

Introduction

The Beginnings of Ch'an Buddhism

The practice of contemplation or meditation (Sanskrit: *Dhyāna*; Chinese: *Ch'an*; Japanese: *Zen*) as a means of attaining Enlightenment is an ancient Indian tradition. The precedent established by Gautama Buddha, who attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree through this practice, made contemplative practices an integral, vital part of Buddhism. Meditation was first introduced into China when the Buddhist Law reached that country from India. This happened sometime in the early centuries of our era, but for a considerable time while various sects of Indian Buddhism were transplanted to China and became firmly established there, meditation played a role of only minor importance. It was only after Buddhism had become thoroughly sinicized that meditation as a special, separate, and direct path leading towards Enlightenment came to be propagated.

Some monks, like the great Chih-i (538-597), retired to remote mountains to practice contemplation. Others, instead of seeking the seclusion of life in the mountains, mixed among the adherents of the orthodox Buddhist sects who repeated holy formulas for the acquisition of merit or studied the *sūtras* and their commentaries or placed their faith in the performance of esoteric rituals. Those who adhered to contemplative practices sometimes formed small enclaves within larger monastic communities of the orthodox sects. Perhaps the later stories about the eccentrics Han-shan and Shih-t'ê (see below, page xxix and cat. no. 14) were reminiscences of a period when monks given to contemplation lived the life of semi-outcasts among the adherents of other sects.

Towards the end of the seventh century meditating monks had formed a monastic community at the East Mountain in Hupei. They were led by the monk Hung-jên (601-674), who later became known as the Fifth Patriarch of the Ch'an sect. From this mountain retreat the meditating monks gradually spread their practices all over the country, attaching themselves to existing monastic communities, especially those of the Lü or Vinaya sect, or setting up communities of their own.

As Ch'an Buddhism (as it later came to be known) gradually evolved into an independent Buddhist sect, the necessity for an established historical foundation grew. In China, new ideas often had gained acceptance by being presented

as the product of ancient tradition. Moreover, competition with such sects as the T'ien-t'ai, which claimed the ancient Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna as its spiritual ancestor, made it necessary for the Contemplative Sect to trace its image back to India. In order to support their religious claims to a status above all other sects of Buddhism, the Ch'an Buddhists projected their meditative practices back into the remote past and zealously reconstructed their own "ancient history." Ch'an, they claimed, was the essence of the Buddhist Truth, and had been transmitted from Śākyamuni down to the present, in unbroken sequence from teacher to pupil, without ever having been reduced to writing. The Ch'an sect thereby questioned the validity and authenticity of the sūtras, which were believed by all the other sects to contain the true words of the Buddha. Rejecting the written word, the Ch'an adepts laid claim to an unwritten doctrine, transmitted from mind to mind, pointing directly at the heart of man, who, by seeing into his own nature, might attain Buddhahood.

Their doctrine, the Ch'an adepts claimed, had been transmitted by an uninterrupted succession of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, from Mahākāśyapa, the disciple of the Buddha, to Bodhidharma, the Indian sage who brought the doctrine to China. There the doctrine had been handed down from Bodhidharma to Hui-k'o, and from him through four other Chinese patriarchs to Hui-nēng (639-716). The process by which the Ch'an sect created its own history can be partially reconstructed by an analysis of various collections of biographies of Ch'an monks, which give us an idea of the methods which were employed in rewriting. Monks, most of whom were hardly more than isolated names, were rescued from the limbo of historical obscurity and posthumously elevated to the ranks of the patriarchs in order to supply missing links in the line of succession. In due course, the meager information on their lives was expanded and elaborated into biographies which abound in colorful and picturesque detail. The standard history of the Ch'an sect, as we know it now, and as it was accepted during practically the entire period covered by this exhibition, is the final result of a protracted and complicated process of continuous accretion and deliberate elimination, which took place between the seventh and thirteenth centuries.

Of special interest is the evolution of the

legends which surround the alleged founder of Ch'an Buddhism in China, the Indian Bodhidharma (Japanese: Bodaidaruma, usually shortened to Daruma). The historicity of this figure is still a controversial problem, despite the efforts of various scholars. Bodhidharma, the legend tells us, was a South Indian prince, who came to China during the early part of the sixth century after long peregrinations. In an audience with the Southern Chinese Emperor Liang Wu-ti (502-550), a noted patron of Buddhism, he pointed out the uselessness of founding temples, copying sūtras and supporting monks (see cat. no. 7). According to late accounts, he crossed the Yangtze on a reed, and spent nine years in meditation in front of a rock wall at the Shao-lin-ssū, a monastery at Mount Sung in the state of Northern Wei.

Bodhidharma finally transmitted the "Seal of Mind" to the monk Hui-k'o, who had cut off his arm to express the deep sincerity of his religious resolve. Hui-k'o became the Second Patriarch (see cat. nos. 1 and 55). The end of Bodhidharma's life is as shrouded in mystery as is its beginning. Some stories say that he returned to India by land, or crossed over to Japan, while others state that he died in China at 150 years of age. A passage in the sixth-century *Lo-yang Ch'ieh-lan-chi* casually speaks of a Persian monk named Bodhidharma, who lived at the Yung-ning-ssū, and who claimed to be 150 years old. This statement is sometimes thought to be the historical grain of truth from which the later Ch'an legend grew. Bodhidharma's transformation in legend from a Persian into an Indian monk would seem to be in perfect keeping with what may be called the Indian mystique of Ch'an Buddhism.

Chinese and Indian Thought in Ch'an Buddhism

The reason why we speak of an Indian mystique is that in spite of all Ch'an protestations, there is no clear prototype or established precursor for the Ch'an among the Buddhist sects of India. Ch'an Buddhism is, as we shall see, a typical product of Chinese soil, a native Chinese reaction to the impact of Indian metaphysics on their culture. Although it is generally thought that Ch'an Buddhism was largely a product of the Chinese mind, and not directly inherited from India, it is nevertheless apparent that there are contributions from both sides. However, by the time the Ch'an sect was established and its

ideas formulated, Buddhism already had flourished for more than four hundred years, and to dissect such a movement into its Chinese and Indian components is not always possible. All we can do, therefore, is to suggest possible origins for some of the ideas which were incorporated into the doctrine of the Ch'an sect.

The literary descriptions of the search for Enlightenment by Ch'an masters are as fascinating as they are puzzling. The atmosphere they evoke is quaint and exotic. Thus, grumpy, strong-willed old teachers, who "stride around like oxen," reply to what would seem to be perfectly legitimate and sensible questions concerning the Buddha-nature or Bodhidharma's meditation with inarticulate exclamations such as *kuan!* or *ho!* or crudities mixed with paradox, or seemingly unconnected replies such as "Go, wash the bowls" or "When I was staying in Ching-chou I made a hemp robe which weighed seven catties." Teachers surprised their pupils with all kinds of bizarre tricks, shocking them into sudden realization of the Truth by means such as twisting their noses, beating them about the head, or crushing their feet in doors. Enlightenment was thus a dramatic, sudden event, which came unannounced, without forewarning, often under the most unusual circumstances.

A doctrine which so resolutely rejects the written traditions of Buddhism, which considers the veneration of icons useless and absurd, and which preaches highly unorthodox and paradoxical methods to attain Enlightenment, would seem to be as far removed from the mainstream of Buddhist tradition as is possible. Yet, upon closer scrutiny, there are many things which Ch'an and other forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism have in common.

As the schools of the Greater Vehicle (Mahāyāna) developed, the founder of the Buddhist Law, the Buddha Śākyamuni, receded gradually into religious obscurity. His renunciation of the world, his final attainment of Enlightenment were no longer considered to be unique events. Śākyamuni became incorporated in an infinite chain of Buddhas, the appearance of whom was thought to extend over an eternity of innumerable *kalpas* in the remote past as well as in the distant future. His identity as a person became abstracted, as he gradually came to be identified with the Truth which he himself had first proclaimed. Thus he became the visible manifestation of the Absolute Truth which is

omnipresent in the universal "Buddha-nature."

The Ch'an Buddhists revived this remote figure and restored him to his original as an enlightened human being. In the story of his life, in his personal struggle for Enlightenment, which he attained through his own willpower and exertions, the Ch'an Buddhists found an inspiring example. In some respects this development represents a return to the wellsprings of primitive Buddhism. The Enlightenment of Śākyamuni is the central message of Buddhism, and in focusing again on this event in their direct, human way, the Ch'an Buddhists brought him back to life again.

The rejection of textual traditions by the Ch'an sect can easily be exaggerated. As its opponents pointed out with glee, even Ch'an adherents sometimes reluctantly admitted to the belief that Bodhidharma had transmitted a copy of the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* to his disciple Hui-k'o. Although this would seem to be inconsistent with their claim of a "transmission outside the scriptures," the ideas of the Ch'an Buddhists do indeed have much in common with the doctrine of subjective idealism embodied in this *sūtra*. They, too, recognize that the phenomenal world is a mirage, a reflection of our impure minds, and that inner realization lies at the core of all higher knowledge. For a considerable time the Ch'an Buddhists seem to have formed a kind of *Lankāvatāra* sect mainly devoted to the study of this *sūtra*.

It was only when Hui-nêng, the Sixth Patriarch, appeared on the scene that the emphasis shifted to another text. Hui-nêng, his biographies tell us, made the resolve to follow the path to Enlightenment when he overheard a monk reciting the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*, and it was during his patriarchate that the difficult and abstruse *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* gradually began to lose ground to the much more easily understandable *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*.

With the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*, which is part of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, the concept of transcendent comprehension (*Prajñā*) as a source of Enlightenment became part of the Ch'an doctrine. This text also introduced the idea of *śūnyatā* or "vacuity," i.e., the relativity or irreality of things, the idea that on the highest philosophical plane reality is uncognizable and non-plural, that everything is identical, and intangible.

These ideas, which Ch'an adopted from the mainstream of Buddhist philosophy, are all

traceable to the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools of thought in India. Although Ch'an Buddhism may sometimes have twisted reality in a somewhat negativistic direction, the ideas are all thoroughly Buddhist in character. One of the reasons they found such ready acceptance in Ch'an circles was that they corresponded in many ways to the older, more familiar Chinese concepts of Taoism. The idea of a transcendental principle (*Tao*), which manifests itself in Nature and is inherent in everything, approaches the concept of the universal, omnipresent Buddha-nature. Both Ch'an adepts and Taoists use the paradox to describe its action and practice contemplative methods in order to become part of it or to gain insight into this principle. Furthermore the Taoists shared with the Ch'an Buddhists an ingrained distrust of the human intellect, and the words it produces. The Taoists were the first to use the expression "a doctrine without words," which was later applied to Ch'an Buddhism.

The Northern and Southern Schools

The line of patriarchal succession, which, according to pious legend, had lasted through twenty-eight Indian and five Chinese patriarchates, suffered its first schism when Hui-nēng (638-716) was appointed Sixth Patriarch. The so-called Northern School formed by his opponent Shēn-hsiu (died 706) lasted only a few generations, and most of our knowledge of the schism is based on rather one-sided information supplied by the victorious followers of Hui-nēng. The reasons for this schism undoubtedly are more fundamental than the mere rivalry between the two main proponents. The Northern School was ideologically closest to orthodox Buddhist ideas and inclined toward a quietistic approach, whereas the Southern School of Hui-nēng was more extreme in its propagation of the concept of Sudden Enlightenment. As a result the Northern School continued the study and exegesis of the *sūtras*, while the Southern School advocated the rejection of the written word. However, the controversy also had political overtones, for Shēn-hsiu was backed by the notorious Empress Wu, whereas Hui-nēng and his followers received the support of the Confucianists.

In the end, the views of the Southern School prevailed and flourished; new subjects appeared and new lines of succession were established, each with its own center of activity and

methodological variations. Most of the subjects developed into a complex pattern of patriarchal genealogies and shared the fate of the Northern School. Three schools of Ch'an Buddhism survived, and this only because they were transplanted to Japan. The most important of these are the ancient Lin-chi (Rinzai) School (see cat. no. 62), exported to Japan in 1191, and the Ts'ao-tung School (Sōtō), exported in 1228. Much later, in 1654 the Chinese priest Yin-yüan Lung-chi (1592-1673) of the Wan-fu-ssü near Foochow came to Japan. In 1661 he founded the so-called Huang-po (Obaku) branch, the third and last Ch'an school to be transplanted to Japan (see cat. no. 68).

The Earliest Form of Ch'an Art

Reliance primarily on a non-scriptural transmission made the question of the lineal authenticity of the succession from teacher to pupil a matter of crucial importance in the Ch'an sect. This deep concern for the authentic transmission of the "Seal of the Mind" stimulated the growth of the hagiographical literature of the Ch'an sect during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, a movement which culminated in the compilation of *The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, a large collection of biographies, towards the end of the tenth century. The common motive in all of these biographical works is first and foremost to establish legitimate lines of transmission of the doctrine. Thus, they quote extensively from the conversations between teachers and pupils, in which the former display profound Ch'an wisdom by their "strange words and extraordinary behavior," and in which the latter earn their teacher's official sign of approval (Chinese: *yin-k'o*; Japanese: *inga*) by their enlightened answers or astute reactions.

The preoccupation with patriarchal genealogies, so evident in the early Ch'an literature, has its parallel in the earliest recognizable forms of Ch'an art: the theme of the Six Patriarchs Transmitting the Law and the Robe. The earliest reference to a painting of this type occurs in the opening paragraphs of Hui-nēng's *Platform Sūtra*, which gives a detailed and highly partisan account of the circumstances under which Hui-nēng became the Sixth Patriarch: "In this corridor they intended to have scenes from the *Lankavatāra-sūtra* painted as an act of devotion. They also wanted paintings of the Five Patriarchs Transmitting the Robe [of Bodhi-

dharma] and the Law in order to spread knowledge about them and as a record for later generations. The painter Lu Chên had already inspected the walls and was planning to start the next day." Perhaps it illustrates the relative importance accorded to certain words in the Ch'an sect, in contrast to images, that this wall painting was never realized. That very night the empty space on the wall was taken up by the first of a series of competing couplets, composed by the monks Shên-hsiu and Hui-nêng. Their competition resulted shortly afterwards in the latter's confirmation as the Sixth Patriarch of the sect. Judging from the literary sources, paintings representing either the Sixth Patriarch or Six Patriarchs — unfortunately, the Chinese language does not draw a distinction between the two — were painted by a number of well-known artists, among them the T'ang artists Lu Lêng-chia and Ch'ên Hung. The Northern Sung painter Li Kung-lin painted *The Patriarchs Transmitting the Robe and the Law*. This work was kept in the collection of the Emperor Hui-tsung (reigned 1101-1126), but is now lost.

During the eleventh century, illustrated books with pictures of the Six Chinese Patriarchs or the Twenty-eight Indian Patriarchs were printed in Ch'an monasteries in Soochow and Foochow in Southern China. In 1072 the traveling Japanese monk Jōjin personally made a copy of such prints to send to Japan. Monk-painters eagerly copied these continental models. The drawing of *The Six Patriarchs of the Bodhidharma Sect* (cat. no. 1) is an example of such a Japanese copy. In spite of its modest size, it still conveys a vivid impression of a now almost completely vanished iconographic theme, which may well have been the oldest of all Ch'an themes in painting.

