

## THE TEMPLES OF KAMAKURA

### III

#### ZEN AND KAMAKURA

Kamakura dates its real beginnings as a centre of religion, politics, and art to Minamoto Yoritomo, who in 1192 made the little fishing village the capital of the Shogunate. It was to Yoritomo's religious vein that we owe many of the temples in Kamakura, and it was he who gave an impetus to the development of architecture, sculpture, and painting, which was carried on by his successors, the Hojo regents under whom it culminated. At the time of its greatest prosperity Kamakura rivaled Kyoto in the arts and in religion but not in luxury.

The Zen sect in Japan, we may say, begins with the second return from China in 1191 of the Priest Eisai. He established himself first at the Keninji in Kyoto and in 1201 at the Jufukuji in Kamakura whose first presiding priest he was, so that from that time on Zen came to be taught in Kamakura.

Zen is popularly called the contemplative sect because in its search for reality it counsels its followers to seek for the essence of mind in silent meditation. It claims to give the true teaching of the Buddha which is beyond verbal or literal description, indeed it abandons these as useless and strives for first-hand illumination. Its simplicity and directness appealed to the military spirits at the time of the Hojo Regency, and Zen with Kamakura, one of its chief centres, second only to Kyoto, attained a great vogue among the warriors of that time and this influence has continued down the centuries. To the Zen influence, we owe the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, the noble sculpture of the school of Unkei and the art of the Nangwa school. Zen and Japanese culture are closely interwoven. But it is Zen in Kama-

kura that interests us now, especially in connection with the temples which together with the natural beauties of hills and sea make the town even today attractive. The great earthquake of 1923 lay low many of the famous fanes but they have been restored, partly due to the interest of the Government and partly to the devotion of Buddhists. The restoration is often on a smaller scale, for today we cannot equal the pure architectural style of the past or the grandeur of the Unkei sculptures. But the Zen teaching and its traditions remain and Kamakura is still associated with Zen history and teaching.

Let us take an imaginary journey and visit these Zen temples in Kamakura and see if it will not reveal to us something of interest and perhaps of enlightenment.

Formerly, Kenchoji was the head and chief of Kamakura's five great monasteries. It was founded in 1251 by Tokiyori the fifth Hojo Regent who himself became a priest five years later and who invited over from China to become the first Abbot of Kencho, the celebrated priest Doryu or Daigaku-Zenshi, his posthumous name.

When we enter the gate we find some fine cryptomeria and juniper trees. Set in the midst of these are the main temples, the Butsuden and the Hatto. These were both destroyed in the earthquake but have been rebuilt. The object of worship was a large statue of Jizo and this has been preserved. In a Zen temple the object of worship is generally Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, but occasionally we find Jizo and Kwannon, and in the Meditation Hall Monju. The quality of mercy is specially considered in Buddhism and both Jizo and Kwannon are Bodhisattvas of mercy. Jizo was specially prominent in the Kamakura era. We find many fine statues of him and many interesting legends. Kenchoji alone has a number of attractive legends concerning him. Two of these legends are told by Lafcadio Hearn in his *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, Vol. I. "A Pilgrimage to Enoshima." But there is another one which is also

of interest and that is connected with a man named Saita. It is said that the site of this temple was once an execution ground and that this Saita was sentenced to be executed here. But when the executioner endeavoured to cut off the head of the man, his stroke failed and the sword broke in two. Every one connected with the execution was surprised and asked Saita if he could offer any explanation. Then Saita said that he was a special devotee of Jizo and always carried a small image of the Bodhisattva in his hair. His head was examined, the story was found to be true, and what was more a new mark upon his back was seen. Saita was pardoned for he was now considered to be innocent. The little image is still preserved among Kenchoji treasures. Jizo, the Bodhisattva of mercy, is the patron saint of children, travellers, and women. He is represented with a staff in one hand and a *tama* or jewel upon the outstretched palm of the other.

The Jizo statue of Kenchoji has a mandala composed of many small Jizos; they are called the Thousand Jizo and are said to have been carved by the priest Eshin. The garden of Kenchoji laid out in the pure Zen style was very picturesque; it was the first landscape garden made according to the Zen ideas but the earthquake all but destroyed it.

The first Lord Abbot of Kenchoji, Doryu, was a famous man. It is said that when he died and his body was burned *shari* of five different colours were discovered among his ashes. A *shari* is a small object something like a pearl mingled in the ashes of a sage. When the Buddha died a number of *shari* were found and these are preserved in many places. In Buddhist temples in Japan these can be seen set in gold or silver reliquaries. When the *shari* are not said to be those of the Buddha they are stated to be those of some holy priest. The large juniper trees near the main temple here are called *shari-ju*, trees of the *shari* from the incident of the finding the *shari* in the ashes of the Lord Abbot Doryu.

