

REVIEWS

**The Soto Approach to Zen**

*By Reiho Masunaga*

*Tokyo, Layman Buddhist Society Press  
(Zaiko Bukkyo Kyokai 1958.) pp.215*

Dear Professor Masunaga :

I hope everything goes well with you and your work in 1960.

This evening I have re-read your last work, "The Sōtō Approach to Zen," and as one of your best friends, I should like to give you my opinion regarding it. This is not easy, because I feel that I must be critical; but in the interest of scholarship and a better understanding of our common goal, I feel that you will fully understand my attitude.

I deeply appreciate your idea of introducing to the English-reading public the Sōtō "School," which is the most prominent branch of Zen Buddhism in Japan. As we all know, there were five schools and seven branches of Zen Buddhism in China, of which only three were introduced into Japan: the Rinzai, Sōtō, and Ōbaku. These have developed well in our country and two have flourished. Even today they are prosperous.

However, of these three, only the Rinzai school has been introduced to the Western world. Apparently in the expectation that it is something new and wonderful, it has become a subject of absorbing interest there. Thus the Sōtō school, although the most prominent in our country, has been neglected and even now is not known in the West. This is unfortunate. Something should be done about it. Therefore, you have written "The Sōtō Approach to Zen," which is indeed well-timed. This is very commendable on your part, and all your friends are grateful for your effort; but I regret to say that I do not think that you have been entirely successful.

In this connection we must bear in mind what Dr. Daisetsu Suzuki has done for the Rinzai School of Zen Buddhism. He could do this because he has a fluent command of English, and has demonstrated his ability to read the innermost

## REVIEWS

thoughts of Western people. Moreover, he has displayed the sense and sensibility of a great journalist. Even though Dr. Suzuki has represented only the Rinzai side, but for his ability and life-long effort, the Western world would have had no contact at all with or interest in Zen Buddhism.

Your idea of making up for this neglect of the Sōtō by presenting a clear and concise explanation of Zen Buddhism for Western people is, as I have said, highly commendable, and I would be only too pleased if your efforts had been crowned with success. But to realize your idea you must overcome many more mountains and valleys that lie ahead. You must improve your command of English; you should be able to read the Western mind better, and you should try to find more adequate expressions for certain special terms. I recognize these difficulties because they are not only yours, they are also mine.

May greater success attend your

next publication.

Sincerely yours,  
Fumio Masutani

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## THE SŌTŌ APPROACH TO ZEN

Reiho Masunaga

1. The Gist of Buddhist Thought
2. Outline of Zen Buddhism
3. Essence of Zen and Its Historical Development
4. The Standpoint of Dōgen and His Ideas on Time
5. *Uji* (Translated from the *Shōbōgenzō*)
6. *Shōzi* (Translated from the *Shōbōgenzō*)
7. *Fukanzazengi* (Rules for *Zazen*)
8. *Zazen yōjinki* (Points to Watch in *Zazen*)
9. *Genjōkoan* (Translated from the *Shōbōgenzō*)
10. *Bendōwa* (Translated from the *Shōbōgenzō*)
11. *Shushōgi* (True Meaning of Training and Enlightenment)
12. *Sandōkai* (Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i)
13. *Hōkyōzammai* (Pao-ching-san-mei)
14. The Place of Dōgen in Zen Buddhism