The Consolidation and Expansion of the Ch'an Sect

During the T'ang period (618-906) the monasteries of most sects of Buddhism became powerful and prosperous. About the middle of the ninth century, however, the impoverished and weakened central government, no longer able to afford the drain of wealth from the national economy which resulted from these huge tax-exempt institutions, reacted with a secularization program that resulted in a virtually complete destruction of the Buddhist monasteries in the metropolitan area and in those regions where the central government

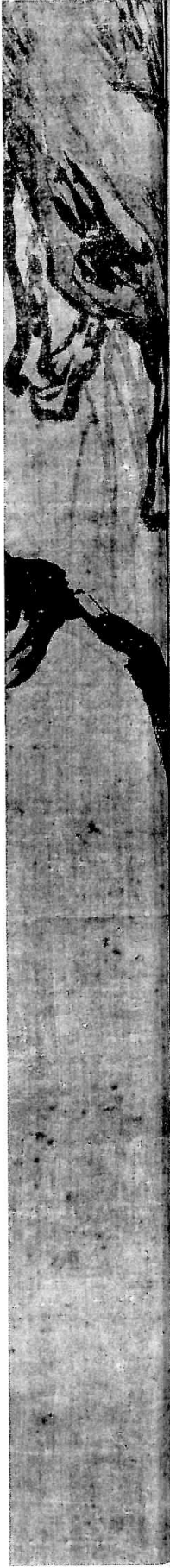
could still enforce the law. In regions farther removed from the capital and no longer in the hands of rulers loyal to the central government, monasteries often escaped the fate of the central provinces. Even so, most Buddhist sects never recovered from this crippling blow dealt to their economic position, continued to decline, and began to disappear altogether in the period of civil wars which came in the aftermath of the T'ang dynasty.

The period of the Five Dynasties (906-960), a time of steep decline for most of the sects of Buddhism, saw the Ch'an sect prosper, spread, and gain a foothold in the area which was to remain its stronghold during the next few centuries, the region in and around Hang-chou (Chêkiang Province). During this period most of present-day Chêkiang was part of the Kingdom of Wu-Yüeh. Under the patronage of the ruling Ch'ien family, Buddhism, especially the T'ien-t'ai school, went through a period of revival, stimulated in part by the recovery, from Korea and Japan, of Buddhist texts which had been lost in China.

The reasons for the survival and the resilience of the Ch'an sect cannot occupy us in detail, but need to be briefly sketched here. By the time the persecutions began, the Northern Branch of Ch'an, descended from Shên-hsiu, had already disappeared. The Southern Branch and its offshoots emerged from the period of the persecutions relatively unscathed. To some extent the sect may have owed its perpetuation to the organizational reforms which had been instituted by the great monk Po-chang Huai-hai (720-814) fifty years earlier. Up to that time, Ch'an monks had often lived in monasteries of the Lü sect and were obliged to obey its special monastic rules. Huai-hai established a new set of rules of conduct, different from those of the other sects and more in keeping with the Ch'an ideals of simplicity and austerity. In the newly founded monasteries, which were even admired by the Confucianists for their atmosphere of frugality, Huai-hai began to put these new regulations into practice. By doing so, he must have drawn his following away from the large and affluent institutions, which were soon to bear the brunt of the persecutions. By propagating his motto "Cling to nothing" he discouraged the accumulation of great wealth, and by enforcing the rule "One day without work, one day without food," he effectively reduced the native Chinese antipathy toward the



2. Arhat reidentified as Shih-tê, in the style of Kuan-hsiu,
ca. 14th century (detail)



non-productivity of the Buddhist clergy. Planting trees and growing tea or vegetables, the adherents of the Ch'an sect escaped from the odium of living by alms, which had been propagated by the Indian vinaya. From that time on, begging by the Ch'an monks was strictly regularized.

Kuan-hsiu (832-912): The Birth of Ch'an Art

It was in Ch'ekiang that the first great artist emerged from the Ch'an milieu, the monk, painter, calligrapher, and poet Kuan-hsiu (832-912). His *Three Arhats* (cat. no. 2), although undoubtedly copies several hands removed from originals by the master, illustrate some of the typical characteristics of Ch'an art, which were to remain its hallmarks throughout its entire history.

During the middle of the T'ang period certain artists appeared who distinguished themselves by their nonconformist methods of painting. One of them is Wang Mo ("Ink Wang") who painted landscapes starting from configurations of ink splashes, spattered freely on the silk, which he then elaborated in a composition. Supposedly painting only when he was drunk, Wang Mo was in the habit of stamping upon his pictures with his feet and of smearing them with his hands. Nevertheless, these unorthodox ways were recognized as having their own artistic merit.

The art critics consequently established a separate category for the practitioners of such techniques, whose work did not conform to the "basic methods of painting" — the *i-p'in* or "untrammeled" class.

The artists of this category usually worked in ink-monochrome. Their brush methods were unrestrained, coarse, and "deficient in bone structure," according to their critics. They painted simplified, sketchy shapes, which they indicated with a few strokes of the brush. The use of these unorthodox methods of painting gradually spread during the Five Dynasties and Sung periods. That they gained increasing acceptance among the art critics is clearly indicated by the fact that the "untrammeled" class — a classification implying judgment of quality as well as describing style — began to be placed at the head of the traditional threefold classification of painters according to their artistic ability. It was among the artists of the western Chinese state of Shu (present-day Szechwan) that the untrammeled methods of painting gained con-

siderable popularity. While unrest and civil war engulfed the rest of the country, this secluded and peaceful area became a haven of refuge for artists from other regions. When Kuan-hsiu became implicated in political intrigue, he too headed west for the state of Shu, where he was warmly received because his fame as a poet and painter had already preceded him there. Thus it happened that the first great artist with a Ch'an background came into contact with the artists of the untrammeled class.

The fact that the rise in popularity of the untrammeled styles of painting coincided with the appearance of the first real Ch'an artists, could be a mere accident of history. Although practically nothing is known about the evolution of Kuan-hsiu's style, he may well have been painting in an unconventional manner before he came to Shu. How strongly he was influenced by the *i-p'in* artists is not clear. It is quite conceivable, however, that a Ch'an artist, reared in an atmosphere where the authority of the canonical texts of Buddhism was emphatically rejected, would adopt a method of painting which deliberately deviated from the classical precept of "fidelity to the object in portraying form." Although some of the existing works attributed to Kuan-hsiu are painted in colors, the paintings in this exhibition are in ink-monochrome, a technique which is specifically mentioned in literary sources as one in which Kuan-hsiu excelled. This in itself is not surprising, for Kuan-hsiu had a great reputation as a calligrapher and was compared with the "mad" monk Huai-su (725-785), who practiced the "unrestrained cursive style." Thus we may assume that Kuan-hsiu's methods of painting and writing were equally unorthodox. To work in ink-monochrome rather than in colors would seem to be in keeping with the Ch'an spirit of simplicity, and to reduce the many colors of the phenomenal world to values of gray and black was a method which certainly had an essential affinity with Ch'an ideas. If it was merely an accident of history which brought Kuan-hsiu into the group of the *i-p'in* and ink-monochrome practitioners, it certainly was a momentous occurrence. For it is clear that from the time Kuan-hsiu first painted his Arhats, there has been a close affinity between unorthodox brushwork in ink-monochrome and themes or subjects favored in Ch'an circles.

It is also of importance to note that Kuan-hsiu's behavior typifies the attitude and way of



2. Arhat reidentified as Han-shan, in the style of Kuan-hsiu, ca. 14th century (detail)



life characteristic of many later Ch'an artists. Renowned for his poetry and calligraphy, Kuan-hsiu maintained numerous contacts with the intelligentsia of his generation. Especially during the Sung and Yüan periods this tradition of intellectual accessibility, often leading to exposure to politics, was to be an important factor in the mutually productive cultural exchange between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Because of their secular contacts, the Ch'an artists were able to find inspiration in thoughts and forms which would have remained outside their range of vision if they had stayed entirely within the monastic confines of their Ch'an institutions. Conversely, many concepts of the Ch'an Buddhists, in art as well as in literature, penetrated into literati circles and even influenced certain of the academic artists.

The predictable result of this interaction is that there are paintings which represent typical Ch'an themes executed by artists who were not themselves Ch'an priests. In this exhibition the two paintings attributed to Ma Yüan (cat. no. 4) and *Two Patriarchs Harmonizing Their Minds* (cat. no. 3) by Shih K'o are the works of artists who were never part of the Ch'an sect. Conversely, there are paintings by Ch'an priests that are strictly secular in artistic origin and have no overt connection, symbolic or otherwise, with Ch'an ideas. That *Two Patriarchs Harmonizing Their Minds*, which belongs to the earliest period of the development of ink-monochrome painting in China, should happen to deal with a Ch'an theme, is an interesting phenomenon in the history of Chinese painting but should not create the misconception that Ch'an is necessarily ink painting or, conversely, that ink painting is Ch'an, nor that *i-p'in* and Ch'an are identical modes of expression.

Ch'an Literature and Kōan

The T'ang period has often been called the "Golden Age of Ch'an Buddhism." The Japanese have called it the "Epoch of Zen Activity" (*Zenki no Jidai*), the word "activity" here being used in the sense of creative ability or originality of thought. By giving it this name, they have stressed one of the most striking features of the activity of the great Ch'an masters of the T'ang period: their singularly unpredictable originality and liveliness of spirit. Their determined, singleminded quest for Enlightenment and their unrelenting efforts to shake and shock their pupils into realization of the Truth are full of

eccentric originality and have a spirited vitality. It was only natural that this movement should one day spend its energy and start to slow down.

That seems to be what happened during the Sung period, and many of those who were living at that time realized the inexorable process which was taking place. As time passed, the path to Enlightenment, which the great Ch'an masters of the T'ang period had found in a direct, immediate, intuitive fashion, and not as the result of an involved process of cogitation, gradually was lost. Dōgen, the monk who introduced Sōtō Zen into Japan in 1228, lamented that the T'ang period had been the great epoch of Ch'an and that by Southern Sung times it had lost all of its "purity." In their search for this purity, spontaneity and vitality, which had carried earlier generations of Ch'an priests to the realization of Truth, later Ch'an adepts turned to the "strange deeds and extraordinary behavior" of the ancient masters. Searching for clues to what was basically an incommunicable experience, they began to commit to writing the many puzzling stories which they found either in the biographical literature or oral traditions transmitted to them from the past. One visionary (or perhaps reactionary?) monk tried to destroy the manuscript of the *Green Cliff Record* (early twelfth century), a collection of one hundred strange Ch'an stories which are accompanied by equally abstruse commentary and verse. He feared that by reducing Ch'an lore to writing its spontaneity would be lost forever. One must admit that this is what eventually happened. Dōgen, however, who deplored the loss of T'ang "purity," was not free from literary inclinations. He is reputed to have spent the night before he sailed home from China in a determined effort to copy the entire *Green Cliff Record*. The result of his labors still exists and is known as the *Ichiyō-bon*, the "One-Night Book."

By committing the acts of the ancient patriarchs to writing, the Ch'an monks fixed and codified the stories about their distant predecessors, calling them "precedents" or "cases" (*kung-an*; Japanese: *kōan*), a term borrowed from legal terminology.

The *kōan* became the subject of intense study, especially in those subsects which continued to adhere to the doctrine of "Sudden" Enlightenment. The students were required to cogitate on them, to "solve" them, in the hope that this would help them recapture the spirit of the classical period of Ch'an. But of even more

importance, the primary ^{kōan} aim of this method of teaching was to provide the pupils with a tool with which they could attain Enlightenment themselves.

The T'ang masters had created and lived *kōan*, while the Sung masters contemplated and studied them. With the benefit of hindsight, we can explain this change in Ch'an mood and method as the inevitable result of institutionalization. The growth of a voluminous literature, created by a sect which claimed "transmission outside the scriptures" as one of the fundamentals of its creed, is an indication of change, but can hardly be viewed as a symptom of decline. By some of the Ch'an and Zen monks who actually took part in these developments—Dōgen is a typical example—these changes were viewed as an omen of the inexorable decline of the religious momentum.

Even though we may find Dōgen's harsh judgment too romantic and onesided, one cannot entirely escape from the impression that the artistic élan of the Ch'an sect reached its peak a considerable time after the original religious spontaneity and philosophical creativity had begun to decline. Whether a direct correlation exists between these two phenomena is difficult to judge. The creativity of the Ch'an sect is not simply explained as an accumulation of creative energy which, in accordance with some law of nature, had to find an outlet, be it in original doctrinal speculation or in art. It has been taken for granted too often that the search for Enlightenment and the desire for artistic expression can be equated, and that the attainment of Enlightenment and artistic inspiration are experiences of a similar kind.

In considering these points two important facts have to be taken into account. The first is that the nostalgia for the "Epoch of Zen Activity" was one of the primary motivations behind the growth of Ch'an literature and that, as we shall presently see, a very important part of Ch'an art was based in turn upon the writings which this longing for the "creative" past had produced. The second is that it is almost as difficult to determine when the philosophical creativity abated as it is to establish when Ch'an art began to develop. Perhaps enough literature has been transmitted to gain insight into the progress of philosophy. Our vision of early Ch'an art, however, is bound to remain unclear, for we can only base our judgment on the few isolated works of art which chance has preserved for us.

Ch'an Art during the Northern Sung Period (960-1126)

The Northern Sung period was a time when there were only sporadic contacts between China and Japan. The few Japanese who made the crossing usually went on pilgrimages to the revered sites of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism. This was the original motivation for the journey of Eisai through whose efforts Zen was finally introduced into Japan.

After the firm establishment of Ch'an Buddhism in Japan, monks began to go to China to "seek the Law," i.e., to sit at the feet of the great Ch'an masters on the continent. As we have already seen, the monk Jōjin sent home a drawing of the Six Patriarchs, but this still was an isolated instance during the Northern Sung period. It was not until later, after the move of the seat of the Chinese Government to Hang-chou (1126), that Japanese monks began to collect the artistic materials on which our entire knowledge of Ch'an art is based. The infrequency of previous contacts and the preoccupation of the early pilgrims with other sects of Buddhism probably account in large part for the fact that so little Ch'an art of the Northern Sung period has survived.

The literary sources of the Southern Sung period give us no inkling of the sudden development of artistic talent, which is attested to by the actual Ch'an paintings preserved in Japanese collections. The few, isolated remarks on Ch'an art in Northern Sung records cannot be taken, therefore, as an indication that the production of Ch'an art was necessarily small in quantity at the time. Some impression of the artistic production, vague though it is, may be gained from the small number of rare illustrated Chinese books, and the scattered literary references which throw some dim light on the religious and artistic movement which produced these books.

