IN BUDDHIST TEMPLES

VII. NANZENJI

There are several Zen temples in Kyoto, belonging to the Rinzai School of Zen, and Nanzenji is one of the most important. It stands in the North-Eastern part of the city in a fine grove of old pine trees, on a slope of one of the hills of Higashiyama. Nanzenji is not what it was, for a series of fires has destroyed many of its fine buildings. But enough is left to give an idea of what it must have been when at the height of its prosperity and power.

Originally a Tendai temple stood upon this site, but the Emperor Kameyama charmed with the picturesque surroundings erected a palace here to provide for his retirement which took place in 1274 A.D.

It is said that when the Emperor first came to reside at this place, a report was spread that the place was haunted. The abbot of Saidaiji of Nara was called to exorcise the ghosts. But although he did his best with prayers, exhortations and the reading of sutras, it was of no avail; the ghosts continued to walk as before. Then Fumon, the Abbot of Tōfukuji, who was noted for his holy life was invited to try. He came with twenty followers and sat quietly in meditation within the precincts of the palace. From that time on the palace was quiet. The Emperor was so pleased that he gave the lower part of the palace to Fumon for a temple, but he himself continued to reside in the upper portion which is now called Nanzen In, the residence of the present Abbot. Fumon was noted not only for his holy life but his great strength of character and wide spread influence. The poem which the Emperor wrote upon his death gives a hint of the character and the personality of this great priest. It reads:

"The venerable master of our Zen monks
Is the eye of both gods and men.
He is like a flash of lightning or the running meteor;
However much pursued by men, he cannot be overcome.
Holding his bamboo stick of three feet he never stirs
Yet how overwhelmingly we feel his power."

Fumon himself when his time came to die wrote the following:

"Come! No place to abide.
Gone! No quarters to which to depart.
Ultimately what!
Kwatz![1]
No departing from where I am."

The Great Gate of Nanzenji was built in 1627 by one of Iyeyasu's generals. In the upper story are sculptures of the Buddha and of the Sixteen Rakans (Arhats), disciples of the Buddha. It was in this gate that the noted robber Ishikawa Goemon lived and from which he stole out to commit his bold robberies. Nanzenji has had disastrous fires and the Butsuden or Main Hall of the Buddha is new, but it is a fine structure and has Śākyamuni Buddha upon the altar.

The Hōjō or Priests' Apartments harbour some very fine screen paintings of the Kanō school, Motonobu, Eitoku and Tannyū being well represented. The Tiger rooms the screens of which were painted by Kanō Tannyū are celebrated. While we may wonder at the unreality of the tiger's body we cannot help but admire the decorative effect of the brilliant colours, yellows and greens against the gold backgrounds and the subtle suggestion of power and grace in the tiger's general appearance. One of the treasures is a picture of the first Abbot of Nanzenji, the noble Fumon by

[1] "Kwatz" is the cry given often by Zen masters in the course of their instruction.

Takuma Eiga. It is a splendid example of this artist's work. He sits in a chair clad in his priestly robes with his Chinese shoes placed before him. His striking features with typical Chinese overhanging eyebrows and his virile expression makes the picture a most attractive one. Here can be seen some fine specimens of ancient Chinese art and one arresting picture of the Nehanzo (Nirvana of Buddha) from the brush of Chô-shikyo of the Northern Sung period.

Before the apartments is the unique garden laid out by the Master of æstheticism, Kobori Enshū, representing a tiger passing over a brook. Some will see only a lot of sand and a few stones, but one who has imbibed the spirit of Zen taste will see represented the perfection of art in simplicity of style.

There are many sub-temples in Nanzenji, the largest and finest being Konchi In which boasts of fine screens and a garden also laid out by Kobori Enshū called the Garden of the Stork and the Tortoise. Nanzen In has also beautiful screens, a picturesque garden and a life-size and realistic statue of the Emperor Kameyama who so loved Nanzen In that he left the command that a portion of his ashes should be interred there.

There are interesting graves in Nanzenji of scholars and artists. There is also the delightful little sub-temple of the Bodhisattva Marishiten with a garden laid out by Soami. And here too is the Sōdō or Meditation Hall where young monks congregate to live the Zen life and practise meditation under the instruction of the Roshi (Meditation Master).