Behind the temple on the hill is the cave where he used to practise *zazen* (Zen meditation). Of course, at Kenchoji there is a meditation hall for the *zazen* discipline. The fine old one was destroyed by the earthquake but a small new one is now in its place. But the Kaisando, a very ancient building, the hall for the founder, where the statue of Doryu is enshrined was spared. Behind it on a small hill is the tomb of Doryu. Here in a beautiful solitude repose his ashes. A simple monument resting on a carved lotus covers them. Many of his relics are preserved at Kenchoji, his robes, rosaries, flute, and sutras copied by himself. Here, too, we can see his picture. There is an interesting story told of him that bears repeating. He had brought from China a metal mirror. After the death of the Abbot some one dreamed that the mirror contained a portrait of the Lord Abbot. But as this was known not to be true, Hojo Tokimine who had loved the Abbot very much was disinclined to believe it, but ordered an examination of the mirror. Then it was found to be clouded over and when polished it revealed a picture of Kwannon (the Bodhisattva of Mercy) whose manifestation Doryu was said to be. This mirror can still be seen. The story shows in what high esteem and regard Doryu was held by his contemporaries. It is to these great priests of the early days of Buddhism in Japan that Japanese Buddhism owes so much of its spirit which still is vital today.

Opposite Kenchoji is Ennoji or Arai-no-Emmado, the shrine of Unkei's famous and wonderful statue of Emma, the God of Death, so wonderfully described by Lafcadio Hearn. (See also "The Ruined Temples of Kamakura," I, in *Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. III, No. 2.)

Situated in a valley, back from the main road between Kenchoji and Engakuji is Meigetsuin. Now Meigetsuin is small and unimportant, but it is interesting on account of its association with Hojo Tokiyori, one of the most striking in personality of the Hojo regents. There are many roman-

tic stories told of him. He it was who as a mendicant priest wandered about the country in order to get in touch with the people. The Nō play, "Hachinoki," dramatises one of these incidents. He was devoted to Zen, and when he gave up public life, he entered the priesthood and retired to Saimyoji on the site of Meigetsuin. It is said that when he died, he was seated in his priest's robes practising *zazen*.

Later the temple Zenkoji was erected on this site and Meigetsuin was attached to it and under its jurisdiction. There are some treasures to be seen here. The famous statue of Uesugi Shigefusa, once exhibited in London, is now in the Ueno Museum, Tokyo, but there are others left in the possession of Meigetsuin including Tokiyori's own bust, said to have been carved by the first Abbot of Engakuji, of a material in which Tokiyori's own ashes had been mixed. And in connection with *shari*, there is one here which was carried by Yoshitsune the celebrated hero. In the grounds of Meigetsuin are buried the ashes of the wise Tokiyori. A simple tomb commemorates him whose body now lies in the peaceful spot to which he had retired in order to practise meditation for the attainment of enlightenment.

As we pass on the main road we come to Jochiji, a Zen temple, which boasts a fine statue of Jizo carved by Unkei, the master sculptor of the Kamakura era.

Further on lies Tokeiji, formerly a nunnery, popularly called in ancient days the divorce temple. It was founded by a relative of Yoritomo, the lady Mino-no Tsubone, and re-established in 1285 by the wife of Tokimune. Tokeiji offered a sanctuary to any woman who wished to leave her husband. Here she could stay for three years serving in the temple and quite unmolested; at the end of that time she could have a divorce. Later the three years were reduced to two. This privilege was enjoyed until the later days of the Tokugawa era. The wife of Tokimune was the first Abbess and the last died twenty-six years ago. The monastery then became the home of an eminent Buddhist priest, the cele-

brated Shaku Soyen, who was Abbot of both Kencho and Engaku temples. He had travelled widely and attended the Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893, and was known all over the world as a great Buddhist teacher. He was one of the most popular and influential priests in Japan. All foreign scholars interested in the study of Buddhism visited him. Tokeiji was indeed a kind of Mecca in the Zen world. Count Hermann Keyserling writes of him in *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*: "I visited him in his temple at Kamakura. I have never yet had such an impression of inwardness coupled with equal martial energy; this delicately built monk is thoroughly military in appearance. How he must have inspired the troops whom he accompanied through Manchuria. He is a philosopher who understands the spiritual meaning of the Zen doctrine to the full."