During the middle of the eleventh century, Ch'an monks and Buddhist laymen began to compose poetry of an allegorical type, in which man's grasp of the Ch'an doctrine was likened to a tenfold parable of the ox and its herdsman (see cat. no. 49). At least a dozen of such sets of "songs" are known to have been composed, and it would appear that it became a literary fashion to write sets of *Ten Oxherding Songs* and publish them in illustrated books. This vogue was part of a larger movement to reduce the contents of large *sūtras*, such as the *Gandavyūha*, to a series

of fifty-three poems, devoted to the Good Teachers, whom the boy Sudhana visited in his legendary search for Enlightenment. These poems were also published in illustrated books, and at least two authors, a Ch'an priest and a layman, tried their hand at both themes. To illustrate these books required artistic talent, and several of the authors supplied their own illustrations, as they were amateur painters. Whereas all early Chinese copies of the *Ten Oxherding Songs* have disappeared, a few Sung copies of the illustrated *Gandavyūha* texts have been preserved.

At least one of the artists involved in composing and illustrating such poetry was an artist whom we may safely place in the untrammelled class. This was Yang Chieh, whose description says: "He excelled in painting demons and spirits. Each time he put his brush to the paper he would first paint the hands and feet, then he would finish the whole figure in two or three strokes." This description fits almost perfectly such pictures as Shih K'o's *Two Patriarchs Harmonizing Their Minds* (cat. no. 3). One of the painters and poets of *Gandavyūha* illustrations, the Ch'an Master Chung, is said to have painted in a style comparable to that of the great Northern Sung artist Li Kung-lin (1040-1106), and the work of the Ch'an monk Fo-kuo, another Ch'an illustrator, shows the unmistakable influence of the line-drawing technique for which Li Kung-lin was famous. This shows that the Ch'an artists were not working in some sort of artistic vacuum, but were cognizant of the main artistic trends of contemporary art and responded to these according to their own inclinations.

Ch'an Monks and Literati

There would be no special reason to dwell here at any length on the work of one group of early Ch'an artists whose entire oeuvre has been lost, if it were not for the fact that the circumstances which led to the publication of the *Ten Oxherding Songs* and the rhymed abstracts of the *Gandavyūha* reveal some interesting facts about the relations between literati and Ch'an monks during the Northern Sung period. A tradition of cordial relations had already been established by the time Kuan-hsiu roamed the country. He was a famous poet and calligrapher, and must have found it easy to associate with people of similar interests. The information we have about the obscure artists who were involved in

writing and illustrating these books clearly shows, however, that even Ch'an monks of lesser fame were on congenial terms with the famous literati of their time. Well before the effects of the lively interaction of these two groups may be seen in actual works of art, members of the literati group and Ch'an monks often met and established close bonds of friendship.

The most famous coterie of Northern Sung literati consisted of the great writer, poet, and calligrapher Su Shih, his brother Su Ch'ê, the calligrapher and poet Huang T'ing-chien, the painter Li Kung-lin, and Mi Fu, an amateur painter who was primarily known as a calligrapher and art collector. Su Shih, Huang T'ing-chien and their close friend the Ch'an monk Fo-yin later made their appearance in Ch'an painting as the Three Vinegar Tasters.

It was among these intellectuals and artists that the basic ideas first began to be formulated which led to the rise of the literati school of painting. By shifting the emphasis from the subject-matter of painting to its formal elements, and thereby extending concepts and ideas which had first been developed in poetry and calligraphy into the realm of painting, the literati asserted that a work of art expresses and communicates to its viewer the personal character of the artist, and the mood in which he created his work.

Although an examination of the theories of the literati school would lead us too far away from the topic at hand, certain close parallels between the ideas of literati and Ch'an monks should be mentioned. Thus there is the common idea that the painting reveals the character of the artist, and that there is no need to stress skill and technique. The idea of "deliberate awkwardness," which the literati propagated, also must have been agreeable to the Ch'an artists. Furthermore, because of their familiarity with the concept of "by Mind transmit to Mind," the idea of transmitting the spirit of the artist by non-descriptive, "abstract" means must also have been perfectly acceptable to the Ch'an monks. However, even though many of the ideas of the literati may have touched a responsive chord among Ch'an priests, it cannot be denied that there are clear differences between them. Most important, perhaps, was the Confucian mood of loftiness and restraint, or nobility of spirit, which was not part of the traditions of the Ch'an monks, even though each group in

its own way expressed an aversion to the over-attachment to things.

Nevertheless, there was enough common ground to allow a lively exchange of ideas. The profound influence of Buddhism on the rising Neo-Confucian school is well known and need not be treated here. It not only extended into such forms of literature as the "Recorded Sayings" and into a form of meditation practiced by the Neo-Confucianists, but penetrated deep into the highest spheres of philosophical speculation. The influence of Sung Confucianism on Ch'an is less clear, but in Ch'an art the impact of the literati is omnipresent. In fact, the parallels become so numerous that James Cahill has written: "It may be questioned whether a valid division [between literati and Ch'an schools] can in fact be made, whether they should not be regarded as a single school of amateur artists. In styles they overlap; perhaps they should be distinguished, if at all, on the basis of attitude: the more intellectual approach of the Confucian literature as against the intuitive one of the Ch'an monks" (*Chinese Painting*, Geneva, 1960, p. 96).

The Repertoire of Ch'an Themes

In view of the frequent contacts between literati and Ch'an monks, it is only natural that the styles of painting of these two groups overlap, and that the lines of distinction often become blurred. Themes dealing with Nature, whether it be landscape, animal or plant, can be seen from the Ch'an point of view by pointing out that the Ch'an painter was aware of "a single reality underlying the phenomena of nature." But who is to draw a clear distinction in art between the reality of the "Buddha-nature" of the Ch'an monks or the "mind" which the Neo-Confucianists consider the fundamental principle behind all phenomena?

The most obvious criterion for establishing what Ch'an art is lies in its subject matter, and the evolution of Ch'an art can best be followed through the gradual development of this repertoire of typical Ch'an themes.

Claiming to transmit a doctrine outside the scriptures which could not be expressed in words, the Ch'an sect rejected the authority of most of the *sūtras* which the orthodox Buddhists believe to contain the teachings of the Buddha. By doing so they turned their backs on the vast corpus of canonical literature which provided a source of inspiration for more orthodox Bud-

dhist artists. The rejection of the written word by the Ch'an sect is graphically expressed in Liang K'ai's *The Sixth Patriarch Tearing up a Sūtra* (cat. no. 6), and the lack of respect for icons could not have been more appropriately and brilliantly illustrated than in *The Monk from Tan-hsia Burning the Wooden Image of the Buddha* (cat. no. 13). Yet, although both masterpieces are typical creations of the Ch'an sect, their message should not be taken literally. After all, the "doctrine without words" had produced a large volume of religious literature, and the occasional outbreaks of anti-scriptural protests seem to have been directed not so much against the beliefs of the orthodox sects as against certain literary tendencies within the Ch'an school itself. The artistic counterpart of the anti-scriptural tendencies is iconoclasm. Except for such cases as the monk from Tan-hsia, there is no evidence of this kind of fanaticism in Ch'an or Zen. However, there is no indication that Ch'an Buddhism succumbed to the cult of icons which played such a prominent role in other Buddhist sects.

The Buddha and Figures from the Buddhist Pantheon

The general rejection of the *sūtras* automatically eliminated, at least in theory, a vast number of orthodox Buddhist themes. Moreover, whenever themes concerning orthodox Buddhist concepts were represented at all, a certain aloofness from exact iconographical representation and a deliberate effort to make the work of art look different from an orthodox icon are clearly noticeable. All schools, orthodox as well as Ch'an, accept the first part of the life of the Historical Buddha, leading up to his Supreme Enlightenment. As we have already seen, the Ch'an sect returned to a more humanistic, less abstract concept of the Buddha, and saw him in the first place as the supreme example of an Enlightened Being. In keeping with this concept, the Ch'an artist usually represented the Buddha not as a stylized remote *Tathāgata*-type, but as an Indian monk. In a way, he was regarded as the First of all the Arhats. The Arhats (Chinese: *Lohan*; Japanese: *Rakan*) represented the class of beings who have attained Enlightenment by themselves, but are unconcerned about the Enlightenment of others. Vague figures from Indian Buddhist antiquity, about whose lives almost nothing is known, the Arhats fitted well into the Indian mystique of the Ch'an sect, and the



4. *Fa-yen Wên-i and His Teacher Lo-han Kuei-ch'ên*,
attributed to Ma Yüan (ca. 1150-1230) (detail)

artist, relatively free in the way he wished to represent them, often created fantastic, almost grotesque "Indian" figures (cat. no. 2).

In their selection of the moments from the life of the Buddha which they represented in art, the Ch'an painters made a choice which deviates from that of the traditional sects. Obviously, a school which claimed to have received the wordless doctrine from the Buddha himself had little interest in his later activities as a preacher.

Surprisingly, however, the theme of the actual moment of Supreme Enlightenment, though not lacking in Ch'an art, is uncommon. Perhaps there was some reluctance to represent not only the Buddha's Supreme Enlightenment, but also the actual moment of *Satori* of Zen priests. Instead we find representations of the Buddha undergoing austerities (cat. no. 53) and, most frequently, his return from the mountains after he had relinquished asceticism as a path leading toward Enlightenment (cat. no. 28). Although Reisai and Minchō have painted the scene of the Death of the Buddha (*Parinirvāṇa*), it would seem that this reflects the widespread popularity of this theme in orthodox Buddhist circles and should not be taken as part of the typical Ch'an repertoire.

The selection of other Buddhist figures from the vast traditional pantheon is perhaps somewhat more easily understood than the choice of the events from the life of the Buddha. The White-Robed Kuan-yin was perhaps the most informal, the most secular, and the least Bodhisattva-like figure of the entire Buddhist pantheon. The theme of Śākyamuni Returning from the Mountains as well as the White-Robed Kuan-yin (cat. nos. 19, 33, and 35) may have both come into the Ch'an repertoire through the work of the much-admired Northern Sung literati painter Li Kung-lin (died 1106). The only other traditional Buddhist deity to be included in the Ch'an pantheon is the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (cat. no. 32). This Bodhisattva embodies the idea of transcendental knowledge (*Prajñā*) and came closest to the Ch'an concept of the Ideal Teacher as the Bodhisattva who guides the faithful on their way to Enlightenment.

The deities adopted by the Ch'an sect from orthodox Buddhism were depicted in accordance with the descriptions of these figures in the *sūtras*. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when Ch'an literature had become fully developed, the artists of the Ch'an school began to draw upon their own Ch'an literature for

artistic inspiration. Naturally, one of the most important figures they selected was the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma. Even within the limited framework of this exhibition, we can follow the evolution of this theme through several of its most important stages. The Founder of Ch'an is shown as an ordinary monk in *The Six Patriarchs of the Bodhidharma Sect* (cat. no. 1). During the Southern Sung period (cat. no. 7), however, he had already acquired most of the facial features which would serve as a prototype for the later Japanese Bodhidharma representations (cat. no. 57). The "Red-Robed" Bodhidharma of the Kōganji (cat. no. 20) represents a different Chinese tradition. More portrait-like than any other representation of Bodhidharma, this masterwork comes as close to a real icon as is possible in the Ch'an sect. Such representations as *Bodhidharma Crossing the Yangtze on a Reed* (cat. no. 22) and *Bodhidharma Contemplating a Wall* (cat. no. 55) illustrate events from the life of the First Patriarch which are later additions and embellishments of his biography.

Zenkiga

The cryptic discussions and confrontations between Ch'an teachers and pupils, which make up such an important part of the biographical literature, found their way into art through a category of Ch'an painting which the Japanese have called *zenkiga*, i.e. paintings of Zen "activities" (see above, p. xxi). Just like the literature they illustrate, these paintings may suggest paths leading to Enlightenment. Although written *kōans* were used for instruction, there appears to be no evidence that the visual representations of these same stories served the purpose of training Ch'an adepts. The only exceptions are the illustrations of the *Ten Oxherding Songs*, but these were an integral part of the scroll or book in which text and illustration were reproduced together.

Zenkiga is a generic term, and it is possible to subdivide the large body of painting belonging to this group into several categories. A large group consists of representations of visits, dialogues, and encounters. These can be meetings between teachers and pupils, a type of painting represented in this exhibition by two works by Ma Yüan (cat. no. 4). This type of representation is sometimes referred to as a "Patriarch Meeting" (Chinese: *tsu-hui-t'u*) or as

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7. Bodhidharma, artist unknown, 13th century (detail)



7. *Fêng-kan*, by Li Ch'üeh, 13th century (detail)

a "Ch'an Visit" (*ts'an-ch'an*), a term still used among Zen adepts for the private interview between teacher and pupil at stated times. Other categories of meetings represented in these paintings take place between Ch'an monks and persons who are either ignorant of Ch'an or committed to other ways of life. The conversation between the Monk from Tan-hsia and the abbot of the temple whose image he burned (cat. no. 13), or the visit of Ma-tsu to the recluse P'ang (cat. no. 17) both seem to fall into this category, which is known as "Ch'an meetings" (Chinese: *Ch'an-hui*; Japanese: *Zen-e*). Often, the titles of such paintings mention the words "question and answer," i.e., dialogue (Chinese: *wên-ta*; Japanese: *mondo*). This is a very descriptive form of art, sometimes not far removed from historical figure painting. It is not surprising, therefore, that it attracted artists who are not known for their connections with Ch'an Buddhism. The pair of hanging scrolls from the Tenryūji (cat. no. 4) is a perfect example of Ch'an art created by an artist of the Academy with a professional painter's background.

A special category of *zenkiga*, which often poses difficult problems of interpretation, is that of pictures which supposedly represent a Ch'an monk in the act of attaining Enlightenment. The unusual circumstances under which certain Ch'an monks attain Enlightenment, such as hearing the sound of a stone against bamboo or seeing his own face reflected in the water when fording a stream, are described in biographical Ch'an literature. Chinese representations of Ch'an monks attaining Enlightenment are almost nonexistent. According to an old tradition, *The Sixth Patriarch Chopping Bamboo* (cat. no. 5) represents Hui-nêng at the moment when hearing the sound of bamboo being chopped brought him Enlightenment. However, this Japanese tradition has no support in literary sources, and this is also true of many other paintings belonging to this category. The possibility that the interpretation of these paintings is a later Japanese elaboration, which occurred after the original meaning of the painting had been lost, should therefore not be altogether excluded.

The Ch'an Eccentrics in Art

The next category of subjects, though still typically Ch'an in character, is of a somewhat different nature. The encounters and confrontations with persons such as P'ang Yün (cat. no.

17) almost invariably represent personages of a definitely historical character, even if their brilliant sallies and clever repartee may have been embellished by later chroniclers. Another group, however, consists of a number of weird figures, whose historical authenticity is less clear. There are several features in their biographies which makes it doubtful that these waggish additions to the Ch'an pantheon of eccentrics really ever existed. First of all, they do not seem to appear in any of the pedigrees which record the lines of transmission of the doctrine. Although their bizarre unworldliness bears testimony to their advanced stage of Ch'an perception, and although the names of their teachers are sometimes mentioned, these figures never seem to have founded lines of their own. Secondly, their place of birth and secular name—biographical data which are available for almost all prominent Ch'an monks—are generally unknown. Instead we find a long list of strange, occasionally even facetious names, highly contradictory dates, and a dearth of any solid biographical information.

