceive themselves and, what is worse, let loose an evil karma that spreads to many others. We must be very careful about this.”

ON GARDENS AND THE WAY

From *Dialogues in the Dream*, section 57

From ancient times until now there have been many who have delighted in raising up mounds of earth, making arrangements of stones, planting trees, and hollowing out watercourses. We call what they make “mountains and streams.” Though all seem to share a common liking for this art of gardening, they are often guided by very different impulses.

There are those who practice the art of gardening out of vanity and a passion for display, with no interest whatever in their own true natures. They are concerned only with having their gardens attract the admiration of others.

And some, indulging their passion for acquiring things, add these “mountains and streams” to the accumulation of rare and expensive things that they possess, and end up by cherishing a passion for them. They select particularly remarkable stones and uncommon trees to have for their own. Such persons are insensible to the beauty of mountains and streams. They are merely people of the world of dust.

Po Lo-t'ien dug a little pool beside which he planted a few bamboos, which he cared for with love. He wrote a poem about them:

The bamboo—its heart is empty.
It has become my friend.

The water—its heart is pure.
It has become my teacher.

Those everywhere who love mountains and rivers have the same heart as Lo-t'ien and know the way out of the dust of the world. Some whose nature is simple are not attracted by worldly things and they raise their spirits by reciting poems in the presence of fountains and rocks. The expression “a chronic liking for mist, incurably stricken by fountains and rocks” tells something about them. One might say that these are secular people of refined taste. Though they are in the world and without the spirit of the Way, this love of the art of gardens is nevertheless a root of transformation.

In others there is a spirit that comes awake in the presence of these mountains and rivers and is drawn out of the dullness of daily existence. And so these mountains and rivers help them in the practice of the Way. Theirs is not the usual love of mountains and rivers. These people are worthy of respect. But they cannot yet claim to be followers of the true Way because they still make a distinction between mountains and rivers and the practice of the Way.

Still others see the mountain, the river, the earth, the grass, the tree, the tile, the pebble, as their own essential nature. They love, for the length of a morning, the mountain and the river. What appears in them to be no different from a worldly passion is at once the spirit of the Way. Their minds are one with the atmosphere of the fountain, the stone, the grass, and the tree, changing through the four seasons. This is the true manner in which those who are followers of the Way love mountains and rivers.

So one cannot say categorically that a liking for mountains

and rivers is a bad thing or a good thing. There is neither gain nor loss in the mountain and the river. Gain and loss exist only in the human mind.

From *Dialogues in the Dream*, section 76

One time I went with seven or eight monks to West Lake, at the foot of Mount Fuji. It seemed to us that we had found a place of enchantment, and we could not help being moved by everything that we saw. We found a fisherman who lived by the lake there and got him to take us in the boat. Wherever the boat turned we saw another magnificent landscape. The monks could not contain their emotion, and kept exclaiming and clapping the side of the boat with their hands. The old man, who had lived by that lake all his life and seen the landscape every day from morning until evening, thought nothing of it. When he saw how excited the monks were he asked, "What is it? What are you so worked up about?" The monks answered, "We are admiring the beauty of this landscape, the views of this mountain and this lake." The old man was more puzzled than ever and he said, "You came all the way here just to see that?" He could not understand it.

I said to the monks, "If this old man asks us to explain to him what there is about this place that moves us, how can we tell him? If we point to the landscape of mountains and rivers and say to him that what moves us is just that, the old man will say that he has seen that for years and that there is nothing remarkable about it. On the other hand, if we try to change his mind by telling him that we are moved by something besides what he sees in front of him, he will think that what he sees is not what we care for at all, and that there is a further splendor beyond the West Lake."

The meaning of the “special transmission outside the scriptures” is just like this.

From *Dialogues in the Dream*, section 93

QUESTION: Teacher, what is the gate of the Law which you are really showing to others?

ANSWER: In Silla the sun shines at midnight!

This exchange is the conclusion of *Dialogues in the Dream* as it was edited by Musō's followers. *Silla* was an ancient Korean kingdom. The name had come to signify somewhere impossibly remote in time and place, and that is one of its meanings here.

MUSŌ'S ADMONITION

(In some Zen temples in Japan this has been recited regularly as an exhortation ever since Musō's time.)

