

Myōju

Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia



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Dreams and Visions: Returning

In the dream world / There is dozing / Further within / Speaking and dreaming / Of the dream as it is. – Ryokan

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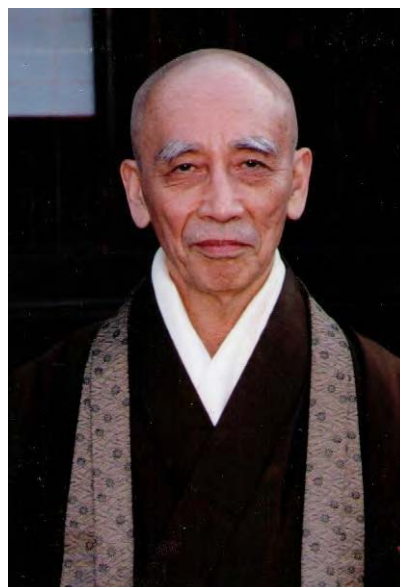
SOTO KITCHEN
James Watt

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:
THE ROAD TO MT. KUGAMI
Jim Shoshin Holden

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“Buddha’s Boundless Compassion Exists in one Single Moment” (No. 1)

BY IKKO NARASAKI ROSHI



Ekai Osho’s late teacher, Ikko Narasaki Roshi.

The late predecessor, Abbot Ikko, used to go to the group called “The East and West Interaction of Spirituality” and had given lectures to them. He probably deepened his relationship with this group through Zazen. The summary of these lectures was found recently. I am sorry that I could not recall clearly the situation around that time, but I will publish the summary in the Icho Newsletter in several instalments. – Narasaki Tsugen, Abbot of Zuio-ji.

For the past 40 years since the last war, the Zen tradition of our country has been of deep interest to thoughtful people all over the world. And now, even though the number is small, some people practice Zazen very seriously, as you know. In Showa 54th year (1979), for the purpose of “The East and West Interaction of Spirituality”, a Catholic Monastery in Europe had invited Zen monks and the people of Zen cultures (masters and experts in tea ceremony, flower arrangement, calligraphy, Japanese painting and martial arts) to Europe. With Yamada Mumon Roshi as leader, many people went there, stayed for a month and deepened interaction at various monasteries.

The second gathering was held four years later, in Showa 58th year (1983). This time Japan became the host country. From Europe, fathers and priests came to Japan and experienced monastic life for a month. Three people came to Zuio-ji, (Great Father Notokel of Otterien Great Monastery of West Germany, Father Pierre and Priest Joseph from Belgium). Owing to this connection, I was invited to attend the celebration ceremony of 100th anniversary of Otterien Great Monastery’s Foundation in Showa 59th year (1984). I received a hearty welcome and spent a week in the monastery, together with fathers and priests from all over the world, and practiced Zazen in the morning and at night. I was really amazed to see that they actually practiced Zazen. Also I had an opportunity to meet the Pope at the Vatican who asked me to look after the Interaction of Spirituality activities.

Just until recently, Christianity and Buddhism have been like oil and water, calling each other heretics or pagans, so

I was truly impressed with the new era which I had never expected to come.

The following year, I was invited to the Minnesota Zen Center in USA and practiced Zazen with them for a week. It was just after the Bon Festival in Showa 60th year (1985). During that year we had abnormal weather. The place was not equipped with either electricity or gas, and the Dojo (practice hall) was rather makeshift. People who did not have any custom of Zazen, concentrated on practicing Zazen from 4am to 9pm. I was really moved.

The year before last I went to Brazil. A monk from Brazil named Daiju Osho had practiced here at Zuio-ji. He asked me to come over to Brazil. For one week I practiced Zazen together with about 30 local people at “Ibilas Busshin-ji” in Pitoria, deep in the interior of Brazil. I found out that in the West, East and South parts of the world, even though the numbers were few, people who had grown up in different cultures were now seriously learning Zen – Buddha’s teachings. I fully realized the unthinkable age had arrived.

This year the fourth “East and West Interaction of Spirituality” is being held and, this coming May, three fathers are scheduled to come to Zuio-ji to experience Zazen. These days, people from Western countries constantly come to Zazen.

Why do people who do not have any custom of sitting, come to practice Zazen, suffering from the pain of bent legs?

Translated by Isshin Taylor and edited by Hannah Forsyth.