The first and by far the most famous Ch'an eccentrics who belong to this category are Han-shan ("Cold Mountain"; Japanese: Kanzan) and Shih-tê ("Foundling"; Japanese: Jittoku). The origin of the legends of Han-shan and his inseparable companion Shih-tê can be traced to a collection of about three hundred T'ang poems, known as the *Collected Poems of Han-shan*. The suggested dates for Han-shan, the alleged poet of these verses, range from 577 to 871. The numerous chronological discrepancies in the earliest accounts strongly suggest that Han-shan, Shih-tê, and Fêng-kan, a Ch'an priest who befriended them, are all legendary personages, whose elaborate fictional biographies were constructed upon a few lines of poetry and the preface of the *Collected Poems*.

According to this preface, Han-shan was a recluse and poet who lived on Mount T'ien-t'ai (Chêkiang, a place renowned for its hermits, both Taoist and Buddhist). He was a friend of the monks Fêng-kan and Shih-tê of the Kuo-ch'ing-ssü, a monastery near his hermitage. Shih-tê, who had been found as a child by Fêng-kan, and who had been brought up in the monastery, worked in the dining hall and kitchen. He supplied his hermit friend with leftovers. Sometimes, the legend says, Han-shan would stroll for hours in the corridors of the monastery, occasionally letting out a cheerful cry, or laughing or talking to himself. When taken to task or

driven away by the monks, he would stand still afterwards, laugh, clap his hands, and then disappear. Judging from his poems, which abound with references to the *Tao-tê-ching* and *Chuang-tzū*, the Taoist classics, Han-shan was actually more of a Taoist recluse than a Ch'an monk, and most of the Buddhist references in his poems are taken from the *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*, a work not highly regarded in Ch'an circles. Later, Han-shan and Shih-tê came to be regarded as avatars of Bodhisattvas (Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra) and took their place in the Ch'an pantheon.

The Ch'an painters often represented these two eccentrics at work, an artistic tradition which had its beginning in the Sung period. It is quite possible, however, that their companion Fêng-kan, always escorted by his pet tiger, gained earlier recognition as a figure worthy of inclusion in the repertoire of Ch'an painters. If the copy after Shih K'o (cat. no. 3) accurately reflects a work of this master, Fêng-kan Sleeping on His Tiger is a Ch'an theme which antedates the earliest Han-shan and Shih-tê pictures by a considerable period of time.

Another Ch'an eccentric is the potbellied Pu-tai, the only personage of this group who became a popular deity in Chinese folk religion. The biographical works list him under the monk's name Ch'i-tz'ü, a weird name meaning "Congruent with This." His name Pu-tai is a facetious, punning nickname, for it can mean "cloth bag" or "glutton." Pu-tai carried a cloth bag on a stick over his shoulder. Wandering around the country, he begged for food and alms, and whatever he received he promptly put into his bag.

This potbellied, bald, and wrinkled figure, sometimes cheerful, sometimes crude, and always taciturn when confronted with Ch'an riddles, was believed to be an avatar of Maitreya, mainly on the strength of some cryptic statements which he had made himself. Some maintain that he died in 916 or 917, which is in conflict with descriptions of his alleged exploits twenty years later. Whatever the exact date of his death may have been, all accounts agree that it became fashionable to paint portraits of Pu-tai, if not already during his lifetime, then at least shortly after his death. The *Sung Kao-sêng-chuan*, compiled ca. 988, says that his portrait was frequently painted by the people of the Yang-tzu and Chêkiang regions.

This pageant of eccentrics of dubious historical authenticity becomes complete with Hsien-tzū ("Clam") and his companion Chu-t'ou ("Pig's Head"), two unrelated figures, whose eccentricity consisted of non-vegetarian habits.

Chinsō: The Portraits of Ch'an Masters

The Ch'an themes which have been described in the preceding pages can often be recognized immediately by their bizarre figures. The real core of Ch'an art, however, which reveals the essence of Ch'an more directly than any other type of painting, is portraiture: seemingly conventional paintings representing monks seated in high chairs, usually holding one of various Ch'an implements in their hands.

Ch'an portraiture is a highly personal form of art, as intimately connected with the idea of the orthodoxy of transmission as the ancient theme of the Six Patriarchs Transmitting the Robe and the Law. In the Ch'an sect, it was customary that each disciple who had achieved Enlightenment was given a portrait of his teacher. In recognition of the advanced stage of the disciple's perception, the teacher would inscribe his portrait with a personal dedication or eulogy. It is unclear just when the practice of presenting pupils with portraits began, and there is almost no evidence left in China that the artistic tradition ever existed at all. If it were not for the many Japanese monks who proudly returned to their homeland carrying the portraits of their beloved teachers, we would probably never have known anything about this form of Ch'an art.

It would be wrong to think, however, that the Ch'an portrait, usually referred to by its Japanese name *chinsō*, was nothing but a diploma or certificate, intended simply to testify to the fact that the pupil had attained *Satori* and that he had therefore taken his place in the line of succession. Much to the contrary, the Ch'an portrait is the tangible artistic expression of the deeply personal relationship between teacher and pupil which is one of the fundamental characteristics of the Ch'an sect. By having the portrait of his teacher ever with him, the pupil could always maintain the indivisible spiritual bond with his teacher through this symbolic presence of the painting, drawing from it the inspiration and the psychological comfort which he would need on his way through life.

Naturally, this high ideal was not maintained in every case, and certain portraits seem to have

been made to satisfy more general, ceremonial purposes. The *Butsunichi-an Kubutsu Mokuroku*, an inventory of works of art in the Engakuji in Kamakura dating from 1365, lists thirty-nine portraits of Chinese Ch'an monks. About half of these bear inscriptions by the sitter (Japanese: *jisan*), suggesting that they may have been given to pupils. The other half consists of portraits inscribed by other monks, usually contemporaries. All of these portraits represent well-known Ch'an monks, worthy of being included in a collection of portraits of the spiritual ancestors of the school.

Certain prominent Ch'an teachers, who were particularly respected by the Japanese, had large followings, with the result that several of their portraits survive. Chung-fêng Ming-pên, whose portrait is shown in this exhibition (see cat. no. 15), must have given away a large number of portraits, to judge from surviving examples. Although several of Ming-pên's portraits, including the example shown here, are of distinguished artistic quality, it is not surprising, considering the circumstances, that a few of them are somewhat perfunctory in execution. But even if we disregard the mere souvenir and the imitation among the *chinsô* portraits which came to Japan, there still remains a group of portrait painting of a very special type.

First of all, the intimate personal relationship between the sitter and the recipient required that these portraits meet a high standard of physical likeness. In addition, however, the artist was obliged to penetrate beyond the surface of mere physical resemblance in order to capture some essential aspect of the psychology of his subject. Although it is difficult to establish with certainty just how successful the artists were in achieving this objective, there can be no question that the best portraits of Ch'an priests extant today surpass all of the existing secular Chinese portraits in quality of observation and execution.

In view of the dearth of secular portraits — the few existing examples are small figure paintings, not real portraits — it is difficult to judge whether the Ch'an portraitist created an art form which consistently surpassed the secular works. Certainly, Sung and Yüan portraiture should not be judged by the fossilized art of Ming and Ch'ing ancestral portraits. On the other hand, the Yüan treatise by Wang I, *The Secrets of Portrait Painting*, reveals no remarkable psychological insight, and seems to be mainly preoccupied with the

mechanics of portraiture. It opposes the uncultured portraitists "who ask their models to sit stiffly erect with their garments in orderly array." Yet this is exactly what the Ch'an portraitists seem to have done without any detrimental effect.

Almost nothing is known about the identity of the portraitists. One portrait of Ming-pên is signed by a monk-painter, and it is probable that other, anonymous *chinsô* were also painted by monks. Japanese examples substantiate this idea. The monk-painter may have known the sitter personally and was naturally familiar with the specific requirements for a Ch'an portrait. Although he may have been influenced on occasion by the idealizing inclination of the historical portrait painters, his primary purpose was nevertheless to penetrate through the external appearance and into the heart of the subject. At the same time, however, he exercised all his powers of visual observation and portrayed the smallest details, omitting no stray hair or wart.

The final step was the addition of the teacher's encomium in order to seal the bond of transmission of the doctrine, which is "by Mind to transmit Mind." And the pupil, by looking at the portrait, and by reading the inscription, would look straight into his teacher's heart. There is perhaps no other form of Chinese and Japanese art in which painting and calligraphy are so intimately connected in their purpose and meaning.

Landscapes, Animals, and Plants

All the different categories of painting treated above have in common a clearly demonstrable connection with Ch'an doctrine and Ch'an literature. In paintings representing landscapes, animals, or plants, however, a connection with Ch'an is inherently less obvious and thus often cannot be established with the degree of certainty that may be possible with figure paintings. The "secular" paintings shown in this exhibition are most likely all works of Ch'an or Zen monks, and may therefore be classified as Ch'an or Zen art simply because of the religious affiliation of the artist. Even though the artist is a Ch'an monk, however, it does not follow that his paintings will necessarily have a symbolic or allegorical Ch'an content.

There are, of course, subjects with obvious symbolic connotations. A number of these are

familiar and well established, since they were derived by painters from the repertoire of the literati painters. As the poems written on the paintings by Ch'an and Zen priests indicate, bamboo, plum blossoms, and orchids stood for the same lofty ideals in Ch'an as among the literati. A striking example of the adoption of literati symbols is to be found in the *Ten Oxherding Pictures* traditionally attributed to Shūbun (cat. no. 49). The ninth stage, dealing with the purity of one who has attained Enlightenment, is visually represented by the Three Pure Ones — rock, plum blossom, and bamboo.

The frequent appearance of herons as a subject in Ch'an painting (cat. nos. 34 and 61) suggests that the artists were inspired by more than simple delight in the elegance of these birds. Ch'an and Zen artists painting oxen must have borne in mind the parable of the *Ten Oxherding Songs* (cat. no. 49). Sparrows, represented in this exhibition in a painting attributed to Mu-ch'i (cat. no. 11), are mentioned in Ch'an and other Buddhist literature with a regularity which makes us suspect that this simple bird may have acquired some special symbolic connotation. Although sparrows first appear in paintings of the Northern Sung Academy, the Ch'an artists soon adopted and developed this motif, possibly for symbolic reasons. The deep attachment of the great Ch'an monk Ikkyū to a bird of this type is expressed in the *document humain* embodied in the calligraphy of this artist (see cat. no. 52).

The symbolic meanings of birds, animals, plants, and fruit in Ch'an painting should be considered in terms of several levels of possible meanings. First of all, there are the documented and traditional symbolic subjects already mentioned. Future research in depth in the literature of the Sung and Yüan periods, especially in Ch'an texts and in poetry, may reveal more cases of such intentional, directly interpretable symbolism.

In the *Ts'ai-kên-t'an* ("Turnip Talk") by Hung Tzū-ch'êng (ca. 1600), an author whose syncretic ideas show a strong influence of Ch'an Buddhism, and whose work was much admired by Zen Buddhists in Japan, the following passage occurs: "The fishes swim in water, but they are oblivious to it; birds mount the wind to fly, but they do not know that there is wind. If we understand this, we can rise above the fetters of the phenomenal world and we can rejoice in our destiny."

Although this was written long after sparrows and herons had become common subjects in Zen painting, this passage reveals the less direct, more diffuse levels of symbolism which may account for the inclusion of birds in the Ch'an repertoire of subjects. In this group of paintings the artists express the spontaneous and natural movement of a bird or a fish in its own habitat — by analogy, the condition of the enlightened human being in this world. Paintings in this category may appear to be works of art in which no meaning — no purpose beyond that of pictorial representation — can be established at all. One cannot escape the impression, however, that the philosophical content of Ch'an painting increases as the symbolism becomes less specific, particularly near the indistinct borderline between religious and secular painting.

Ch'an artists who achieved Enlightenment viewed the world around them with new and different eyes. It was not, of course, the world that had changed; the change was within themselves. They had acquired an intuitive awareness of the transcendental principle which unites man and mountain, animal and plant. Of this state of mind it is said: "Only when you have no thing in your mind and no mind in things are you vacant and spiritual, empty and marvelous." This frame of mind implies an extraordinary blending of aloofness and non-attachment on one hand and a sympathetic feeling of total participation and complete understanding on the other. Such a *Weltanschauung* must have enhanced the individual character and flavor of Ch'an landscape painting which distinguish it, despite its numerous and obvious connections, from the landscapes of the literati.

Ch'an Monks and Literati in the Southern Sung and Yüan Periods

For us to reconstruct the breadth of the differences between literati and Ch'an landscapes is a difficult undertaking. One wonders, indeed, to what extent these differences were already felt by the contemporaries of the artists. It may not be coincidence at all that the frequent and intimate personal contact between literati and Ch'an artists and the appreciation of Ch'an paintings by the intelligentsia of the secular world seem to have diminished at the time when Ch'an painting brought forth its greatest artists: Liang K'ai and Mu-ch'i.



13. *The Monk from Tan-hsia Burning a Wooden Image of the Buddha*, by Yin-t'o-lo (13th-14th century)



15. Portrait of the Ch'an Priest Chung-fêng Ming-pên
(before 1325) (detail)



Liang K'ai, represented here with two of his finest figure paintings (cat. nos. 5 and 6), blends the impetuosity of the untrammelled artists with the line drawing of Li Kung-lin and the discipline of a former academician. His association with Ch'an monks left an indelible mark on his work. Although he was not a Ch'an monk himself, he treats Ch'an themes with genuine Ch'an feeling. From the moment he left his Golden Belt (an imperial decoration) hanging in the Academy, the literary sources of the Sung period seem to have lost sight of him. It is only on the strength of his former association with the Academy that his name appears in later collections of artists' biographies, and we may even wonder whether the positive judgment accorded his work is not simply the result of ignorance of his later style. The near-contemporary and somewhat later comments by Chinese art critics on the work of Mu-ch'i are almost invariably of a derogatory nature. Perhaps the most "noncommittal" statement, tinged with a *dédain* that in itself is most revealing, is the remark, addressed to him and other painters, that their work is "good only for display in monks' quarters." However, at least two Ch'an artists achieved great fame during their lifetimes. The reputation of the calligrapher Chang Chi-chih (cat. no. 9) is said to have spread to the Chin Empire which occupied northern China. Perhaps of merely local character was the great fame of the painter of orchids Hsüeh-ch'uang (also known as P'u-ming). According to contemporary accounts, paintings from his hand seem to have hung in every house in Soochow, where he lived. Perhaps it is a measure of his fame that he is the only Ch'an artist whose name was ever mentioned in something as popular as a Yüan novel.

Contrary to traditional pattern, which had been established several generations earlier, several Ch'an monks of the Southern Sung and Yüan periods repudiated the life of monastic seclusion, which was devoted to withdrawal from the turmoil of the world and to association only with kindred spirits. Hsü-t'ang Chih-yü (1185-1269), a superb calligrapher, and the teacher of Nampo Jomyō (see cat. no. 26), was closely connected with the imperial court. As the abbot of the Ch'an monastery at Mount A-yü-wang, he engaged in a conflict with the government and was forced to resign from the abbotship. Mu-ch'i, the great painter (cat. nos. 10-11), had to flee to Yüeh and go into hiding because

he had insulted the prime minister, Chia Ssü-tao. Others enjoyed the secular world in the company of poets and calligraphers without getting involved in politics. Chung-fêng Ming-pên (cat. no. 15) is an example of a monk who entertained the closest contacts with the secular and artistic world around him without ever being drawn into controversial politics.