Shaku Soyen died in 1919 to the great sorrow of a very large circle of followers. He is buried in the wood back of Tokeiji. On a terrace reached by some steps are buried the former Abbesses, the tomb of the Imperial lady being specially enclosed. Behind them up against the hillside is the grave of Shaku Soyen. His tomb is a rock, shaded by a maple tree, and before it stands a statue of Amida. The heart of Mrs. Russell of San Francisco, a pupil of his, is buried in the garden. In his days there was a stream of guests coming and going at Tokeiji, but now the place is very quiet. There are high steps leading up to the terrace on which stands the temple entered by a walk bordered by the *hagi* (bush clover), which Rev. Shaku loved. When I go there it seems as if I could see him yet, alert, kindly, serene, in his yellow robe, walking in the garden or seated amidst his books or talking sympathetically with a guest. Tokeiji is lonely without him.

Now we are ready to enter the precincts of Engakuji, a short distance above Tokeiji. The Engakuji grounds are fourteen acres in extent. The earthquake of 1923 did disastrous damage to the ancient buildings of this historic

temple, but restoration and renovation have been carried on. Even without buildings the natural beauty of Engakuji is as perfect as before. The cryptomeria trees grow as tall and stately as ever. It is the number and beauty of these trees that help to give the impressive effect of quietude and serenity to this spot. The visitor enters the grove of cryptomeria trees and looks up at the great Sammon (gate) which stood firm during the earthquake. The former Butsuden, so graphically and beautifully described by Lafcadio Hearn, was razed by the earthquake and one of the old temple priests was killed in it. It has not been rebuilt. The splendid black Buddha with the amethyst eyes was entirely destroyed.

Engakuji was founded by Hojo Tokimune in 1282 and was and still is a stronghold of the Zen sect and a school for the study of Zen enlightenment.

Engakuji was built by Tokimune in the style of the Sung dynasty of China. He sent architects to China in order to study architecture and upon their return the buildings of Engakuji were constructed. Tokimune invited a Chinese priest to be the first Lord Abbot. He was the celebrated Sogen called after his death Bunko Kokushi the posthumous title given to him by the Emperor. As with Doryu there are many interesting legends told of Sogen.

The Hōjō or main hall was formerly a large and beautiful structure with a charming garden in the Zen style. Here was enshrined Miroku (Maitreya), the Buddha of the future. This building was completely destroyed in the earthquake but has been rebuilt in a smaller and modified style. Gone are the beautiful straw thatched roofs at Engakuji and tiled ones have taken their place, safer but less picturesque.

The buildings have little to boast of now; it is the fine cryptomeria grove that gives beauty and sanctity to Engakuji. But the great treasure of this temple, partially destroyed by the earthquake, the Shariden has been rebuilt by the government and it is listed as a national treasure.

It is a perfect model of the Sung style of Chinese architecture and the most ancient building in Kamakura. It was originally erected to make a shrine for the relic of the Buddha's tooth which had been brought from China through the efforts of the Shogun Sanetomo and installed at Engakuji in 1301. It is said to have miraculous power and is exhibited in its gold and crystal shrine once each year. There are numerous legends handed down as to its miraculous intervention. Prayers have been offered before it at the time of calamities such as earthquakes and floods and tempests as well as wars and famines. In a sutra it is written: "In this world of suffering my relics shall change to an emerald jewel for the sake of the poor and unfortunate, and I shall scatter the seven treasures upon all mankind. I will grant their prayers."

The Hall of the Founder back of the Shariden did not fall in the earthquake. This is the holiest place in Engakuji; it contains a statue of the founder. His tomb stands above on a little hill from which a view of all Engakuji can be obtained.

The Zendo or Hall of Meditation was destroyed but has been rebuilt. Here monks and often laymen come to study meditation under the Abbot. Engakuji's Zendo is one of the quietest of all meditation halls, it seems truly removed from the ordinary world, so silent, so simple is its environment. At certain times the sutra to Kwannon is intoned to the striking of a large bell near at hand but except for this all is silence.

Speaking of bells, the largest bell in Kamakura and one of the largest in Japan is in Engakuji. It is reached by a flight of steep stone steps. It measures 8 feet 6 inches in height and 4 feet 8 inches in circumference. Its tone is great and musical and can be heard at a distance.

Lafcadio Hearn again has described this bell and I cannot forbear quoting what he says of it. "Under a lofty open shed, with a tilted Chinese roof, the great bell is hung.