I have three sorts of disciples. The best are those who resolutely give up all worldly relationships and devote themselves wholly to seeking and realizing their own true natures. The middle sort are not really earnest in Zen practice, and in order to find distraction from it prefer to read about it in books. The lowest are those who eclipse the light of their self-nature and do nothing but lick up the Buddha's spit. As for those students who care about nothing but non-Buddhist books and their own literary reputations, they are nothing more than laypeople with shaven heads. They are lower than the lowest. And lower still are those who spend their time doing nothing but eating and sleeping. Do they even deserve to be called black-robed monks? A Zen master once called them "robe-hangers" and "rice bags." They are not monks at all, and I will not let them come and go in the temple and subtemples, calling themselves my disciples. I will not even put them up for a visit and certainly would not let them stay to become followers of mine. This is the will left by this old monk. Don't blame me for not extending mercy and love to everyone. My one wish is for all students to see and correct their shortcomings and become worthy of the seeds and trees of the Way of the Patriarchs.

List of Names

After each name, occurrences in the text are noted by poem number; W, for West Mountain Evening Talk; D, Dialogues in a Dream; I, "Introduction." Traditionally, Musō Soseki has been called Musō Kokushi; "kokushi" is an honorific title, "Teacher of the Nation." "Oshō" and "Zenji" are also honorific titles to Zen masters, though priests are generally called "Oshō" today.

- Ashikaga Motouji (1340–67): one of Takauji's sons. (123)
Ashikaga Tadayoshi (1306–52): Ashikaga Takauji's brother. (73, 85)
Ashikaga Takauji (1305–58): founder of the Muromachi Shogunate (1336–1573). (75, 111)
Ashikaga Yoshiakira (1330–67): one of Takauji's sons and the second general of the Muromachi Shogunate. (124)
Bukkō Zenji: Mugaku Sogen or Wu-hsueh Tsu-yuan (1226–86): Chinese Zen master. Came to Japan and became the founder of Engaku-ji in Kamakura. Dharma grandfather. (90, W)
Bukkoku Zenji: Kōhō Ken'nichi (1256–1316): Bukkō Zenji's successor and Musō's teacher. (W)
Chao-chou: Chao-chou Ts'ung-shen (778–897): Chinese Zen master. (6, W)
Chueh-fan: Chueh-fan Hui-hung (1071–1128): editor of *Forest Life*. Chinese. (W)
Daisen Oshō: Daisen Dōtsū (1265–1339): Dharma friend. (8)
Dōgen: Eihei Dōgen (1200–1253): founder of the Japanese Sōto Zen; famous for his *Shōbō Genzō* [The Eye and Treasury of the True Law]. (I)
Dompō Shūō (?–1401): disciple. (94)
Feng-hsueh: Feng-hsueh Yen-chao (896–973): Chinese. (W)
Fo-chien: Fo-chien Hui-ch'in (1059–1117): Chinese. (W)

Gassan Shūsū (1331–99): disciple. (35)
 Gen: Kosen Ingen (1295–1374): Dharma friend. Studied in Yuan China. (42, 79)
 Gen'nō Oshō: Gen'nō Hongen (1281–1332): Dharma brother. (31, W)
 Gidō Shūshin (1325–88): major disciple. (63)
 Go-Daigo (1288–1339): emperor. (22)
 Gyokuen (?–?): Hosokawa Yoriyuki's wife. (71)
 Gyokugan: see Ashikaga Motouji.
 Heizan Zenkin (?–?): disciple. (126)
 Hōgai Kōon (?–1363): disciple. (127)
 Hōgo Kōrin (?–1373): Dharma friend. Studied in Yuan China. (118)
 Hosokawa Yoriyuki (1329–92): warrior and feudal lord. (70)
 Hsiang-yen: Hsiang-yen Chih-hsien (?–898): Chinese Zen master. Attained satori at the sound of a stone hitting a bamboo stalk. (21)
 Hsing-hua: Hsing-hua Ts'un-chiang (830–88): Chinese. (W)
 Hsueh-tou: Hsueh-tou Ch'ung-hsien (980–1052): Chinese. (W)
 Huang-lung: Huang-lung Hui-nang (1002–69): Chinese Zen master. (51)
 Huang-po: Huang-po Hsi-yun (?–856?): Chinese. (W)
 Hui-neng: Hui-neng Ta-chien (638–713): the Sixth Patriarch. Lived at Ts'ao Valley. Chinese. (102)
 Iku: Genshō Shūiku (1321–86): disciple. Studied in Yuan China. (44)
 Issan Kokushi: I-shan I-ning (1248–1317): Chinese Zen master. Visited Japan and lived at Kenchō-ji and Engaku-ji. (I, W)
 Kan: Tsūsō Kōkan (?–?): disciple. (43)
 Kansō Shukan (?–?): disciple. (120)
 Keigan: see Hosokawa Yoriyuki.
 Kengai Oshō: Kengai Kōan (1252–1331): Dharma friend. (34)
 Kihō Shiyū (?–?): disciple. (27)
 Ko: Reigaku Sōko (?–?): Dharma friend. Studied in Yuan China. (98)
 Koan Fushō (?–?): disciple. (48)
 Koboku Jōei (?–?): disciple. (25)
 Kogen Shōgen (?–1364): Dharma friend. Studied in Yuan China. (121)
 Kōgon (1313–64): emperor. Became a Zen priest after retirement. (64)
 Kōhō Ken'nichi: see Bukkoku Zenji. (I)
 Kokei Reibun (?–?): disciple. (109)