When we compare the list of monks who wrote colophons on the paintings of Liang K'ai with that of the poets who inscribed the paintings of Mu-ch'i, we discover that many of the names are identical. If we try to unravel, with the help of such Ch'an sources as the "Recorded Sayings" of prominent Ch'an monks, the complicated fabric of mutual friendships, provincial loyalties, and casual acquaintances of the Ch'an monks involved, we receive the impression that the Ch'an art of the Southern Sung and Yüan periods was produced, inscribed, and admired by a relatively small coterie. To some extent this impression may be deceptive, and attributable to the semi-nomadic habits of Ch'an priests, who often moved from one temple to another every few years. The rotating system of abbotships, which gave the more accomplished eligible monks a chance to be the head of a monastery at least for a few years, and the search for teachers with whom the adept could establish the personal rapport which is a prerequisite of Enlightenment, contributed to the frequent communication between principal monasteries of Ch'an Buddhism in or near the metropolitan area of Hang-chou. Naturally, artists and monks with an interest in art tended to gravitate to the same centers, which may be one of the reasons why the student of Ch'an art is confronted again and again with the same names of monasteries, temples, artists, and monks writing colophons.

Although it is hazardous to make generalizations, it would seem that the contacts between Ch'an monks and literati during the Southern Sung period were neither as frequent nor as intimate as they were during the Northern Sung. One of the reasons the Northern Sung intelligentsia had praised the work of minor Ch'an artists, albeit in a somewhat condescending way, was that their work resembled that of their friend and *confrère* Li Kung-lin. This attitude on the part of the intelligentsia seems to have changed during the later periods. With the exception of Chang Chi-chih, who was not a Ch'an monk, even calligraphers, who revered and emulated the same masters that the literati

did, do not seem to have enjoyed the respect and appreciation of the establishment. Chung-fêng Ming-pên's contacts with Fêng Tzŭ-chên and Chao Mêng-fu (see cat. nos. 15 and 16) were certainly not based on their good opinion of his calligraphy, which even his admirers considered clumsy. It appears that Ch'an art, after being encouraged by the literati in its formative stage, and after absorbing the influence of the literati styles, shapes, and ideas, evolved into something which the literati found difficult to understand and to appreciate. As a result, the Ch'an artists may have gradually turned inward, losing contact with the artistic movements which were developing in the circles of the literati. With the triumph of landscape painting as developed by the Four Great Masters of the Yüan period, Ch'an art gradually receded into the background.

The End of Ch'an Art in China

Ch'an as a vital doctrine did not end with the Ming restoration. On the contrary, it made a significant contribution to the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming, who revitalized Confucianism. Ch'an Buddhism was even viable enough to resume, at the fall of the Ming, its missionary activities in Japan. Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's references to Ch'an, and the artistic activity of the "mad" painter Hsü Wei (1521-1593), who is reported to have painted a now lost picture of Han-shan and Shih-tê in his wild, impetuous ink-monochrome style, are isolated instances of the survival of Ch'an elements in art. The artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did not establish a Ch'an tradition. The great collectors of the Ming period did not collect the works of these obscure Ch'an painters, who, if mentioned at all in biographical reference works, were given no words of praise. That any part of the Ch'an oeuvre has been preserved at all and handed down to the present day is due only to the activities of a small group of dedicated Japanese monks who penetrated into the coterie of Ch'an artists. With a genuine desire to attain Enlightenment, they had come from across the sea to sit at the feet of the great Ch'an masters. Deeply imbued with the philosophy of Ch'an, they were perhaps in a better position to appreciate Ch'an art than their Chinese secular contemporaries. Their acquisitive instinct, their desire to transplant the real Ch'an to Japan, saved the oeuvre of some of China's most fascinating artists.

Zen: Its Establishment in Japan

The first reliable information on meditative practices in Japan goes back to the middle of the seventh century. Dōshō, who was responsible for the founding of the Hossō (Yogācāra) sect in Japan, went to China in 653 and became a disciple of Hsüan-tsang, the redoubtable pilgrim who had journeyed all the way to India in order to study the Dharma in its birthplace. As a result of Hsüan-tsang's influence, Dōshō took an interest in Ch'an, which had become a vital, flourishing movement at the hands of Hui-k'o's successors; and when he returned home, he had the first Japanese meditation hall built within the precincts of the newly founded Hossō headquarters.

The first Ch'an priest to make the voyage to Japan, Tao-hsüan, arrived almost a century later. A member of the northern line of Shên-hsiu, he came to Japan at the invitation of Japanese Buddhist monks, and is credited with influential religious activities during the Tempyō period. He taught Ch'an meditation to Gyōkyō, the teacher of Saichō (767-822), the founder of the Tendai sect in Japan, who seems to have been a part-time practitioner himself, and although meditation was a part of the routine in the Chinese parent sect (T'ien-t'ai), Saichō's approval of these practices accounts for the inclusion and continuance of the contemplative tradition in the Japanese branch in later centuries.

During the second quarter of the ninth century, a Chinese monk of the Lin-chi sect, I-k'ung, who had been invited by the wife of the Emperor Saga, made the long journey to Japan. He lectured on Ch'an at the Imperial Court and also founded the Danrinji, which the Empress built for him, and gave instruction in meditative practices there. He seems, however, to have been unable to generate the religious momentum necessary for establishing the sect permanently in Japan, and he returned disappointed to China.

Thus, all these early attempts to plant the roots of Ch'an in Japanese soil proved ineffectual, and it was only after a hiatus of more than three centuries that this task was finally accomplished. There seems to be no evidence of the importation of Ch'an art in connection with any of these abortive efforts to bring the sect to Japan, or of artistic efforts during the short-lived activities of these missionaries there.

日下僧自號林放
牛沖泊靜閑意
趣不為方當極子熟
於美苑瞻菊香
蘇臺綠野漱
青山瀨散放半以際
以古鉢為芳草以壞
袖為眠策他日露地
蒼亭蕉園依舊
送舟船繪不駕靴
騎執鐵吹玄懷他
韻續至是時臥
明月汲他清風
界外別有町畦在
海客大人

16. Dedicatory Encomium for Hōgyū Kōrin by Fēng
Tzū-chên (1257-post-1327) (detail)

✓ The effective transplantation of Ch'an to Japan took place initially at the hands of the two native masters, Eisai (1141-1215) and Dōgen (1200-1253), who are much revered for their pioneering efforts in transmitting the Lin-chi (Japanese: Rinzai) and Ts'ao-t'ung (Japanese: Sōtō) sects. As Eisai was active somewhat earlier, however, he is commonly honored as the actual founder of Japanese Zen. Eisai received his first training at the great Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei, and when he made his first trip to China in 1168, he followed the established pilgrimage route, visiting the great centers of his sect. However, he seems to have been strongly attracted to the doctrines and spirit of Ch'an, which was by then the most vital school in Chinese Buddhism. In 1187 he made the voyage to China again, inspired this time by a zealous ambition to retrace Buddhism to its spiritual source in India. Bad weather and uncooperative authorities forced him to give up this plan, but he focused his efforts on the study of Ch'an, and subsequently received the seal of Enlightenment from a branch of the Lin-chi line, which he propagated with great determination and vigor on his return to Japan, hoping that Ch'an teachings would revitalize Japanese Buddhism. In 1191 he founded the Shōfukuji, the first center of the Rinzai school in Japan, at Hakata, the customary terminus for voyages from the continent.

In 1202, the Kenninji was completed in Kyoto, and Eisai, who received the support of the Shōgun Yoriie, was appointed to head this new establishment, the first large-scale Zen monastery in Japan. However, there was concerted opposition to Zen by the older sects, especially the Tendai, who viewed it as a dangerous competitor, particularly because of the Kenninji's location, in the midst of the area of traditional Tendai control and also unfortunately close to the long-standing sources of Tendai temporal support in the court. Eisai's proclamations emphasizing the superiority of Zen over Tendai did little to ease the problem. Despite Eisai's diligent efforts to propagate the faith and to gain recognition for it as an independent school, he was nevertheless forced to make certain pragmatic concessions to the older, entrenched Kyoto sects, Tendai and Shingon. Thus, the original architectural layout of the Kenninji had a heterodox quality about it which clearly exhibited doctrinal compromise: in addition to the most essential Zen facility, the meditation

hall, there were also buildings for both Tendai and Shingon rites, and although the pressures which caused this syncretic accommodation disappeared with the passing of time, a residual Tendai ceremony is still performed there at the present day. In general plan, the Chinese monastery on Mount Po-chang is said to have served as the prototype for the Kenninji. Shortly before his death, Eisai was invited to Kamakura, where the Shōgun had established his governmental headquarters, and there he superintended the construction of the Jūfukuji, which was not only the third Zen temple in Japan, but more importantly, the first Zen establishment in this city, which was soon to become the greatest bastion of the faith in eastern Japan.

Zen flourished during the Kamakura period (1185-1333) not only in the two main centers of influence and culture, Kyoto, the ancient capital, and Kamakura, the city which gives the period its name, but also in the provinces, where great monasteries like the Eihei-ji, the headquarters of the Sōtō sect, were established. While the ardent efforts of a large group of distinguished monks, some Chinese, the majority Japanese, provided the energy for this progress, Zen was also fortunate in acquiring the patronage of the Bakufu, and this support was of primary importance in the construction of the great monastery complexes where the faith was propagated.

Many of the Hōjō family, the de facto rulers during the period, became devout followers and diligently sought the company of distinguished prelates. Other influential members of the military class followed their example and were converted to the Zen doctrine, which seems to have struck a particularly responsive chord among the warriors, who were drawn naturally to its direct, simple tenets, which stressed self-discipline and the realization of truth through introspection rather than tedious reference to scriptures or tendentious metaphysics. The Hōjō Regent Tokiyori (1227-1263) was a devoted protagonist of Zen, whose interest began with the arrival of the Chinese prelate Lan-ch'i Tao-lung (Rankei Dōryū) (cat. nos. 20, 21) at Kamakura. Tokiyori recognized the religious eminence of Tao-lung and installed him as the first abbot of the newly built Kenchō-ji, a magnificent monastery completed in 1253, where Zen was practiced in the unadulterated Chinese fashion for the first time. Tokiyori achieved *Satori* as a result of instruction from another emigré Chinese priest, Wu-an, and died in 1263 dressed

in Buddhist robes and sitting motionless in *zazen*, the meditating posture.

Zen Monks in China during Late Kamakura Times

The completion during the third quarter of the thirteenth century of two great monasteries, the Tōfukuji (cat. no. 59) in Kyoto, and the Ken-chōji (see cat. no. 21) in Kamakura, ushered in a vigorous new era in the development of the Zen church. With the establishment of these and other great centers, Zen grew rapidly in influence and numbers. Japanese monks traveled with ever-increasing frequency to China, where they dutifully followed the well-trodden paths from one celebrated Ch'an institution to the next, studying industriously under Chinese masters in their singleminded search for Enlightenment.

The most influential prelate in China during the first half of the century was Wu-chun Shih-fan (see cat. no. 8), and the efforts of his students, both Chinese and Japanese, were of particular importance in the evolution of Zen as a dynamic force in Japan in the latter half of the century. Disciples came to him from various regions of China, and sixteen Japanese monks are known to have studied under him. Thus, it is not surprising that the founders of both the Tōfukuji (the Japanese monk Ben'en Enni) and the Ken-chōji (Lan-ch'i Tao-lung, the noted Chinese monk) were recipients of the "Seal of Mind" from Wu-chun Shih-fan.

During Southern Sung times, the most important Ch'an temples were organized into a hierarchical system known as the "Five Mountains and Ten Monasteries," a system which was later to be utilized in a modified form in Japan. Of the fifteen institutions, eleven were situated in Chêkiang, the province where the capital was located, three in Kiangsu, and one further south in Fukien. It is clear from this geographical distribution that the main Ch'an centers were localized in a fairly small area. This concentration simplified the traveling problems of Japanese monks, who do not generally seem to have gone very far from the chief monasteries in Chêkiang. There are no accurate figures on how many Zen monks crossed the sea to study at these Ch'an centers during Sung times, but about one hundred names are attested to in literary sources. During the succeeding dynasty, the Yüan, more than

fifty Zen monks traveled to the continent from about the time of the Mongol invasion attempts (1274, 1281; see cat. no. 30) to the end of the Kamakura period (1333), and ten Chinese monks made the voyage to Japan during the same period.

It was only natural that the earnest Japanese pilgrims returned from their continental sojourns with greater religious insight, but they also brought back, as more tangible evidence of their protracted journeys, the prescribed memorabilia and keepsakes acquired during their studies. In doing so, they were simply continuing a tradition dating back centuries to the earliest days of Buddhism in Japan. The iconographical sketch depicting *The Six Patriarchs of the Bodhidharma Sect* (cat. no. 1), probably the oldest subject depicted in Ch'an art, may be based on a sketch done originally by one of the earlier Japanese monks who traveled to the continent, Jōjin, who never returned to Japan himself, but is known to have sent back drawings of this subject.

The unique importance of the master-disciple relationship, together with the perennial preoccupation with authenticity in the transmission of doctrinal lines in Ch'an-Zen, resulted in the production of art forms which reflected these concerns: the *chinsō* portrait of the master, with an inscription by him above (usually attesting to the religious achievements of the student, and often with explanations of methods for seeking Enlightenment), and certain types of calligraphic documents, such as *suiji* (which are often similar to the inscriptions over *chinsō*), instructions on procedures designed to help the student in his quest for *Satori*, or *inkajo* certifying that the student had mastered all the necessary disciplines and had attained an advanced degree of religious accomplishment. These art forms were the objects of the highest veneration, for they symbolized the true and authentic transmission of the particular branch of Zen which inspired them. Consequently, it is not surprising that Zen pilgrims attached the greatest importance to acquiring such works, and solicitously transported them back to their homeland, where they were reverently protected.

Both Eisai and Dōgen returned with *chinsō*, setting the precedent for later travelers. The finest Chinese *chinsō* in existence, the full-length portrait of Wu-chun Shih-fan in the Tōfukuji, was given to Ben'en Enni (see cat. nos. 8, 59) by the sitter in 1238, and brought back

to Japan in 1241. It is of unique importance, for it demonstrates the high degree of artistic excellence and psychological insight achieved by Ch'an monk-portraitists, a superlative tradition which soon declined in its homeland, and is known today only as a result of the care and veneration accorded such paintings over the centuries in Japan. Among the other early dated Chinese *chinsō* in Japan are an apocryphal portrait of Hui-nêng in the Kōshōji in Fukuoka (dated 1198), a portrait of Yün-an P'u-yen, with his own colophon, in the Daitokuji (dated 1218), and a representation of his student Hsü-t'ang Chih-yü with a colophon in his own hand (dated 1241). Japanese monks continued to diligently collect *chinsō* in China over the next century and a half, although their own native monk-painters had become so proficient in this genre that they had drawn abreast of and passed the Chinese by the end of the Yüan period (third quarter of the fourteenth century). However, the portrait of Chung-fêng Ming-pên (cat. no. 15) shows that the artistic level of the Chinese portraits was still high at the beginning of the century.