A great Zen monastery is an institution in itself with various departments and sub-temples and halls. While the young monks are studying under the Roshi at the Sōdō, the other affairs of the temple are being managed by the Abbot from Nanzen In. Tourists call at the Hōjō to see the screens and pictures. Worshippers do homage to the Buddha at the Butsuden. The life of the sub-temples goes on in various ways. At one, a sweet-faced nun gives lessons in the tea-

ceremony; at another, young students pore over their University lectures; at another the head-priest is instructing the troubled or reciting sutras for the dead. The breeze comes down from Higashiyama, the cherry blooms in spring amidst the green pine trees or the maples scatter their vermillion leaves in the autumn. The Great Gate towers above the black-robed monks sweeping the paths, the Buddha statue sits in the Butsuden and the Imperial effigy at Nanzen In. As I walk in the quiet and noble precincts of Nanzenji, I hear the voice of the past united with the present and that voice speaks of the Triple Jewel, the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order.

VIII. Ginkakuji: The Silver Pavilion

In the north-eastern part of Kyoto stands the temple of Jishōji, popularly called Gingakuji, the Silver Pavilion, surrounded by its unique garden. When the Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa retired in 1479, he gave orders to build a villa on Higashiyama in the grounds of the temple Keiun-In, and in 1483 he moved to it and spent the rest of his days in the pursuit of æsthetic pleasures, such as tea ceremony, incense game, moon gazing, picture collecting, and so on. The beautiful garden was laid out by Sōami, and in 1490 Yoshimasa erected the two-storied pavilion called Gingakuji. He intended to coat it with silver as the Kinkakuji had been of gold, but he died before the plan was carried out. After the death of Yoshimasa, his villa was turned into a Zen temple called Jishōji, and the famous priest Musō Kokushi (Sōseki) is regarded as its founder and first Abbot.

At Yoshimasa's villa was constructed the Jibutsudō, the first four-and-half-mat tea-room, and this room is now under the special protection of the Government. Other famous rooms were the Rōsei-tei for incense parties, which has been rebuilt exactly as it was in Yoshimasa's time, the Gingetsurō used for gazing at the moon, the Silver Pavilion itself, and others.

The Rōsei-tei is a modern replica of Yoshimasa's charming incense room, originally laid out by Shino Munenobu, the founder of Shino pottery in the province of Owari. It was he who initiated Yoshimasa into the delights and mystery of the incense game. Incense itself had been brought from Korea perhaps with the Buddhist statues and pictures which came at the time of the introduction of Buddhism from Korea in 552 A.D. By 900 A.D. incense was imported from China and used chiefly for Buddhist purposes, but Takimono-awase, the making of incense, became a pastime of Japanese noblemen. The incense game was called Kō-awase, or Kiki-kō. The test of ability in the game is to distinguish the different scents of each incense. The implements to be used in the game are many and are artistically made of expensive and beautiful materials. In the Museum of Kyoto today is exhibited a set of incense game utensils which give a good idea of the charming delicacy of this æsthetic pastime. This incense ceremony—for ceremony it is more than a game —is also an expression of the Zen spirit, because our original nature is purified with the fragrance of incense which was originally burnt in reverence to the Buddha.

The tea ceremony was greatly enjoyed by Yoshimasa. His master and indeed the first true tea-master in Japan was Shuko, a disciple of Ikkyū. It is said that while practising Zazen he would become sleepy in spite of all his efforts to keep awake, so he asked a doctor to give him some remedy which would help him to keep awake. He was told that tea was stimulating, and advised to try it and was delighted to find that it helped him to keep awake and gave it to others. One day when Yoshimasa visited Daitokuji he was served tea by Shuko and he became interested in Shuko's style of serving it. He became so interested indeed that he built a tea-house for Shuko and wrote for it a tablet to hang in the tea-room. This tablet said "Shuko anju"—the Master of the Cottage of Shuko (shining jewel). In the garden was a well called "Samegai" which means "to awake" for

its water was so pure, it was considered the best water to use for the tea which awakes.