Kosan: see Ashikaga Tadayoshi.
 Kyūō Fukan (1321–1410): disciple. Studied in Yuan China. (26)
 Lin Hsiang-ru (third century B.C.): famous statesman in the old China.
 (19)
 Lin-chi: Lin-chi I-hsuan (?–867): Chinese Zen master, founder of the
 Rinzai [Lin-chi] sect. (60, W)
 Ma-tsu: Ma-tsu Tao-i (707–86): Chinese Zen master. (39, W)
 Meghasri: fictitious character appearing in the Hua-yen [Kegon] su-
 tra; one of the fifty-three saints and the first person visited by Sud-
 hana. (20)
 Mokuan Shūyu (1318–73): disciple. (72)
 Mokuō Myōkai (?–?): disciple. (122)
 Mugaku: see Bukkō Zenji
 Mugoku Oshō: Mugoku Shigen (1282–1359): major disciple. (74, 113)
 Muhan: see Kōgon.
 Myō: Mōzan Chimyō (1292–1366): Dharma uncle. (80, 81)
 Nang-yang: Nan-yang Hui-chung (?–775): Chinese Zen master. (44)
 Ninzan: see Ashikaga Takauji.
 Old Man Ho: 34, 69.
 Old Man San-chiao (?–?): Ta-hui's Dharma grandson; Chinese lay-
 man. (W)
 Pai-chang: Pai-chang Huai-hai (720–814): Chinese Zen master. (W)
 Pao-feng: Pao-feng Ch'u-yuan (?–?): Chinese Zen master. (W)
 Po Lo-t'ien (772–846): famous poet in T'ang China. (D)
 Pu-tai (?–916): Chinese Zen man. (W)
 Reizan Oshō: Reizan Dōin or Ling-shan Tao-yin (1255–1325): Chi-
 nese Zen master and Dharma friend. Came to Japan in 1320.
 (5, 6, 7)
 Sagami Umenokami (?–?): minister of horses. (47)
 Seikei Tsūtetsu (1300–1385): disciple. Studied in Yuan China. (119)
 Seisetsu Shōchō: Ch'ing-cho Cheng-ch'eng (1274–1339): Chinese Zen
 master. Came to Japan in 1326. (40)
 Shen-kuan: Hui-k'ō (487–593): name of the Second Patriarch in his
 younger days. Showed his earnest wish to become Bodhidharma's
 disciple by cutting off one of his arms. (68, 77)
 Shō: Kasan Sōshō (?–?): possibly a disciple. (83)