With the establishment and rapid growth of Zen monasteries during the twelfth century, it was only natural that Japanese artists should have turned their attention to the *chinsō*, not only because works imported from the continent could not meet the demand, but also because Chinese masters were active in Japan and Japanese priests such as Ben'en Enni had achieved high esteem and established their own lines.

Japanese Chinsō

It is not clear when the first Japanese *chinsō* were produced by Zen artists, but it may have been as early as the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Initially, Zen institutions lacked the established atelier traditions and nucleus of trained artists to produce such works, and they were forced to utilize the services of specialists from other sects, as we know from the fine portrait of Wu-an P'u-ning in the Shōdenji in Kyoto, painted in 1265 by Takuma Chōga, a specialist in Esoteric Buddhist subjects from the Daigoji, a temple of the Shingon sect close to Kyoto. Whether the famous portrait of Lan-ch'i Tao-lung in the Kenchōji, dated 1271, and its companion piece the "Red-Robed" Bodhidharma (cat. no. 20) were indeed painted by a Japanese artist (rather than by an emigré Chinese special-

ist) is impossible to determine at the present state of our knowledge, although Japanese scholarly opinion is strongly inclined in this direction. Another superb painting by an anonymous artist which falls into the same category is the *chinsō* of Shōichi Kokushi, who died in 1280, which has a colophon by the sitter and is preserved in the Manjuji in Kyoto.

Where Ch'an monks are portrayed in *chinsō* it is often difficult to determine whether the work was actually produced in China or whether it is a Japanese imitation, for the high esteem accorded imported portraits in Japan resulted in the production of very meticulous copies. In some cases the identity of the writer of the colophon or the date may help clarify the problem. Although there is not enough evidence to generalize, it appears that Chinese Ch'an specialists in *chinsō* did not sign their works during Sung times, and it is possible that the earliest Japanese Zen portrait painters also followed this precedent. Perhaps the earliest signed *chinsō* done by a Zen artist is a portrait of the priest Shinchi Kakushin (Emmyō Kokushi), which is dated 1315 and bears a signature which reads "Kakukei," a name presumed to be that of a Zen monk. By the second quarter of the fourteenth century, however, it is clear that Japanese artists were capable of producing *chinsō* of the highest artistic quality, a fact which is demonstrated by the superb portrait of Musō Soseki (cat. no. 24) done by his disciple Mutō Shūi in 1349, and carefully signed in the lower right-hand corner in small characters. Eight portraits of Soseki are attributed to Shūi, and among these there is an earlier dated work, produced in 1340. Another superb work of this period is the *chinsō* of Shūhō Myōchō (Daitō Kokushi, cat. no. 26) in the Daitokuji, dated 1334, which is unsigned but reveals the influence of the traditional Yamato-e style of painting in its execution.

Once the standard of artistic excellence had been established by Mutō Shūi, other Zen painter-priests developed who maintained this superb tradition. Generally, they were men like Minchō (see cat. no. 42) who worked at ateliers in the largest monasteries, either in Kyoto or Kamakura. Minchō, like Shūi before him, was a master of great versatility who produced a large variety of paintings. However, his posthumous portrait of Ben'en Enni (Shōichi Kokushi), preserved in the Tōfukuji, shows that he must have been very carefully trained in the painting of *chinsō*. That the high artistic level of



24. *Chinsō Portrait of Musō Soseki* by Mutō Shūi (active first half of 14th century) (detail)

Japanese Zen portraiture was still being energetically maintained as late as the middle of the fifteenth century is apparent in the *chinsō* of Ikkyū Sōjun (cat. no. 51). Fine *chinsō* continued to be produced until the end of the Muromachi period, and the tradition exercised a strong influence on secular portraiture during the sixteenth century.

Although there are interesting *chinsō* depicting masters of the Ōbaku sect which were produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the tradition of Zen portraiture had generally lost its vigor by this time, and there are few examples that show any artistic inspiration or originality.

Chinsō are used in Zen monasteries on a variety of ceremonial occasions, generally in connection with memorial services of one type or another, such as founding dates, anniversaries of deaths of eminent monks or patriarchs, or services connected with certain dates revered in Buddhism. Certain of the events are celebrated in a formal, prescribed manner, often with large numbers of monks in attendance. On such occasions *chinsō* are generally hung in the Dharma Hall or the second story of the huge *Sammon* gate. One of the most solemn occasions is the funeral service held for a venerated priest, when a portrait representing the departed personage is installed in a portable pavilion-like structure known as a *shintei*, equipped with curtains. This is carried in procession and installed on a funeral altar, and rites are performed before it. *Chinsō* are also used in more informal, private ceremonies, as well, such as the occasion when the Shōgun Yoshimitsu received the tonsure (see cat. no. 24) while sitting in front of a portrait of Musō Soseki.

As a result of the close connections between the military class and the Zen church from middle Kamakura times on, an interesting hybrid form of *chinsō* evolved. Along with the other features of etiquette and daily behavior which were adapted from Zen by the military class, certain aspects of the funeral observances followed by Zen monks were also taken over by the warriors, and this included the use of portraits of the deceased which were, to all intents and purposes, *chinsō*. The portraits of four generations of the Hōjō family in the Kanazawa Bunko Collection are representative of this derivative genre. Although the religious affiliations of these men varied, the artistic influence of the *chinsō* tradition is readily apparent in the treatment of the faces, which are rendered in a

carefully observed, realistic manner. Perhaps the finest example of this type of portrait is the *chinsō* of Nansō-e Kōji with a colophon, dating it to 1330, by Minkō Soshun, who came from China and served as abbot of the Nanzenji.

Bokuseki:

The Calligraphy of Ch'an and Zen Monks

It may well seem paradoxical that a sect which attached so much importance to the concept of a "special transmission outside the scriptures," with "no dependence upon words and letters," should have produced a monumental amount of written materials during the course of its development. Included among the prolific output of its Chinese and Japanese monk-writers and chroniclers are sermons, tracts, hymns, the "Recorded Sayings" of a large number of patriarchs and eminent ecclesiastics, compendious biographies, and *kōan* collections, as well as an impressive quantity of writings in seemingly secular forms of literature, such as diaries and poetry. It must be noted, however, that this history of literary accomplishment did not develop without occasional antiscriptural activities.

Liang K'ai's painting of a patriarch tearing up a *sūtra* (cat. no. 6) provides graphic evidence of this sentiment, which seems to have developed from time to time among certain monks who feared that the spiritual vitality of the sect would decline if the revered sermons, sayings, or apothegms of the masters were set down in written form. This type of concern probably accounts for the action of Ta-hui, who suppressed and burned the famous collection of *kōan* known as the *Green Cliff Record* (*Pi-yen-lu*), a composite work of Hsüeh-t'ou Chung-hsien (980-1052) and Ta-hui's highly respected teacher, Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in (1063-1135). Yüan-wu had lectured to his students on the one hundred "cases" of Hsüeh-t'ou which are included in this work. He seems to have had no intention of compiling his lectures, but the monks wrote them down and they were later published as commentaries to the one hundred cases. Ta-hui may even have felt that he was actually carrying out the master's wishes in destroying the work. Good fortune prevailed, however, for the work existed in other copies, and it became one of the most frequently used *kōan* compilations in later times. The case of Tê-shan (780-865), famous for his rough treatment of students, provides another example of this antiscriptural tendency.

He devoted himself diligently to the study of the *Diamond Sūtra*, but when he attained *Satori*, he burned all his patiently accumulated notes and commentaries on the *sūtra*, proclaiming that all philosophical speculation was meaningless.

Despite these destructive aberrations, however, which seem to be characteristic of the Chinese parent sect rather than the Japanese offspring, the amount of written material that has been preserved, both in book form and in handwritten documents, is nothing short of prodigious. The corpus of printed editions of Ch'an religious literature that has been transmitted down to the present in both China and Japan is impressive in its variety and size, but actual specimens of the writings of Ch'an priests can only be seen today in Japan.

The calligraphy of Ch'an and Zen monks is generally referred to in Japan as *bokuseki*, an elegant term which, translated literally, means "ink traces" or "ink vestiges." In China the term (pronounced mo-chi) seems to have been used as early as the Six Dynasties period, but it did not become a popular term until Sung times, when it seems to have been only one of several synonyms for "calligraphy." Japanese Zen monks who traveled to China during Sung times adopted the term and applied it in a more specific, restricted sense to the handwritten documents or calligraphy of Ch'an or Zen monks. The term is already used in this sense in the *Butsunichi-an Kubutsu Mokuroku*, the catalogue of calligraphy and paintings of the Butsunichi-an, a sub-temple of the Engakuji in Kamakura, compiled in 1365.

As we have mentioned, the unique master-student relationship in Ch'an-Zen is an outgrowth of the central preoccupation of the sect, the direct, personal transmission of certain intuitively comprehended truths from the teacher to his successor or follower. The tradition that Bodhidharma's bowl and robe were handed down in succession to the patriarchs who followed him represents the symbolic expression of this arcane, perhaps on occasion ineffable, transmission. When the sect had become considerably larger and more institutionalized in later times, the desire for some tangible evidence of this transmission resulted in the practice, described above, of the master's presenting a *chinsō* of himself (usually with an inscription by him above) to the zealous student in recognition of both his advanced stage of religious accomplishment and his acceptance in

the master's line. Alternatively, the master might write out a document in his distinctive calligraphic style and give it to the disciple, accomplishing the same purpose. In either case, the essential requirement was that the object of certification, whether painted or written, was received directly and personally from the master's own hand.

While the greatest reverence was focused on the particular calligraphic documents which attested to the religious accomplishments of the student and confirmed his position in the authentic line of the master, it is also clear that there was a deep sense of respect, if not awe, for all of the writings of eminent church figures, contemporary as well as past. This feeling of veneration was twofold, for it applied not only to the religious content of the writings, but also to the calligraphy itself, the direct product of the master's personality, with its individuality, strength, and profundity of expression. Believed to express the total personality of the writer, the art of calligraphy acquired a kind of mystique, inspired in part by religious circumstance, but more largely as a result of its high level of aesthetic accomplishment.

The oldest piece of calligraphy from the hand of a Ch'an monk preserved in Japan is a letter written by Tao-ch'ien, a man who was awarded a high ecclesiastical title by the Sung Emperor Chê-tsung (reigned 1086-1101), and who seems to have associated with many of the scholars and literati of the period, including Su Tung-p'o. He achieved fame for his talents in composing poetry, but it is also apparent that he was a superlative calligrapher. His style owes something to that of Wang Hsi-chih (see cat. no. 40) but he seems to have been influenced by Su Tung-p'o's manner in his later years.

However, the Ch'an calligraphy that has been most admired in Japan is not of the orthodox type represented by Tao-ch'ien's example, but belongs rather to more personal, unconventional types like the famous example by Yüan-wu (1063-1135) in the Tokyo National Museum. Yüan-wu belonged to the Yang-chi branch of the Lin-chi (Japanese: Rinzai) school of Ch'an, which became the dominant branch in Japan, and exercised the strongest influence on the evolution of calligraphy in later times. The works of Yüan-wu's pupils such as Sung-yüan and Ta-hui (who destroyed the *Pi-yen-lu*) are highly respected and continue the master's stylistic tradition.

In China, where the weight of established tradition in calligraphic expression was quite strong, the unconventional, highly personal calligraphy of Ch'an monks does not often seem to have been well received very far beyond their own religious circles, and it eventually declined. In Japan, however, where Zen exercised a dominating influence on the evolution of culture during much of the "medieval" period, the calligraphy of Zen monks established the standard for excellence, and was extensively emulated in secular society.

There is some evidence, however, that the attitudes of Ch'an monks, and perhaps even something of their calligraphic style, exercised a degree of influence on certain of the literati who associated with Ch'an monks during the Northern Sung period. Thus Su Tung-p'o, who studied Ch'an under two noted masters, seems to express the individualized spirit of the Ch'an practitioners in his statement: "While it cannot be said that my calligraphy is very accomplished, I have produced my own new ideas, and the fact that I am not treading in the footsteps of men of the past is the most pleasant thing of all to me!" Again, the pronouncement of his close friend Huang T'ing-chien (who was a diligent devotee of Ch'an practices): "In my calligraphy there is no basic method!" reflects the original, eccentric quality of Ch'an.

There are many fine specimens of *bokuseki* in private and public collections in Japan, but the largest number of pieces are preserved in Zen temples, particularly in Kyoto, where the main headquarters of the Rinzai school are located. The Tōfukuji (see cat. no. 59) has a superlative group of early examples, particularly those from the hand of the great Ch'an prelate Wu-chun Shih-fan (see cat. no. 8) which were brought back personally from China by Ben'en Enni in 1241, or sent to him slightly later in honor of the founding of the Jōtenji in Hakata. Wu-chun's style, although vigorous and dynamic, is rather more orthodox than that of most Sung monks, and shows a strong inclination to emulate the style of his somewhat younger contemporary Chang Chi-chih (cat. no. 9). Lan-ch'i Tao-lung, the founder of the Kenchōji in Kamakura (see cat. nos. 20, 21), and Fêng Tzū-chên (cat. no. 16) also exhibit an indebtedness to Chang's influential style in their writing.

The *bokuseki* collection in the Daitokuji in Kyoto is one of the finest in existence. Not only is it extensive in numbers and high in quality,

but it also includes a variety of pieces which span a considerable period of time, and a general idea of the main currents, styles, and developments of Ch'an-Zen calligraphy from early Southern Sung times up to the Edo period can be acquired through a study of this collection alone. The oldest example is from the hand of Mi-an Hsien-chieh (1107-1186), one of the most influential prelates of the first half of the Southern Sung dynasty, whose later line includes names such as Sung-yüan, Hsü-t'ang, Wu-chun, Tao-lung and I-shan. It is not surprising that the Daitokuji has the most important corpus of calligraphy by its founder, Daitō Kokushi (Shūho Myōchō, 1282-1337) or examples of works of his teacher Nampo Jōmyō (1235-1309), who studied in China under Hsü-t'ang Chih-yü (1185-1269) and returned to Japan with works by his master. Daitō's style represents the fusion of his own strength of expression with the calligraphic manner of Huang T'ing-chien, one of the most widely emulated masters of the Northern Sung period. T'ing-chien's characters have an incisive though elegant quality which is reproduced in Daitō's works; but with the addition of a slightly eccentric flavor. Daitō reached the height of his career during his fifties, when he devoted himself to educating and advising his many disciples. He wrote a large number of *hōgo* (essays or tracts interpreting the teachings of the Buddha, often with advice on methods for attaining Enlightenment) during this period, which he presented to his students. The manner in which he expressed his opinions through sermons and explanatory discourses and tried to elucidate the methods and means for achieving *Satori* show a clear resemblance to certain practices followed by the Ch'an master Chung-fêng Ming-pên (cat. no. 15), who had a number of Japanese students. Daitō revered Chung-fêng and must have been familiar with his "Recorded Sayings," which were brought back to Japan.