I should judge it to be fully nine feet high, and about five feet in diameter, with lips about eight inches thick. The shape of it is not like that of our bells, which broaden toward the lips; this has the same diameter through all its height, and it is covered with Buddhist texts cut into the smooth metal of it. It is rung by means of a heavy swinging beam, suspended from the roof by chains, and moved like a battering-ram. There are loops of palm-fibre rope attached to this beam to pull it by; and when you pull it hard enough, so as to give it a good swing, it strikes a moulding like a lotus-flower on the side of the bell. Thus it must have done many hundred times; for the square, flat end of it, though showing the grain of a very dense wood, has been battered into a convex disk with ragged protruding edges, like the surface of a long-used printer's mallet.

“A priest makes a sign to me to ring the bell. I first touch the great lips with my hand very lightly; and a musical murmur comes from them. Then I set the beam swinging strongly; and a sound deep as thunder, rich as the bass of a mighty organ,—a sound enormous, extraordinary, yet beautiful,—rolls over the hills and away. Then swiftly follows another and lesser and sweeter billowing of tone; then another, then an eddying of waves of echoes. Only once was it struck, the astounding bell; yet it continues to sob and moan for at least ten minutes!

“And the age of this bell is six hundred and fifty years.”

Hearn also tells an interesting story of the bell.

“In the twelfth year of Bummei, this bell rang itself. And one who laughed on being told of the miracle, met with misfortune; and another, who believed, thereafter prospered, and obtained all his desires.

“Now, in that time there died in the village of Tamawawa a sick man whose name was Ono-no-kimi; and Ono-no-kimi descended to the region of the dead, and went before the Judgment-Seat of Emma-O. And Emma, Judge of Souls,

said to him, "You come too soon! The measure of life allotted you in the Shaba-world has not yet been exhausted. Go back at once." But Ono-no-kimi pleaded, saying, "How may I go back, not knowing my way through the darkness?" And Emma answered him, "You can find your way back by listening to the sound of the bell of Engakuji, which is heard in the Nan-en-budai world, going south." And Ono-no-kami went south, and heard the bell, and found his way through the darkness, and revived in the Shada-world.

"Also in those days there appeared in many provinces a Buddhist priest of giant stature, whom none remembered to have seen before, and whose name no man knew, travelling through the land, and everywhere exhorting the people to pray before the bell of Engakuji. And it was at last discovered that the giant pilgrim was the holy bell itself, transformed by supernatural power into the form of a priest. And after these things have happened, many prayed before the bell, and obtained their wishes."

There are relics of Sogen, the first Lord Abbot, his rosaries, his robes, his writings but most precious of all, his portrait. He sits in a chair and two doves are with him, one at his feet and another on his sleeve. It is said when he was in China and received the summons of Sanetomo to repair to Kamakura, a dove pulled at his sleeve; and when he truly arrived in Kamakura and reached the shrine of Hachiman a flock of doves flew out to meet him. This pleased him and he asked that when his portrait was painted, doves might be painted with him. It is a pretty sentiment found in connection with a vigorous and wise priest like Sogen, for underneath his austerity and sternness which almost all Zen teachers have, was a vein of gentleness and sympathy also to be found in his successors in the Zen discipline.

Jufukuji ranking third among Kamakura's monasteries is the oldest Zen Temple in Kamakura, for Eisai, the introducer of the Zen school of Buddhism into Japan, was its

first priest. It was built on the site of an older temple built by Masako, the wife of Yoritomo, and that in turn had followed one which had been erected by one of Yoritomo's retainers in the life of Yoritomo himself. So associations connected with Jufukuji are very ancient. There are many fine old statues in the main hall, but the most interesting one is a Buddha apparently cast from bronze but really made of paper. The pieces of paper used had sutras written upon them by Masako and then they were moulded into a beautiful statue by a famous Chinese priest and sculptor Chinwakei.

The cemetery back of the temple is wide and beautiful. Here is the tomb of the intrepid Masako and of her ill-fated poetic son, Shogun Sanetomo. They both stand within caves, that of the lady Masako is covered with thick green moss. This graveyard is absolutely quiet, neither a sight nor a sound of man interrupts the stillness, truly it is a city of the dead.

Passing on the road beyond, we come to Eishoji, the deserted temple once belonging to Zen nuns. Now there is nothing but the tombs of the departed nuns and a large and beautiful statue of Jizo, the Bodhisattva who represents mercy and compassion.

Then there is the temple of Kaizo, a dependency of Kenchoji. Its popular name is Juroku-ido (16 Pools) for according to story the saint of Shingon, Kobo Daishi, made these sixteen pools and with the water performed many miracles in healing the sick. There is a red lacquer statue of him enshrined here. The chief Buddha of this temple is however Yakushi-Nyorai, the Buddha of healing, and among the many legends connected with Kaizoji is one about this Yakushi which will perhaps bear re-telling.