- Shōzan Shūnen (?-?): disciple. (39)
- Shun'oku Myōha (1311-88): major disciple. Edited the *West Mountain Evening Talk*. (95)
- Sohō Pō (?-?): disciple. (46)
- Subhuti (?-?): the one of Shakyamuni's Ten Disciples who best understood emptiness. (30, 70)
- Sudhana: fictitious young boy in the Hua-yen sutra. Visits fifty-three saints seeking instruction and meets Meghasri first. (20, 99)
- Sūzan Oshō: Sūzan Kochū (1276-1345): Dharma friend. Studied in Yuan China. (76, 77, 114)
- Ta-hui: Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089-1163): Chinese Zen master. (W)
- Taihei Oshō: Taihei Myōjun (1276-1327): Dharma brother and one of Musō's best friends. (4, 11)
- Tan-hsia: Tan-hsia T'ien-jan (739-824): Chinese Zen master. (15)
- Tekian Hōjun (?-?): disciple. (129)
- Tengan Oshō: Tengan Ekō (1273-1335): Dharma brother. Studied in Yuan China. (49)
- Tetsu: Daidō Myōtetsu (?-?): Dharma brother. (82)
- Unzan Chietsu (?-?): Dharma friend. (41)
- Vimalakirti (?-?): lay Buddhist in the days of Shakyamuni; the protagonist of the Vimalakirti sutra. (122)
- Wu-tsu Fa-yen (1024-1104): Chinese Zen master. (W)
- Yuan-wu: Yuan-wu K'o-ch'in (1063-1135): Chinese Zen master. (W)
- Yun-kai Chi-pen (?-?): Chinese Zen master. (W)
- Yun-kai Shou-chih (1025-1115): Chinese Zen master. (W)
- Yung-chia: Yung-chia Hsuan-chiao (665-713): Chinese Zen master, Hui-neng's disciple. (W)
- Zesshō Chikō (?-?): disciple. (128)
- Zuizan: see Ashikaga Yoshiakira.

Notes to the Poems

- 4 Taihei (in Japanese), literally “perfect peace.”
- 6 Chao-chou once visited a hermit and said, “Hi, there.” The latter held up his fist as his answer to the former. Then Chao-chou left the hut, saying, “The water’s too shallow to anchor here.” He then went to see another hermit, who also held up his fist. But this time Chao-chou nodded with affirmation. “Well, what’s the difference?” This is a kōan.
- 12 The Dragon Gate falls: the famous Yu-Gate falls in China. A legend relates the story of a carp that succeeds in climbing them and then turns into a dragon. Symbolically, the gateway represents success in one’s career.
- 15 It is said that once Tan-hsia slept lying on the bridge leading to Lo-yang, to the surprise of the city official who discovered him.
- 17 In an old Chinese story, a man goes into the bottle with its owner, an old druggist on the street, and enjoys the land of wizards. (In Zen, this strange experience suggests that of satori.)
- 19 Lin was sent to the king of Ch’in, a neighboring country, because the latter proposed to exchange the noted flawless jewel owned by Lin’s lord with the fifteen castles of Ch’in. But when Lin handed the jewel to the king, the latter broke his promise, pretending that he had forgotten his offer. Lin asked the king to return the jewel to him so that he could reveal its one hidden flaw. Actually the jewel had no flaw. Thus Lin kept the jewel from falling into the enemy’s hands and narrowly escaped with his life back to his country.

- 20 Sudhana visits fifty-three saints seeking instruction. He wants to visit Meghasri, the very first teacher of the Buddhist truth, but looks for him in vain; seven days later he sees Meghasri walking on Another Summit. This is a kōan.
- 22 The emperor is Go-Daigo.
- 25 “Dry Tree,” *koboku* in Japanese: Koboku Jōei.
- 26 “Old Man in Retirement,” *kyūō* in Japanese: Kyūō Fukan.
- 27 “Strange Peak,” *kihō* in Japanese: Kihō Shiyū.
- 29 Nachi is noted for its falls; Kan’non is the Japanese rendering of Avalokitesvara, a bodhisattva of mercy, whose wish is to save the whole world.
- 34 Old Man Ho: Chao-chou. Cf. note 6. Engaku-ji is called “Zui-roku-san”—literally, a mountain full of deer, which suggests a good omen.
- 35 “Moon Mountain,” *gassan* in Japanese: Gassan Shūsū.
- 38 In *Lun-yu*, Confucius agreed with his disciple’s words of joy in the passing spring.
- 39 “Laughing Mountain,” *shōzan* in Japanese: Shōzan Shūnen. Ma-tsu once kicked at the chest of his disciple to lead him into satori.
- 40 Fukusan dormitory, the student hall built in Kenchō-ji in 1327. The “Great Master” suggests Seisetsu Shōchō and also Shakyamuni.
- 41 “Cloud Mountain,” *unzan* in Japanese: Unzan Chietsu.
- 42 The “great death” is the complete death of one’s own ego; from this once-and-for-all experience of emptiness starts a new Zen life.
- 44 Nang-yang once summoned his attendant monk three times and the latter responded each time. The meaning of these three summonses and responses is a kōan.
- 46 “Patriarch Peaks,” *sohō* in Japanese: Sohō Pō.
- 47 “East Peak”: layman Sagami Umenokami’s Dharma name.
- 48 “Old Hut,” *koan* in Japanese: Koan Fushō.
- 51 Huang-lung guided his students by the famous kōan, “Huang-lung’s Three Barriers.”