Several of the abbots who succeeded Daitō at the Daitokuji, such as Tettō and Kasō, were also accomplished calligraphers, but the most dynamic hand in this line during the middle of the Muromachi period belonged to Ikkyū Sōjun (1394-1481, cat. nos. 51, 52, 53). The larger part of Ikkyū's life was devoted to combating the religious shortcomings of Zen during this period—a growing spiritual debilitation, complacency, and worldly ostentation. His great strength of character and sense of conviction

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stand out in his calligraphy, which is renowned for its uniqueness and vitality.

The Daitokuji produced few calligraphers of note during the last century of the Muromachi period, a time marked by wars and instability. During the Momoyama period, however, there was a renewed interest in calligraphy. This development took place in large part as a result of the rapid growth of interest in the Tea Ceremony, in which hanging scrolls with appropriate phrases played an essential part. The Daitokuji was the chief monastic center for the Tea Ceremony during Momoyama times, and Sen no Rikyū, who established the main canons for the ceremony which are still followed, was closely associated with the temple and is buried there. Thus there was considerable demand for the calligraphy of Daitokuji monks such as Shun'oku Sōen and Kokei Sōchin, who produced small works with the characters written in a precise, spare manner.

During the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Daitokuji masters such as Kōgetsu Sōkan (cat. no. 65) and Takuan Sōhō (cat. no. 66) returned to a larger, more dynamic mode of calligraphic expression in an attempt to realize more fully the aesthetic potentialities of the hanging scroll format. Both men favored short, direct phrases which could be rendered in a single line, often consisting of only two or three characters, and usually containing some reference to Zen. Kōgetsu's association with the Tea Ceremony was of a very intimate nature, for his father had been a Tea Master, and Kōgetsu studied with Kobori Enshū, the famous garden designer and arbiter of taste, who was also a fellow student at the Daitokuji. The Daitokuji continued to provide support and inspiration for the Tea Ceremony and related calligraphic forms of expression during the following centuries, and it remains a center for these activities at the present day.

The Gozan Monasteries and Their Literary School

As we have noted, during the Sung period the most important Ch'an institutions were organized into a hierarchical system known as the "Five Mountains and Ten Monasteries." The majority of these institutions were located in Chêkiang, at varying distances from the capital, Hang-chou, while the others were situated nearby in the adjoining provinces of Kiang-su and Fukien.

This system was introduced to Japan during the latter part of the Kamakura period. The greatest monasteries of Kyoto and Kamakura were included under the title Gozan ("Five Mountains"), while lesser temples, some of which were located away from the two cities, were assigned to the Jissatsu ("Ten Monasteries") category. With the establishment of the Tenryūji by the Shōgun Ashikaga Takauji in 1339, the monasteries were given a hierarchical ranking, in which the Kenchōji (in Kamakura) and Nanzenji (in Kyoto) were equated at the top of their respective groups. In 1386 the institutions in Kyoto and Kamakura were divided into two independent groups of Five Mountains with their own individual rankings and with the Nanzenji placed in a superior position above both. Below this were the "Ten Monasteries," some of which were located in the provinces. Thus the system went through a series of evolutionary shifts determined not only by occasional changes in the balance of power within the Zen church, but more often as a result of the fluctuating temporal sources of support, for religion and politics became very closely intertwined during Muromachi times. It should be noted that the term "Five Mountains" was not always interpreted in a strict numerical sense, but was simply used to refer to the greatest Zen monasteries of the period.

It was at these great institutions, which exercised a pervasive influence on the development of Japanese culture during Muromachi times, that a literary movement known as Gozan Bungaku ("Literature of the Five Mountains") developed early in the fourteenth century. Although the initial stimulus for the school's development came from emigré Ch'an teachers, like I-shan I-ning (1247-1317; cat. no. 23), it was soon taken over by Japanese monks, such as Sesson Yūbai (1290-1346, cat. no. 30), who had studied for more than two decades on the continent, and Kokan Shiren (1278-1346; cat. no. 31), one of the most industrious and talented scholar-monks of the period. These men aspired to write poetry that was so thoroughly "Chinese" that it would be mistaken for the work of Chinese poets themselves. Although they were not always successful in this difficult task, they undoubtedly produced a higher level of competent "Chinese" verse than the nobles of the Heian period. At the hands of some of the most talented practitioners of the school, however, verse which approached, if it did not equal,

the quality of the Chinese works was undoubtedly produced on occasion. There are references in Japanese sources to certain members of the school who are said to have achieved such excellence in their works that they even surprised the Chinese, although the words of compliment in these sources should not be taken at face value. Yübai, who spent twenty-three years in China and was obviously gifted, may have produced some of the best poetry in the school. Chinese men of letters are reputed to have said that his verse was even better than their own, but the traditional Chinese ethic of self-denigration may well explain such compliments. Among Yübai's successors in the Gozan literary movement are Zekkai Chūshin (1336-1405; see cat. no. 38) who is said to have been esteemed in China as a poet, and Gidō Shūshin (1324-1388), both of whom were pupils of Musō Soseki (see cat. no. 24). Both were highly esteemed in contemporary literary circles, and Gidō was a trusted adviser to the Shōgun Yoshimitsu, whose fascination with things Chinese is indicated by his pleasure in wearing Chinese dress and being carried about in a Chinese palanquin. The taste for Chinese verse gradually declined in Japan, however, and by the end of the century the chief attentions of the members of the Gozan literary school had turned toward philosophy (chiefly in Neo-Confucian ideas) and historical research.

Many of the monks associated with the movement were superb calligraphers. I-shan I-ning, the nominal founder, specialized in the "cursive" or "grass" style, drawing his inspiration from the great T'ang practitioners of this style, the "mad monk" Huai-su and Chang Hsü. The influence of I-shan's style was widespread in Japan, and is apparent in the hand of his student Musō Soseki (see cat. nos. 22, 24). By contrast the hand of Sesson Yübai shows a degree of indebtedness to the influential style of Huang T'ing-chien. Although the styles of the Chinese literati calligraphers Chang Chi-chih (cat. no. 9), Su Tung-p'o, and Chao Mêng-fu all may be discerned in Japanese examples of the late Kamakura and Muromachi periods, that of Huang T'ing-chien is certainly one of the most pronounced strains. The most successful practitioner of Huang's style in Japan is Kokan Shiren, whose superb "*Dankei*" (cat. no. 31) with its strong sense of form, calligraphic ingenuity, and rhythmic vitality is a fitting tribute to the style of the Chinese master.

Ōsen Keisan (cat. no. 54) is one of the representative figures of the Gozan literary movement during the fifteenth century. In addition to his success in the church, he was also respected as a scholar and writer. By Keisan's period, however, the interests of the school had become largely academic, and the calligraphy of its practitioners shows a tendency toward accommodation with native Japanese schools of writing.

Zen Suiboku Painting: Origins and Evolution

The Zen monks who made the long journey to Ch'an monasteries in Southern China during the thirteenth century encountered paintings of a type that was unfamiliar to them, paintings executed in a provocative style which not only caught their imaginations but also roused their acquisitive instincts. These were (to use the Japanese term) *suiboku* paintings, monochrome works executed in washes and lines of pure ink, a form of expression which already had a tradition several centuries old in China but was still unknown in Japan. As we have noted earlier, the origins of this type of painting are not clear, but it seems to have developed in large part among the "untrammelled" artists who appeared during late T'ang times and flourished during the Five Dynasties period. While the Ch'an painters who worked in the ink-monochrome medium had no monopoly on this form of expression during Sung times, they nevertheless contributed significantly to its development. We have mentioned the close association between certain literati and Ch'an priests during the Northern Sung, and the mutual importance of this congenial intercourse in the evolution of calligraphy. The case was much the same with painting, where the free exchange of ideas and aesthetic concepts resulted in the development of composite styles which do not lend themselves to easy division.

At any rate, it is clear that calligraphy and painting flourished and reached a remarkable degree of development at Ch'an monasteries. The reason may lie partly in the traditional role of the monastery as a retreat from the troubles of the secular world. Men of good education who did not fare well in the examination system probably became monks with some regularity; and it would appear that Jih-kuan was one of a number who joined the Ch'an fraternity to escape the oppression of the Mongol conquerors.



29. *The Four Sleepers* by Mokuan Reien (active first half of 14th century) (detail)

The Zen monks, like the pious clergy of any church who make pilgrimages to the religious centers of their faith, were anxious to acquire not only instruction and Enlightenment, but also the more tangible manifestations of their sect, the religious objects and paraphernalia which could be used to propagate the faith on their return. *Chinsō* and calligraphy undoubtedly headed the list, but the number of early monochrome paintings brought back to Japan in the Kamakura and early Muromachi periods indicates that such works were also highly prized.

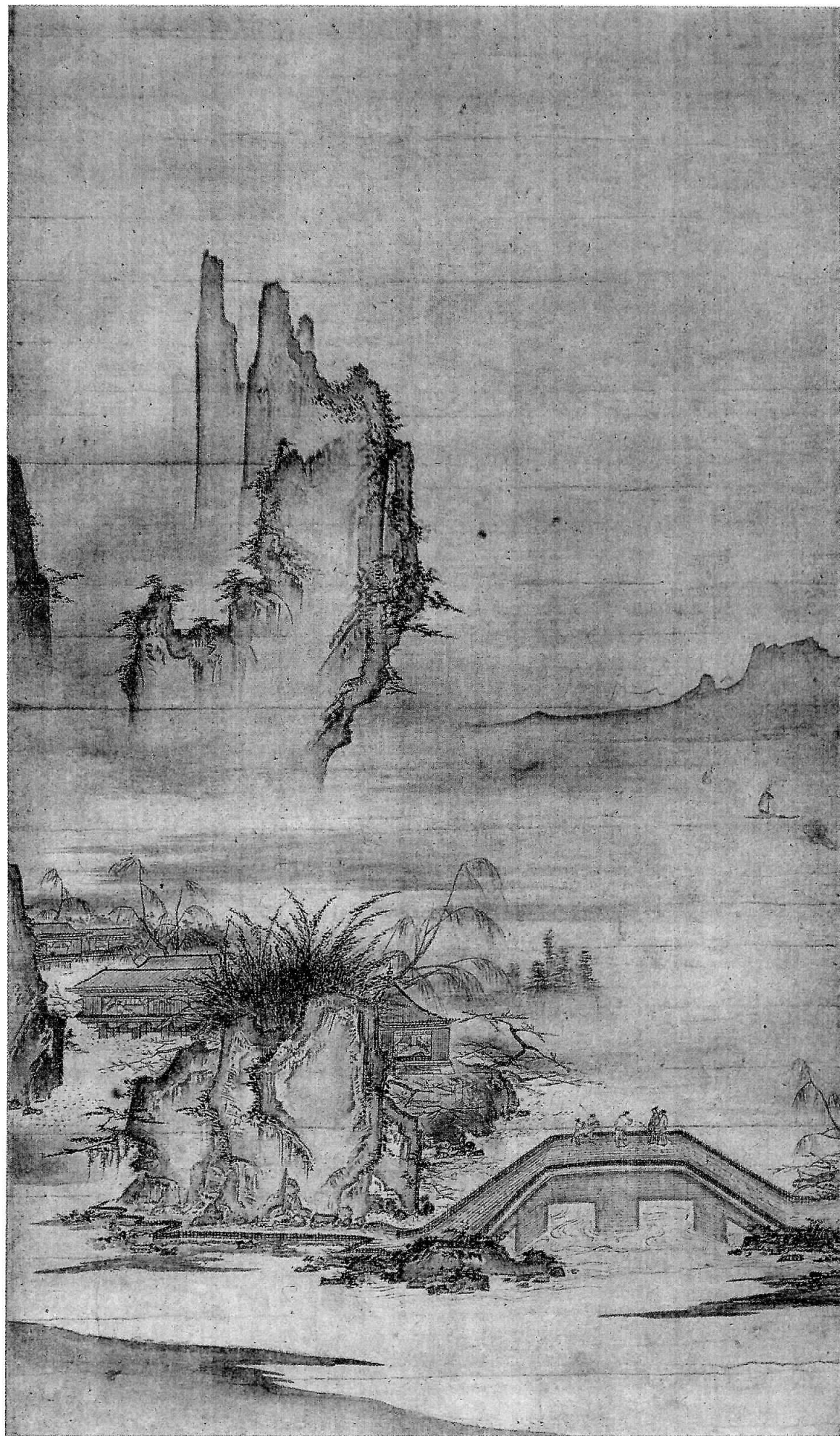
Japanese monks probably visited all the main Ch'an monasteries where ink-monochrome specialists were active, and they not only acquired the works of the better-known masters such as Liang K'ai (cat. nos. 5, 6) and Mu-ch'i (cat. nos. 10, 11), but also the paintings of men such as Yin-t'o-lo (cat. nos. 13, 14) whose names have not even been preserved in the Chinese literary sources dealing with painting. Ben'en Enni (see cat. no. 8) is credited with returning to Japan in 1241 with Mu-ch'i's famous *White-Robed Kuan-yin*, *Monkeys*, and *Crane*, which were later combined into a triptych. Mu-ch'i is said to have been a student under Wu-chun Shih-fan, Enni's teacher, and perhaps this association led to Enni's acquisition of these great works, now preserved in the Daitokuji. Although ink-monochrome works brought from the continent were installed in Zen temples initially, the subsequent collecting activities of the shōguns brought many of these masterpieces into the shōgun collections. The catalogue *Kundaikan Sōchōki*, which was probably compiled at the end of the fifteenth century by the noted painters Nōami and Sōami, contains comments on various Chinese painters, and classifies them on the basis of their artistic level, according to traditional Chinese precedent. The *Gyomotsu On-e Mokuroku*, an inventory of the shōgun collection compiled at about the same time, lists 103 paintings by Mu-ch'i, twenty-seven by Liang K'ai, and thirteen by the Academic painter Ma Yüan (cat. no. 4). Not all of these pieces need necessarily have been of the highest quality, or even authentic, for paintings acquired through successive owners may sometimes have carried spurious seals or untenable attributions. On the whole, however, the Zen monks acquired a corpus of Chinese ink-monochrome works which was discriminating in its quality and representative in its breadth.

Suiboku painting was introduced into Japan as early as the end of the thirteenth century. In the Rikkyokuan, a sub-temple of the Tōfukuji, there is a triptych depicting *Śākyamuni Returning from the Mountains* (the same subject as cat. no. 26) flanked by works showing plum branches in bloom. The central painting is by a different hand than the flanking pieces, and their combination into a triptych represents a practice which was common in Japan (see cat. no. 7). All three have colophons by Haku'un Egyō (1223-1297), who visited China in 1266, served as abbot of the Tōfukuji in his later years, and retired afterwards to the Rikkyokuan. It has not been determined whether these paintings were executed by a Chinese or a Japanese artist, but the paper used in the two flanking pieces has a wax-dyed pattern of plum blossoms and is probably of Chinese manufacture. Perhaps the oldest extant Zen figure painting is the piece in the Masaki Collection (Osaka) showing Hui-nêng arriving at the gate of the Fifth Patriarch and requesting to be taken on as a disciple. Above the painting is an inscription by Mugaku Sōgen, written while he was in residence at the Engakuji in Kamakura, between 1282 and 1286. It appears to be the work of an artist trained in traditional Buddhist subjects who had had the opportunity to study Chinese works. The earliest Japanese ink-monochrome landscape in existence is probably the piece in the Satomi Collection (Kyoto) which bears a seal reading "Shikan," thought to be that of the artist. It shows one of the scenes from the traditional set of subjects depicting the Eight Views at the Confluence of the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers, and has a colophon above by I-shan I-ning, who arrived in Japan in 1299 and died there in 1317. The varied brushwork utilized in the rocks, trees, and mountains, together with the accomplished sense of spatial depth, indicates the artist's familiarity with the landscape canons of the late Sung and early Yüan dynasties.