Shuko was not only a tea master but also an adept at the incense ceremony and a skilful composer of poems. Ikkyū once wanted to see how thoroughly Shuko understood Zen. Ikkyū ordered one of his Jisha to serve tea to Shuko. Just as the Jisha was about to serve the tea to Shuko, Ikkyū struck the bowl in Shuko's hand with his iron wand and cried "Kwats!" The bowl was broken in pieces. But Shuko sat as calm and composed as before, and when he was about to leave, he made a low bow to Ikkyū. Ikkyū asked him, "How about your bowl of tea?" Shuko answered, "The willow is green and the flower is red." Ikkyū knew that Shuko understood, and he himself saw that the true understanding of the tea ceremony and of Zen are the same. He presented to Shuko the calligraphy of Engo, a famous Chinese Zen priest, as a souvenir of this occasion.

Yoshimasa once asked Shuko what the spirit of tea was. Shuko's answer was "If we enter the tea-room, we should be free from attachment, and calm. When we serve tea to others, we must be filled with prudence, reverence, purity, and quietude." Is this not like Zen? The studied simplicity of the tea-room shows Zen influence. Okakura has said:

"The tea-room was an oasis in the dreary waste of existence, when weary travellers could meet to drink from the common spring of art appreciation. The ceremony was an improvised drama, whose plot was woven about the tea, the flowers and the paintings. Not a colour to disturb the tone of the room, not a sound to mar the rhythm of things; not a gesture to obtrude upon the harmony, not a word to break the unity of the surroundings, all movements to be performed simply and naturally—such were the aims of the tea-ceremony."

We can hardly wonder that Yoshimasa fled from court life, became a priest, and devoted himself to the æsthetic arts.

As the perfection of the tea-room was due to Shuko and

the incense apartment to Shino Munenobu, so is the beauty of the garden to Sōami. He was the master architect of laying out gardens, he was also an adept at painting, calligraphy, flower arrangement, incense ceremony. Many of the most beautiful gardens in Japan are due to Soami's taste which was influenced by Zen. Here we find the Pool of the Brocade Mirror, the Island of White Cloud, the Peak of Burning Incense, the Rocks of the Dipper Stars. All of these are poetically named and as poetically arranged to make a beautiful and harmonious whole. From whatever point of view the garden is looked at with its array of pond, trees, rocks, islands, bridges, it is lovely, attractive in its very simplicity.

The Silver Pavilion may be dilapidated but its perfect shape is to be admired. Something of the ancient style of Chinese architecture is here with its oval-topped second-story windows under a sloping roof up-turned at the corners. Seen on a snowy day or by moonlight, its curves seem to gain new beauty. In the upper story is a statue of the Bodhisattva Kwannon sitting in meditation. It is said to be the work of the renowned sculptor Unkei and its sweet feminine beauty is very charming.

There are some good pictures at Ginkakuji by Kanaoka, Sesshu, Chōdenshu, Taigado, the celebrated One Hundred Monkey picture, the White Cockatoo, Ōkyo's Sparrow deprived of eyes that it might not fly away, and Beisen and Buson's screens, and two pictures by Yoshimasa himself. Many of Yoshimasa's tea trays and bowls can be seen but the most interesting object of all is the nearly life-size statue of Yoshimasa himself. He is clad in priest's robes and looks life-like as he sits in the meditation posture gazing straight before him. Mr. Fenollosa has described this statue thus: "There the great Shōgun sits in splendid dark wood statue, as if alive; the single lines of his priest-like garment, the sweet, sad smile on his face, the pathetic dignity of his fine clasped hands bringing a strangely interesting personality

before us. Here indeed is the very Lorenzo di Medici of Japan, who had done for his great contemporaries, by his purely democratic interest in art, *primus inter pares*, what the great Florentine banker had done for his supreme generation. Yes, if Yoshimitsu had been the Cosmo di Medici of Japan, Yoshimasa was the Lorenzo, and each pair, by mere accident, were exactly contemporary. The analogy goes on even to the degenerate Medici and Ashikaga of the sixteenth century.''

It is a mistake to condemn Yoshimasa as many historians do. From the political point of view, he may have been a bad Shōgun and from the strictly moral point of view a bad man, but from the point of view of art and æsthetic culture, he did a great service to Japan and without him Japanese art would not be what it is today. One writer has compared him to Nero who enjoyed his parties while the country was in a state of war; but, as we have seen, another has compared him to Lorenzo of Medici because of his patronage of art. Under Yoshimasa six great Zen temples were founded and he has left the perfect garden of Ginkakuji. Yoshimasa increased the Chinese culture of Japan.