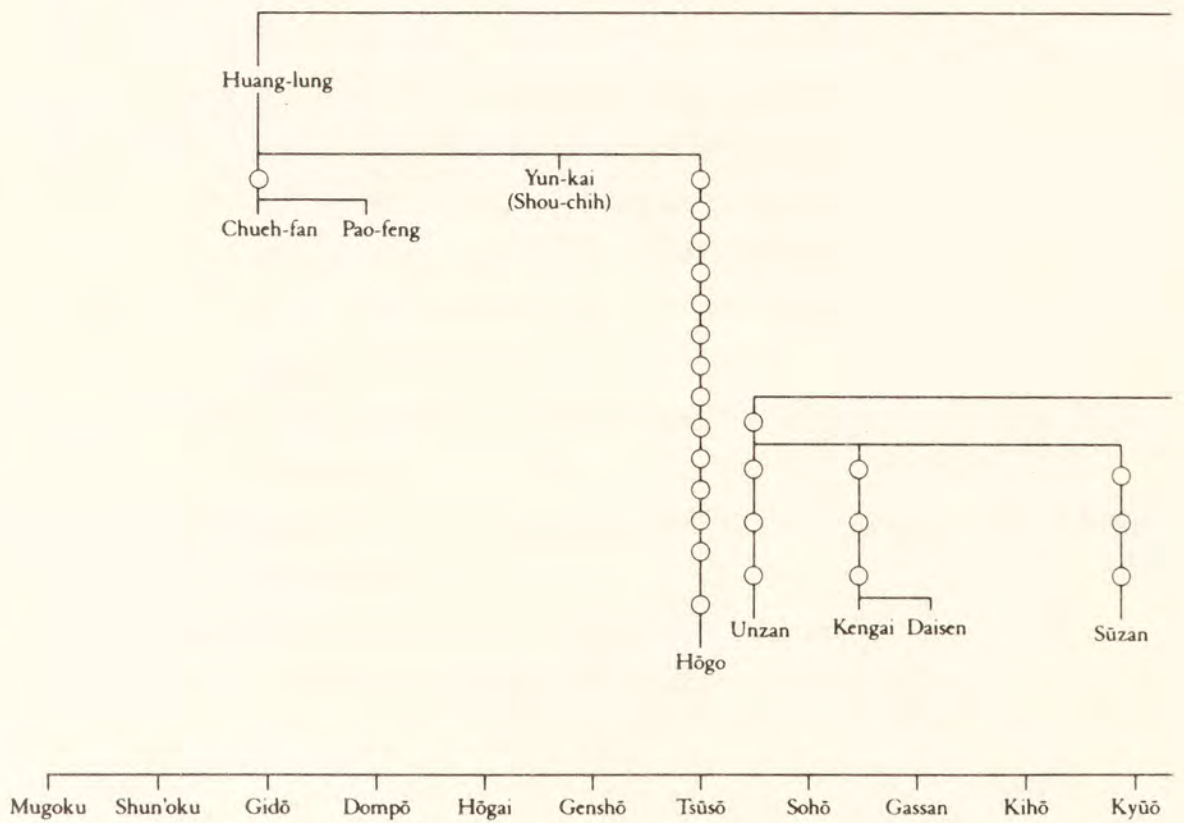
- 57 The Three Worlds: the world of desire, of the five senses; the world of form but of no desire; the world of neither form nor desire.
- 60 Lin-chi planted pine trees as a guidepost for the younger generation.
- 63 “Truth Hall,” or the first truth gate; *gidō* in Japanese: *Gidō Shūsin*.
- 64 “No Precedent,” *muhan* in Japanese: Emperor Kōgon’s Dharma name after retirement.
- 65 Long eyebrows: symbol of a great man of satori.
- 69 Cf. note 6.
- 70 “Moon Tree Cliff,” *keigan* in Japanese: Hosokawa Yoriyuki’s Dharma name.
- 71 “Gem Creek,” *gyokuen* in Japanese: Hosokawa Yoriyuki’s wife’s Dharma name.
- 72 “No Word Hut,” *mokuan* in Japanese: Mokuan Shūyu.
- 73 “Old Mountain,” *kosan* in Japanese, Ashikaga Tadayoshi’s Dharma name.
- 74 “No End Point,” *mugoku* in Japanese: Mugoku Shigen.
- 75 “Lover of Mountains,” *ninzan* in Japanese: General Ashigaka Takauji’s Dharma name.
- 77 Sūzan (Mount Ch’ung) refers to the mountain where Bodhidharma lived. Shen-kuan stood buried in snow up to his waist, asking Bodhidharma’s permission to be his disciple.
- 78 “Pure Sound Pavilion”: Bon’non-kaku. “Riverside Temple”: Rinsen-ji.
- 79 Erin-ji: literally, “Forest of Wisdom Temple.”
- 80 Anzen-ji: literally, “Joy of Zen Temple.”
- 81 Shōfuku-ji: literally, “Sacred Fortune Temple.”
- 87 Rōhatsu, or December 8, is the day when Shakyamuni attained satori at the moment he saw the morning star. In celebration of it, each monastery holds a special intensive practice from December 1 to the morning of December 8.
- 90 Bukkō, or literally, “Buddha’s Light.”