This is the story. Even during the life-time of the founder, a wailing cry like that of a child was heard behind the temple. When Genno went to investigate he found a little tomb from which a light was radiated and a perfume diffused. The Abbot recited a sutra and laid his robe upon

the tomb whereupon the wailing ceased. The next day the tomb was raised and there embedded in the earth, but fine and perfect was the carved head of Yakushi. Genno was deeply impressed by this incident and had a new statue of Yakushi made with this head enclosed within it. This statue is called the weeping Yakushi and every sixty years the body of the statue is open and the original head disclosed.

Jomyoji was founded by Ashikaga Yoshikane in 1188, once one of the five prominent temples of Kamakura, is now little more than a ruin; but it is interesting because of its associations with the Shogun Sanetomo and his mother the forceful Masako. The temple has been twice destroyed by fire and twice rebuilt, and now has little attraction beyond the picturesque site and a few treasures of olden times. Behind the temple is the cemetery in which can be found the tomb of the founder.

Hokokuji, another Zen temple, is practically now destroyed, the earthquake of 1923 completing what previous fires had almost accomplished. Formerly it was prosperous and had many treasures but now almost nothing remains of its past. It was founded six hundred years ago by Ashikaga Iyetoki. Its grounds are very beautiful and the tomb of the first high priest Tengan is sheltered among lofty cryptomeria trees.

Now we come to the last of the Kamakura Zen temples, Zuisenji. It was founded in 1327 by Ashikaga Motouji. The earthquake played much havoc with the buildings and there is little left but its lovely garden and its historical associations. The garden and its surroundings are filled with plum and maple trees; the azaleas give beauty in the spring. The view from above the temple is very fine. What gives a part of its interest to Zuisenji is its connection with Muso Kokushi who was one of the most striking personalities in Zen history. Kyoto temples have many memories of him, but Zuisenji has also, for he was its first presiding priest. There is a cave here where he practised *zazen*, but his tomb

is not here, for later he went to preside over Tenryuji in Kyoto and there his ashes were buried. This temple is also associated with the patriot Yoshida Shoin, for here he found shelter for a time.

We have now reviewed briefly the Zen temples of Kamakura. We know how strong the influence of Zen must have been to have been studied here for six hundred years. Zendo's for the study of the Zen discipline are maintained at Engakuji and at Kenchoji, and these together with the institutions for the same purpose at Kyoto and other places keep up the life of Zen meditation in Japan.

What is the life of the Zendo? Readers of the editor's article "The Meditation Hall and the Ideals of the Monkish Discipline" in the *Eastern Buddhist* (Vol. II. Nos. 1 & 2) and later reprinted in the book, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, know about it. Briefly it is a life led in common by a number of monks with the meditation hall as the centre and with work and meditation for their activities. The work consists in taking care of everything connected with the Zendo including cultivation of the garden or farm and in begging. Meditation consists in sitting silently in the Zendo, attempting to arrive at a solution of the problem (*kōan*) which has been given by the teacher (*rōshi*).

Nor do only monks practise *zazen*. At certain times lay-people both men and women are permitted to join with the monks. In the summer vacation many university students are to be found practising Zen meditation; Engakuji is especially popular with them, and there are buildings especially designed for their use, one for men and another for women. Military men are often students of Zen. Besides getting permission to attend the meditation in the Zendo, the *Rōshi* has private pupils who practise *zazen* in the seclusion of their own homes or in quiet temple rooms.

The key to Zen meditation lies in this phrase, "There is something to be transmitted besides verbal teaching, which is independent of letters." What that something is medita-

tion will reveal, and we come to know the essence of mind and the reality of life.

We are interested in Zen today in connection with its association with Kamakura, its vitality made into visible art and remarkable men. Whether warrior, artist, or priest. Zen brought out a man's best powers into activity. And one of the fields for this activity, military, artistic, and religious was Kamakura, the city of temples, hills, and the sea.

BEATRICE LANE SUZUKI

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BUDDHA

Highest and best of all Earth's great and good,  
Thou towerest over all with noble mien,  
As far around that lofty height is seen,  
Where lies the perfect path of Brotherhood.  
There in thy priestine glory thou hast stood  
From the dim hoary ages, still to guide  
Men from a sorrowing world to goodness' side,  
Bidding them tread upon the righteous road.  
Like those high hills that skirt thy native land,  
Others have fringed along the ethereal height,  
And reared their crests to meet the eternal light,  
Peak beyond peak, in solemn pomp they stand,  
Nathless thy peerless crest, unchallenged, free,  
In lonely grandeur, Time shall ever see.

*H. W. B. Moreno*