The beauty which Yoshimasa admired was that which reflected Zen taste, which had to borrow a term often used in the Nō drama—Yūgen—the beauty which underlies form, colour, and movement. To Yoshimasa is due the growth of Zen taste and feeling artistically in Japan. Not only to him do we owe the perfection of the Tea Ceremony and the Incense Game, but also Flower Arrangement, Gardening, Architecture, Decoration, even the Cooking which has become characteristic of Zen temples.

G. B. Sansom in his *Japan* appreciates Yoshimasa in the following words:

''The Ashikaga Shōguns are generally treated by historians as bad, selfish rulers who did nothing for the State, and certainly as administrators there is not much to be said for them. Yet if we compare their record with that of more

respectable characters in the national story, it seems that they did as good service to posterity as most great captains and statesmen. Feudal policies have left little more trace than feudal battles; but Yoshimasa and Yoshimitsu, through their reprehended indulgence in pleasure, have left however involuntarily a most valuable legacy. It is thanks to their eager and quite selfish promotion of foreign trade that Japan is now so rich in treasures of Chinese art, notably Sung, Yüan and Ming paintings and porcelain. It was under their patronage that the fine arts still flourished, in an oasis of taste and learning around which was a desert of war and barbarity. Nearly all of the applied arts, but especially ceramics, owe a great deal to their practice of the tea-ceremony, whose adepts were liberal if exacting patrons. And if their own particular culture faded quickly away, it was not until it had given shape and substance to an æsthetic tradition which, though it has suffered transformations, in essence still survives.''

The Japanese love the moon. They enjoy viewing beautiful places by moonlight and they enjoy gazing at the moon itself. Poets have celebrated the moon's charm and painters have sought to catch her loveliness. The mountain back of Ginkakuji is called Tsukimatsu-yama (awaiting-the-moon mountain''). At one end of this garden is a tiny stream of water falling into a small pool called ''the Moon-washing Fountain,'' because the reflection of the moon in the water appears to be washed by the fall.

Upon entering the garden a terrace of white sand, hardened by the elements, attracts notice. It is called Ginsha-dan (''Silver Sand Foreshore''). Farther on is a flat-topped, conical heap of sand, about 5 ft. high, 10 ft. in diameter at the base, named Kogetsu-dai (''Moon-Facing Mound''). These are both popularly supposed to be the places where the æsthetic ex-Ashikaga shōgun, Yoshimasa, the founder of the garden, held his moon-viewing parties, but as a matter of fact, these sand heaps were made for the

prosaic and more practical purpose of having a supply of sand on hand to scatter on the paths when the Emperor visited the garden. These visits were usually unannounced and sometimes caught the head-gardener with a scant supply of sand. Determined to be always prepared he decided to store sand in the garden; then in order to make it as decorative as possible he formed it into this terrace and flat-topped cone of perfect shape. This, the priests say, points a moral: "Even as loose a material as sand, can, with infinite patience and perseverance, be made into a flawless structure, so can scattered and random thoughts be gathered into a perfect concentration."

But at Ginkakuji Yoshimasa had his moon-viewing terrace even although he did not use the sand piles. The following poems translated from the Japanese may give an idea of the love for the moon.

The moon is a favourite subject for Japanese poets, and there are many poems written in her praise. I give only a few as illustrations. This might have been written for Yoshimasa and his friends:

"Here come the courtiers and the ladies fair
Gazing their fill upon the gracious moon.
Happy they are, and, Oh, how beautiful the
moon this evening!"

Another poet sings:

"Above the white clouds
Joining their feathers
The wild geese fly;
The autumn moon,
So bright it is,
We can count the number
Of the flying birds."

The poet Narihira writes:

"Not yet sated with the moon's fair light
I watch her going with a vain regret.
Ah, would that mountain edge might break away
To hold her longer, she whom I adore."

The poet-priest Saigyō writes:

"When looking at the moon
How happy I feel,
For I know she is my friend."

Fujiwara-no-Akisuke pens:

"The autumn wind is moving the clouds.
Look, brightness is peeping forth,
Ah, lovely moon!"

We can imagine Yoshimasa and his friends sitting silently on his silver terrace gazing up at the moon in worshipful appreciation and we can realise that Ginkakuji was a matchless place for moon-light adorers. And even now in these prosaic days, the rays from this same silver moon which fell upon those æsthetes of old, still lighten Sōami's lovely garden at Ginkakuji.

SEIREN (BLUE LOTUS)