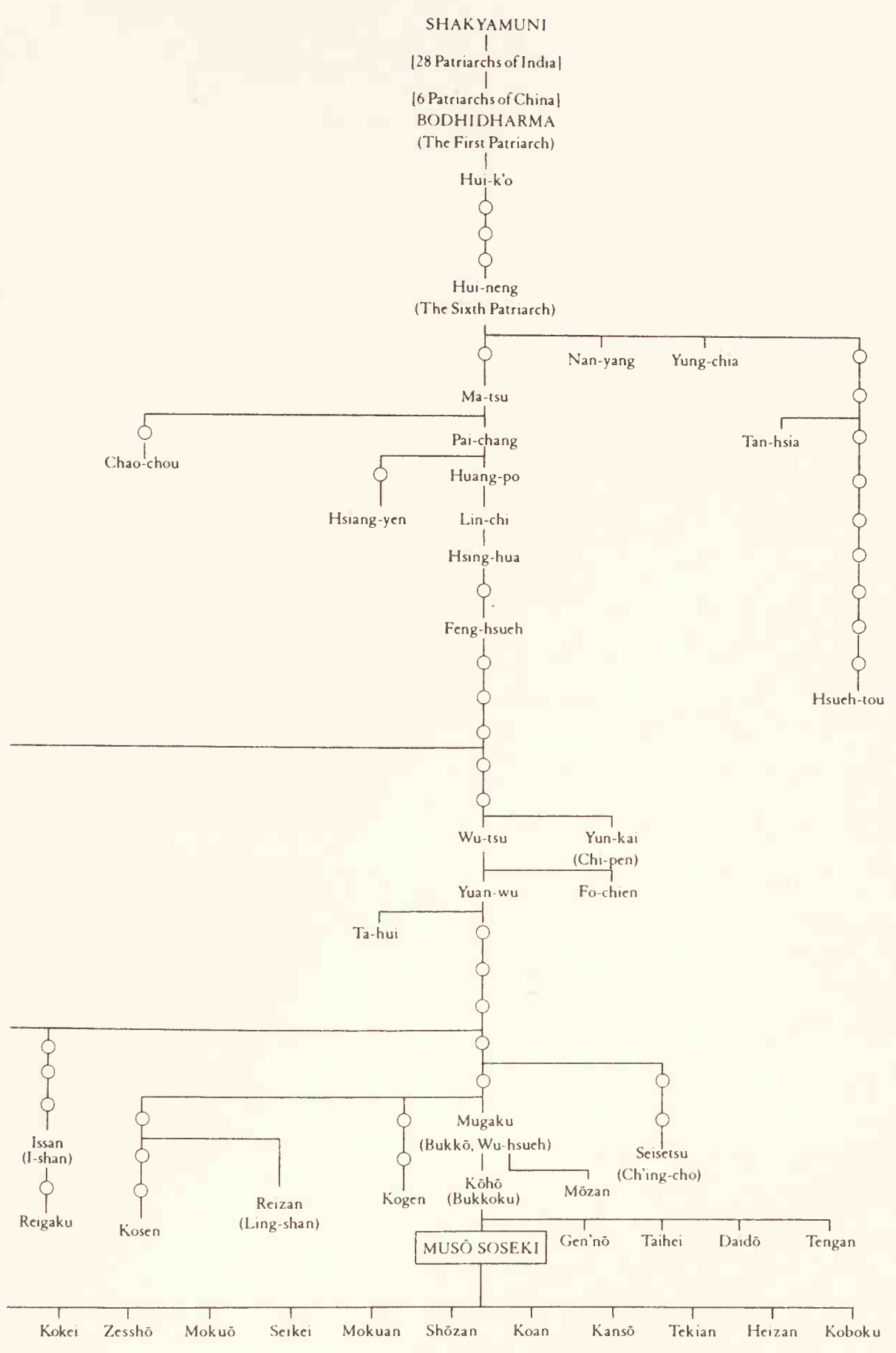
- 94 “Fragrance of the Udumbara,” *dompō* in Japanese: Dompō Shūō.
- 95 “House of Spring,” *shun’oku* in Japanese: Shun’oku Myōha.
- 99 “Dragon of Heaven Temple”: Tenryū-ji. “Gate of Universal Light”: Fumyō-kaku.
- 100 “Incomparable Verse Valley”: Zesshō-kei.
- 101 “Hall of the Guardian God”: Reihi-byō.
- 102 “Hui-neng’s Pond”: Sōgen-chi.
- 103 “Peak of the Held-Up Flower”: Nenge-rei.
- 104 “Bridge Where the Moon Crosses”: Togetu-kyō.
- 105 “Three-Step Waterfall”: Sankyū-gan.
- 106 “Cave of the Thousand Pines”: Banshō-dō.
- 107 “Dragon Gate House”: Ryūmon-tei.
- 108 “Turtle Head Stupa”: Kichō-tō.
- 109 “Tiger Valley,” *kokei* in Japanese: Kokei Reibun.
- 111 General Ashikaga Takauji’s residence. The Three God Mountains: the three legendary mountains (P’eng-lai, Fang-chang, and Ying-chou) of the ancient China where hermit gods live.
- 118 “Ox Turned Loose,” *hōgo* in Japanese: Hōgo Kōrin.
- 119 “Clear Valley,” *seikei* in Japanese: Seikei Tsūtetsu.
- 120 “Old Man at Leisure,” *kansō* in Japanese: Kansō Shukan.
- 121 “Ancient Origin,” *kogen* in Japanese: Kogen Shōgen.
- 122 “Old Man of Few Words,” *mokuō* in Japanese: Mokuō Myōkai. Vimalakirti, in the dialogue between Manjusri and himself concerning the Dharma of nonduality, answers Manjusri with only silence. In Zen this silence of his is compared to thunder.
