

REVIEWS

The Practice of Zen

by Chang Chen-chi
New York: Harper & Brothers,
1959. xi, 199. \$ 4.00



In reviewing "The Practice of Zen" by Prof. Chang Chen-chi, instead of introducing this book in detail chapter by chapter, it may be more useful for readers who are more or less interested in studying Zen, if I take up only one problem and clarify it, showing how the tradition of Zen has changed with the times.

Zen^a in India, that is, the concept of *dhyāna* or *jhāna*, is not identical with Zen in China; and Zen in China before the middle of the fourteenth century was remarkably different from that which came later. Therefore, when we characterize Zen, disregarding the transitions and changes that have taken place, there is a danger that misunderstandings may arise.

What made me feel very strange and at the same time interested me as I read this book was that

the author interpreted *kyōgyō* 経行 (literally, "strolling," pronounced *kinhin* in Japanese Zen Buddhism) as "running" in a large circle.

This term originally meant to stroll quietly for a while in the meditation hall in order to prevent falling asleep in *Zazen*^b (meditation) but in Chinese Zen in the seventeenth century it meant "running about." In Japanese Zen, there is no monastery where such an act as "running about" is to be found. At one time in Japanese Zen history *kinhin* was much discussed. This gives us a clear illustration of the fact that Chinese Zen of the seventeenth century is different from Japanese Zen.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, Ingen^c of the Ming dynasty came to Japan and introduced Zen. However, at that time Japanese Zen was already flourishing with

a. 禪 b. 坐禪 c. 隱元

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traditions dating from the thirteenth century and Ingen's Zen was bitterly criticized. It was asserted that Chinese Zen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not genuine Zen, but was a mixture of Pure Land Buddhism and that it was this kind of Zen that Ingen had introduced. One specific criticism made by Japanese Zen priests was that the priests of the Ming era ran rapidly about and looked crazy. Chinese Zen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appears to have performed this ceremony accompanied by the frequent use of such musical instruments as drums, *nyō*^a and *hachi*.^b

I suppose that, because this ceremony was very noisy and clamorous, the act of *kinhin* naturally became a noisy act of running about. At any rate this was indisputably a strange custom which did not exist in the Tang and Sung dynasties, that is, in the seventh and the thirteenth centuries when Zen had previously flourished in China.

Evidently the Zen, which the author of this book acquired in a

monastery in China when he was young, was derived from Chinese Zen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In this review I have no intention of expressing my opinion about this kind of Zen, but I should like to call attention to the necessity of noting that Zen has varied considerably with the times and should not be defined only according to the type prevalent in one age.

Zen which is known in Europe and America owes much to Japanese students and masters of Zen, so I should like to find some significance in his work that is different from works written by Japanese. As a new Chinese introducer of Zen, the author has given us a very interesting description and has played a role in heightening the interest of foreigners in Zen. I expect that after him more and more Chinese students of Zen will appear.

Frankly speaking, there are not a few things in Zen which were established and developed in China, that should be understood through Chinese thought. Moreover, Zen

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terms in the Sung dynasty were influenced by the colloquial language of the time. In order to understand precisely the meaning of Zen terms, a broader and deeper knowledge of Chinese is required. Therefore, I think there is not a small field of study imposed on Chinese students of Zen. Many things are to be expected from the labors of this author and his successors.

This book seems to have been intended to let many people know about Zen rather than as a scientific treatise. Consequently, to expect to find any detailed scientific inquiry in this book is beside the point, and I shall refrain from demanding this. However, for the sake of the readers ignorant of Zen, if there are any, I should like to add that there is much more literature that is important in clarifying Chinese Zen than has been employed by this book. This book, however, contains many statements taken from the literature of Zen written by Chinese moderns, which may be good for reference and useful in learning about Chinese Zen today.

In regard to words used in the

translation, for example, it is confusing to translate both 五祖弘忍 (*Goso Kōnin*) and 五祖法演 (*Goso Hōen*) in the same way as "Fifth Patriarch." Goso in Goso Hōen is the name of a mountain, Tōzan 東山, where Goso Kōnin lived. Tōzan came to be called Goso-zan 五祖山, because Goso Kōnin lived there. Hōen called himself this, because he also lived there. Therefore, it may be better to translate this word in this meaning.

As the translated questions and answers of Zen are far more understandable here than in Chinese, this book may offer a good key for acquiring knowledge of Zen for Japanese of the younger generation, who have become more accustomed to reading English than Chinese classics.

In conclusion, I want you to remember that while you may feel that I have not paid respect to the author, if you know that Zen priests are accustomed to praise another by means of speaking ill of him, you can understand that I respect the author from the bottom of my heart. I earnestly hope that the writer will come to Japan some

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day to look at Japanese Zen. It many people know the significance
may be very helpful for the persons of Zen, to understand each other.
who study Zen and try to make Shōkin Furuta

Enkakuji. Kamakura

THE PRACTICE OF ZEN

Chang Chen-chi

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