

IN BUDDHIST TEMPLES.

I. TÔFUKUJI, KYOTO.

TÔFUKUJI is one of the five chief monasteries of the Zen sect in Kyoto. It is picturesquely situated in the midst of large grounds in the southern part of Kyoto. In the autumn the many maple-trees turn red, and the scenes in Tofukuji are then very beautiful, and many pilgrims come hither to watch the flaming colours from the bridge above a deep gorge or sit in tiny tea-houses on wooded slopes, gazing with appreciation upon the leafy gorgeousness of colour.

Tofukuji is an ancient temple founded in 1236, and Benyen, later called Shōichi Kokushi, was its first abbot. He was a learned man and lived to an old age establishing various other temples besides Tofukuji. He was so well loved that it is said that at his death all the trees at Tofukuji turned pale and refused to don their flaming autumnal colouring. Even today, he is remembered at Tofukuji. On the fifteenth of every month, sutra-reading takes place at his tomb. At midnight of every day the temple bell booms forth. Far across the city, at Keninji there is an answering boom at two o'clock in the morning. The reason for the ringing of these bells is this: Benyen was also the founder of Keninji, and when he left Tofukuji for a time to take up his residence at Keninji he left Tofukuji at midnight and the priests tolled the bells at parting, to speed him off. But when he reached Keninji, there the bells were rung to greet him, and during all these years now six hundred and sixty, not one night have the bells been silent but have spoken in loud, reverberating strokes to the *Λιουαυ* of the founder. Often have I listened to these bells at midnight, and my thoughts have turned to those early

days in the history of Buddhism in Japan when the worship of the Holy One was at its height and the temples now but shadows of their former splendour and activity were filled with devotees and saintly priests.

Tōfukuji is associated with the name of a famous man, the painter Chō-Densu. It was he who painted the great *kakemono* (hanging painting) of the Buddha's Nirvana. This picture is 48 by 24 feet. The Buddha lies on his right side and about him are his mourning disciples. Not only his followers but also coming to mourn are creatures of all kinds, the lion, monkey, dove, cricket, snake, etc. Now in Nirvana pictures by other painters, the cat is never depicted, for according to legend the cat was too busy catching rats to come to mourn. But in Chō-Densu's Nirvana picture the cat is to be seen and the story is told that when Chō-Densu was painting the picture there came a cat which sat beside him while he worked. So constant was the cat's presence that one day the painter decided to put its figure in the painting, saying, "You too desire to enter Nirvana." Thereupon the cat vanished and came to him no more. It is further related that before departing the cat brought to him some expensive and rare colouring material which he used with remarkable effect in his picture. In the treasures of Tōfukuji, there are other splendid pictures by Chō-Densu, notably the sixteen Arhats done in colours still brilliant. There is also a beautiful Kwannon (Goddess of Mercy) seated upon a rock against which the waves are breaking and above which the clouds are thick. The Goddess smiles serenely while the waves of illusion and the clouds of ignorance surround her, for has she not attained to the Enlightenment of Wisdom? Chō-Densu is also the one who carved the almost life-sized figures of the sixteen Arhats in the upper story of the great gate of Tōfukuji. These life-like and striking figures are most interesting and repay careful study.

Tōfukuji, like other famous temples, has suffered disastrous fires, the great one of 1881 having destroyed many of the finest buildings, including one that sheltered a great Buddha, only one hand of which remains, still preserved. The main building is however now in course of erection and will be very fine when completed.

The tomb of the founder stands in quite poetical surroundings above the Span of Heaven (the maple-viewing bridge). Down a quiet road lies the "Sōdō" (or Training School for Monks). The article in this number by Daisetz Suzuki, "The Meditation Hall and Ideals of the Monkish Discipline," describes the life the young monks lead here. Their home is presided over by the abbot Tenshin, personification of benevolence and serenity. A visit to him in his quiet rooms overlooking an old garden is like a visit to another and quieter world.

The expanse, seclusion, and quiet beauty of Tōfukuji is unequalled among Kyoto temples. Even in these modern days, the old place is picturesque, breathing of a distant past when Buddhism was great in the land; an aroma still hangs about of holy things, prayers and great pictures, revered shrines, and incense, old precious books and mementoes of ancient days. Yet modern life and needs are not forgotten in this quiet retreat. Here come many young men giving up the world for a life of meditation; here come men of affairs in this workaday world seeking temporary seclusion towards the renewal of their spiritual life; here take place lectures, and here societies connected with Buddhist study or work come to meet. Buddhism still keeps its hold upon the people of Japan, as a quiet temple like Tōfukuji can testify.

There are many sub-temples in Tōfukuji, in one of which, the Rikkyoku-an, the editors of this magazine reside. A few years ago it was for a time the home of Sunyananda, Buddhist scholar and devotee, follower of the Madhyamika philo-

sophy, learned in the Tibetan language and religion.

Rikkyoku-an is a large, massively constructed building with the usual sloping, projecting roof, peculiar to Buddhist temples. The main part of the edifice consists of the altar room with other rooms opening off it, separated by paper screens so that all may be thrown together in one large apartment if desired. A princess of the Imperial family was once the patroness of the temple, and so the Imperial crest of the sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum is to be found on the panels and the lintels of the rooms. Enshrined upon the altar is a semi-life-sized figure of Bussho Zenji (died 1297), the founder of this sub-temple, also a Kwannon, Goddess of Mercy, and another of the sixteen Arhats. Once a month on the twenty-fifth the priests come with offerings of flowers and incense to recite a sutra before the image of the founder.

Built on to this main building is another containing smaller rooms and the kitchen, an enormous room with high rafters. A large garden surrounding the building has many old trees and a pond. In one corner of it is a tombstone to the memory of Sôtetsu (1379-1458), a famous poet of the Ashikaga era. His memory is still revered after all these years and from time to time the neighbouring priests bring flowers to place before his grave and visitors also come to pay respect with lighted incense stick or a reverential bow.

In another corner of this garden is a shrine to the guardian gods of the temple; tablets in their honour stand in a miniature red temple. Back of this is a clump of trees—graceful, swaying bamboos, symbol of longevity, stately pines symbolic of fidelity with here and there a camellia bush and an orange tree. About the pond cluster the purple iris and from its banks the dwarf maple raises a dainty head. The garden is carpeted with moss and many quaint bushes and odd-shaped stones are to be seen. Not a sound except

the temple bell, the pensive, sweet note of the *shakuhachi* (Japanese flute) and the gentle "coo-coo" of the dove penetrates this quiet retreat.

Quite cut off from the world it seems, yet here silent and solitary, though it be, one feels the spirit of the Buddha; for it is in his honour and that of his devotee priest that the temple was reared, the sutras chanted, the flowers placed, the incense burned. In the lotus design upon the screens the history of Buddhism can be read, in the beautiful attitude of the merciful Kwannon its spirit be seen, and in the group of the sixteen Arhats the devotion of its followers be remembered.

SEIREN (BLUE LOTUS)