- 123 “Jewel Cliff,” *gyokugan* in Japanese: Ashikaga Motouji’s Dharma name.
- 124 “Joy Mountain,” *zuizan* in Japanese: Ashikaga Yoshiaki’s Dharma name.
- 126 “Flat Mountain,” *heizan* in Japanese: Heizan Zenkin.
- 127 “Beyond the World,” *hōgai* in Japanese: Hōgai Kōon.

- 128 “Beyond Light,” *zesshō* in Japanese: Zesshō Chikō.
129 “Hut in Harmony,” *tekian* in Japanese: Tekian Hōjun.
130 The civil war (1336–92) refers to the war between the two Ashikaga brothers, Takauji and Tadayoshi.

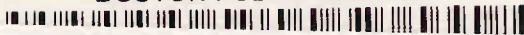
Dharma Lineage Chart

Zen masters who appear in the poems
and the *West Mountain Evening Talk*





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W. S. MERWIN won the Pulitzer Prize for his book of poems *The Carrier of Ladders*. He has published over a dozen other collections, including FINDING THE ISLANDS and *The Rain in the Trees*.

SŌIKU SHIGEMATSU is a noted Zen scholar who has published two other books in English, *A Zen Forest: Sayings of the Masters* and A ZEN HARVEST: JAPANESE FOLK ZEN SAYINGS. He is the head priest of Shōgen-ji Zen Temple in Shimizu, Japan.

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