During the fourteenth century, a vigorous native tradition of ink-monochrome painting evolved at the hands of Zen monks such as Mokuan Reien (first half of the fourteenth century; cat. no. 29), Kaō Ninga (mid-fourteenth century), Ryōzen (active mid-fourteenth century; cat. nos. 33, 34), and Ue Gukei (active 1361-1375; cat. nos. 35, 36). Generally, the *suiboku* practitioners of the fourteenth century seem to have tried their hands at a wide variety of subjects, whereas the fifteenth-century

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47. *The Ten-Thousand-Mile Bridge*, School of Shūbun, 1467



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39. *The Three Doctrines*, attributed to Josetsu (active early 15th century)

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painters are characterized by an increasing tendency towards specialization. Certain of the earlier painters, such as Ryōzen, were strongly influenced by traditional, orthodox methods of Buddhist painting, while others, like Kaō and Gukei, show a freer, more spontaneous approach, which is more artistically congenial to the ink-monochrome medium.

Because of its intimate connection with Chinese literature, the Gozan literary movement produced a group of men known as *Bunjin-sō* ("literati-monks") whose highest aspirations were to produce poetry in Chinese which would be indistinguishable from that of their continental models. One of the outgrowths of this attitude was the appearance of Zen artists such as Tesshū Tokusai (died 1366), and Gyokuen Bompō (1344-ca. 1420; cat. no. 41) who dealt with subjects such as orchids, bamboo and eroded rocks, and viewed their painting as an amateur activity, an adjunct of their scholarly pursuits. This attitude, as well as the restricted choice of subjects, had originated much earlier among Chinese literati, but had been adopted by Ch'an painters such as Hsüeh-ch'uang P'u-ming, and eventually became integrated into the repertoire of Ch'an-Zen subjects. Poems are almost invariably written on such paintings, and this intimate bond between art and literature is often explained in the famous phrases—a poem is "a painting with a voice"; a painting is "a voiceless poem."

Mutō Shūi (cat. no. 24) is the first Zen painter-monk who can be identified with any degree of confidence as a true specialist in painting. He qualifies not only on the basis of the variety of his subjects, but also because his skill and artistic vision are simply too refined to be that of a part-time painter. It is not until the end of the fourteenth or the early fifteenth century, however, that there is reliable evidence of the establishment of ateliers in Zen monasteries.

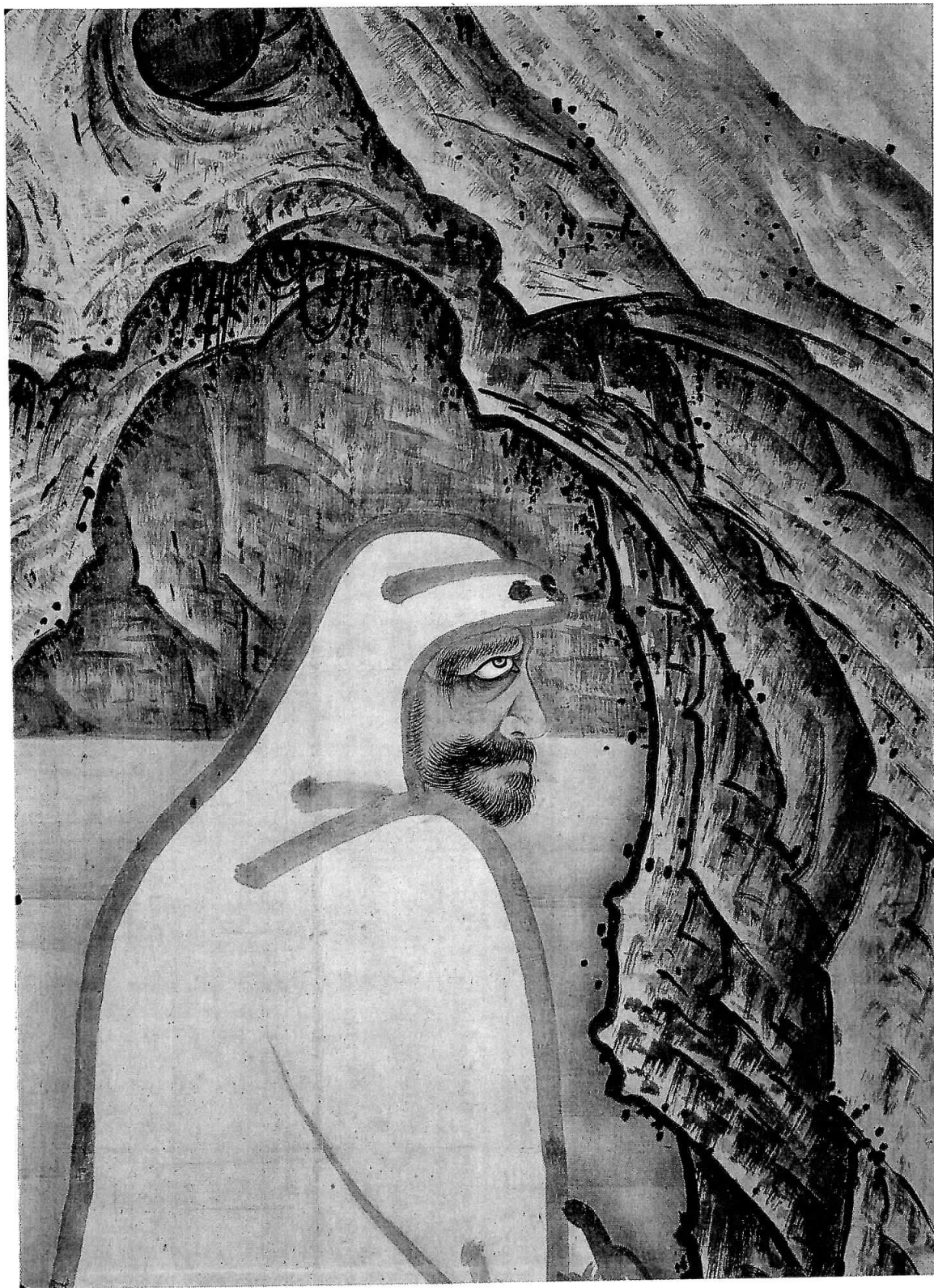
The Tōfukuji seems to have been the site of an atelier at least as early as the time of Minchō (cat. no. 42). The religious importance, largeness of scale, and material well-being of the Tōfukuji are all logical reasons why a group of artists were able to find a continuous outlet for their efforts there. Reisai (cat. no. 44) and Sekkyakushi (cat. no. 45) are only two of a group of artists who seem to have been pupils of Minchō. Ryōzen (cat. nos. 33, 34), who worked half a century earlier, has also traditionally been associated with the Tōfukuji, and it is even possible that an

atelier existed at the temple as early as his period of activity there. Ryōzen, Minchō and Reisai all seem to belong to a transitional school of Zen painting—indebted to earlier, more orthodox traditions of polychrome Buddhist painting, but also painting with great skill in the new ink-monochrome medium. The small ink landscape in the Konchiin known as the *Kei'in-Shōchiku-zu* ("Small Studio Facing North by a Stream") is traditionally attributed to Minchō. Above it are seven inscriptions of a congratulatory nature, one of which includes the date 1413. The Nanzenji monk Junshiboku built a small studio named the Kei'in ("Facing North by a Stream"). He seems to have hoped that even though he lived in the vulgar world, his heart would remain as clear as a mountain stream. In recognition of this ideal, seven of his friends had this painting executed and wrote felicitous passages above. This is one of the oldest examples of a type of Japanese painting known as *Shiga-jiku*, a "poetry and painting scroll" (see cat. nos. 46, 47). This unique combination of literary and visual art became one of the chief art forms in Japan from the fifteenth century on, and developed mainly at the hands of Zen monks.

Another Zen atelier of great importance in the history of Japanese painting was organized at the Shōkokuji in Kyoto, a temple built by the Ashikaga Shōgun Yoshimitsu. It produced its own school of painters, including Josetsu (cat. nos. 39, 40) and his student Shūbun (cat. nos. 46, 47, 48, 49), who established a new compositional scheme which was to dominate landscape painting for the next century. Sesshū (cat. no. 55) was one of Shūbun's students, and men such as Oguri Sōtan and the painters of the Ami family were deeply influenced by him.

The Daitokuji was the center for another group of artists whose fountainhead was Soga Jasoku (cat. no. 53), a man who seems to have been connected in some manner with Ikkyū Sōjun. Jasoku and his followers make up the Soga line of painters, which continues up well into the Edo period.

Another school of painters developed in Kamakura, probably at the Kenchōji. Although certain of the earliest *suiboku* practitioners, such as Mokuan and Gukei, seem to have been associated with this locality, the connections seem tenuous, and the formation of a true school does not seem plausible until the time of Chūan Shinkō (cat. no. 56). With Kenkō Shōkei (cat. no. 57), however, the line is firmly established,



55. Bodhidharma Facing the Wall, detail of the painting
Hui-k'o Showing His Severed Arm to Bodhidharma, by
Sesshū Tōyō (1420-1506)

and the names of a number of his students are known.

With the appearance of ateliers in the fifteenth century, Zen painting entered a new phase, when many of the best artists were specialists who devoted all their time to producing works of art for the church. In Zen temples the monks were generally divided into "eastern" and "western" groups, divisions which distinguished those who performed administrative or maintenance functions from those who practiced the disciplines leading to Enlightenment. Several of the best-known painters of the Muromachi period had titles which indicate they belonged to the former. Minchō is also known as Chō-densu, a title roughly equivalent to "building custodian." Shūbun's title was *tsusu*, an office whose duties appear to have involved general accounting, while Shōkei was also known as Kei-shoki, a title that indicates he performed secretarial duties.

During the sixteenth century, Zen painters continued to produce paintings in great numbers, generally in monochrome but occasionally also with some additions of color, taking their subjects from the standardized inventory of Zen themes (see cat. no. 62). Moreover, the influence of Zen had by this time become so pervasive and deep-seated in Japanese culture that Zen themes and artistic techniques were common even in the works of secular painters such as Tan'an Chiden (cat. no. 61) and masters of the Kano school such as Motonobu (cat. no. 63). This tendency continued to grow in the Edo period, where it may be seen in the paintings of some of the finest monochrome masters of the period, of whom Miyamoto Musashi (cat. no. 67) is representative.

Zen Art in the Edo Period

The Zen church exerted a profound influence on the course of Japanese culture over a period of about three and a half centuries. It dominated intellectual and artistic activities, made notable contributions to popular as well as higher education, and provided religious and moral direction in an age marked by recurrent violence and disorder. During the sixteenth century, however, spiritual stagnation set in and the great Gozan monasteries began to decline. Under the authoritarian regime of the Tokugawa shōguns (1615-1867) the vitality of the church ebbed still further, and its religious activities grew in-

creasingly ceremonial. This is not to say that Zen did not continue to produce talented, vigorous masters, devoted to learning and the arts. But they faced the additional difficulty of realizing these virtues within a church afflicted with an enervating malaise that was common to all branches of Japanese Buddhism.

Among the outstanding figures of the early seventeenth century are Kōgetsu Sōkan (cat. no. 65) and Takuan Sōhō (cat. no. 66), two men who received their training at the Daitokuji in Kyoto, one of the few monasteries where the traditional vigor of Zen was still preserved. At the hands of these two men, the calligraphic tradition of the temple, a proud heritage going back to the time of the founder, Daitō Kokushi (see cat. no. 26) enjoyed a modest renaissance. Although refinement and strong individuality are characteristic of the works of both Kōgetsu and Takuan, their respective calligraphic styles stand somewhat apart. It is of interest, however, to note that the chief features of each man's style—the powerfully composed characters of Kōgetsu, executed with a rather dry, coarse brush, and the eccentric yet elegant hand of Takuan—are both clearly indebted to the calligraphy of the fifteenth-century master Ikkyū Sōjun (cat. nos. 51, 52, 53) who was also associated with the Daitokuji.

The last branch of Ch'an to reach Japan was the Huang-po (Japanese: Ōbaku) line. Yin-yüan (Japanese: Ingen), who became the first patriarch of this line in Japan, reached Kyūshū in 1654 and moved to Kyoto in the following year. South of the capital, near the village of Uji, he founded the new headquarters, the Mampukuji, where he established the forms, routines and practices current in China at the time. The architecture of the new buildings emulated continental prototypes of the Ming period, and its somewhat baroque, exuberant quality contrasts sharply with the characteristic restraint in traditional Zen architecture. The *sūtras* (which play a more important part in the Ōbaku tradition than in other Zen lines) are chanted in Chinese according to the intonation of Ming times, and much of the religious paraphernalia and routine of the monks still has a strong Chinese flavor. Although the introduction of the Ōbaku line to Japan brought a breath of fresh vitality to Zen, its influence did not spread, and its temples remained essentially exotic enclaves of Chinese culture, isolated from the mainstreams of Japanese thought. It did provide a source of

inspiration for Japanese painters of the *Bunjin* ("Literati") school, however, for these artists looked to contemporary painting in China for their methods of expression. Its influence is also to be seen in a school of the Tea Ceremony where *Sencha*, steeped tea prepared in the Chinese manner, is the chief beverage. The chief artistic contribution of the Ōbaku line is the vigorous calligraphy produced by its monks, men such as Ingen (Chinese: Yin-yüan; d. 1673), the founder (cat. no. 68), and various successors such as Mokuan (Chinese: Mu-an; d. 1684) and Tetsugen (1630-1682) who produced a consistent, rather homogeneous school of writing characterized by fluid, semi-cursive execution of characters.

Despite growing ossification and spiritual apathy, the Zen church produced a number of outstanding individuals during the Edo period, men of strong will and high virtue such as the Rinzaï master Bankei (1622-1693), who was highly successful in simplifying the message of Zen and spreading its influence broadly, to high and low alike.

The greatest Zen figure of the Edo period was Hakuin Ekaku (1685-1768; cat. no. 59) the dynamic, zealous innovator who spent most of his life working to revitalize Zen during the eighteenth century. As Bankei had done, he worked tirelessly to spread the message of Zen to the common people and disciples came to him in large numbers from all over the country. Although Hakuin also painted, his calligraphy is his most expressive art form. His characters are written slowly and deliberately, and have a tectonic monumentality which gives them a peculiar strength and impact.

In Japan, Zen has remained a living philosophy up to this day, and even now painters and calligraphers create works of art in the traditions established by the great Zen masters of the Edo period: Hakuin, Sengai (1750-1836), and Ryōkan (1757-1831). These artists, and not their later followers, mark the end of this exhibition, which represents themes and styles of more than a thousand years of Ch'an and Zen art.

ZEN

Painting & Calligraphy

*An exhibition of works of art lent by temples,
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