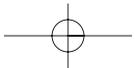
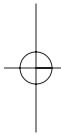
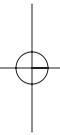
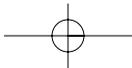
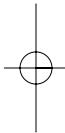
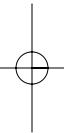
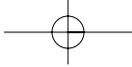


Book I. The Layman.





Book I.

The Layman.

10th. January.

We docked this morning off the coast of Malaysia. There was the usual crowd on the dock but, in one corner, there were a group of rich-looking people and Rev. Jones, the man who I had agreed to help by giving some lectures; I had arranged to do this for him before leaving England. I had promised to stay about three months. The ship docked and I disembarked. Since I was, in any case, going on to Singapore in the morning, there was no need for any immigration formalities and I was soon on the dockside greeting my reception committee.

To my horror I discovered that Rev. Jones had brought a tribe of newspaper reporters with him and they had already been primed as to my reason for visiting Japan—moreover, they seemed to know far more than they should of my private affairs. I was told that I was being ordained in Malaysia during my three-month stay instead of in Japan and that Rev. Jones had made arrangements to have me trained in Malaysia also. I was so surprised that I was unable to say anything for a few minutes.¹ I came to myself again to find Rev. Jones busily telling a story about me to the reporters who were taking it down.

It is perfectly true that I had discussed the possibility of being ordained in Malaysia. Once I had even asked if it could be done but I had made no firm arrangement to this effect as far as I knew. I came to with a gasp.

1. For this and all other notes, see “Annotations” at the end of Book 4, p. 475.

“No,” I said, “this is all wrong; I am going to be trained in Japan.”

The reporters promptly swung round to me but Rev. Jones forestalled my saying anything.

“She means that she may later go on to Japan for a short time,” he said, “I have written to the abbot there to tell him that I am ordaining her here and he has agreed.”

The reporters turned to me again. “Did you know about this,” one asked, “or is it entirely new to you?”

“I did not know about it,” I replied.

“Does your mother know about it?”

“No.”

This was true in every sense of the word, since I did not know of Rev. Jones’ arrangements myself, but I was to regret these words later on.

Rev. Jones continued to elaborate on his plans for me with sweeping statements as to what I was going to do in Malaysia but I felt too sick inside to say anything. I was to be ordained by someone I did not know, instead of by the old man I had met in London and who I knew was waiting for me. True, I had discussed the possibility of being ordained in Malaysia but a “friend” of mine in London had written to Rev. Jones in Malaysia to say that I was too ill to be ordained at all and that he should not even consider it. I had not realised to what extent Rev. Jones had already made the arrangements.

The interview over, I was taken, somewhat shaken, to Rev. Jones’ luxurious house which dripped with valuable possessions of every sort. I was wined, dined, taken on a tour of the island, fed in the most luxurious restaurants, smothered with presents and put to bed in the best guest room of a palatial mansion belonging to a Chinese millionaire. The ship did not sail for Singapore until the next day and so I was able to rest on land for the first time in three and a half weeks. But I could not sleep. Apart from the mosquitos, which ate me from one end to the other, and the intense and unaccustomed heat, my mind was in a whirl of excitement over the arrangements for the festivities which had accompanied my arrival and amazement at what had

been, without my knowledge, decided for me, not to mention the luxury in which religious people in the Far East seemed to live. I have come, expecting a spartan existence, and I find a luxury unknown to most people in Britain.

11th. January.

I was taken to the botanical gardens and fêted again before finally embarking on the ship, five minutes before she sailed, for Singapore.

The reception I got on board was electric; everyone avoided looking at me, or else did so side-ways, and I could not imagine why until someone quietly handed me the morning paper, walking away without saying anything after doing so. The headlines read, “Englishwoman to enter the Buddhist priesthood—Mother does not know!”

I stared in wonder at the newspaper headline, not comprehending its full meaning, since my mother had known of my going to Japan; and then the horror of it burst upon my brain like a thunder-clap. To the average Western person the fact that an adult decides to do something like entering the priesthood is not very significant but it seems that, to the Oriental mind, anything that is done without the *full*² knowledge and approval of a parent, in spite of the age of the person concerned, is absolutely anathema. In addition to this I know the British yellow press too well for me to feel happy about such a headline: but there is nothing I can do about it and I can only guess what repercussions the story may have in England with my family. I spent most of the day, rather miserably, in my cabin.

12th. January.

After a restless night—the second together—I got up, tired and worried, to see a pouring wet day in Singapore harbour. We docked and I waited in my cabin for some time for the person who was supposed to come to meet me with members of the local Buddhist Youth Group. No one came. I waited and waited and then, suddenly, my cabin door was blocked by a tall man,

6 · THE WILD, WHITE GOOSE

who looked more Indian than Chinese, and a young woman who looked the same.

“Are you Miss Kennett?” was his first comment.

I looked at him hard; but in a place such as Singapore, where all the races are inextricably mixed, it was quite possible that he was part Chinese.

“Yes,” I replied.

“Good,” he said, “I want to see you.”

“Are you Mr. Chou?” I asked.

“No,” he replied, “but he will perhaps come later. Shall I take you to your temple?”

It was difficult to know what to do under the circumstances. The ship was about to embark its new passengers prior to sailing and I knew that I had to be off and away before that; I wanted to question this man much more before trusting myself to him but I had almost no time left for such things so I thanked him and we left the ship.

On the quayside I stopped. “I think I really ought to wait for Mr. Chou,” I said. We waited and waited but no one came. Then my new companion turned to me.

“I think you ought to know that all the newspapers in the country are chasing you,” he said. “I can protect you from them if you wish. Allow me to take you to your temple in my car. It is possible that Mr. Chou knows about the newspapers and so has not come.”

“Are you sure?” I was startled but did not wish to show it. Then I said, “Do you know where the temple is?”

“Oh, yes,” he replied, “let me take you.”

The rain continued to pour down and there seemed nothing else to do but get into his car. We roared through the dock-yard and I was surprised at the grin on the face of the custom’s official who did not even bother to check my passport. We were out in Singapore and heading north; where to I did not know.

It was with growing anxiety that I noticed that we seemed to be leaving the city of Singapore behind and making for the suburbs. Finally I gave voice to my thoughts.

“Where are we going?” I asked.

“To my flat,” came the reply, “You see, I too am from a newspaper but, if you see only me, the other reporters will not bother you and you will be left alone. At the moment there are dozens of them around the temple.”

The car was travelling at high speed and there was little I could do to stop it. I said nothing.

“You took that remarkably well,” he said, “aren’t you afraid?”

“Why should I be? I can only die once.”

There was silence in the car for some time. He then started asking all sorts of questions to most of which he thought I was giving unsatisfactory answers. It seemed that he was convinced that the only reason any woman would enter religion was if she suffered from kinky sex. He was so stuffed with all the stupid ideas of the cheap novels he had read that I began to get somewhat angry as well as to recover from my state of shock.

“My readers will never believe this,” he grumbled, “You must give me a better story.”

At this I got really angry. “That is not my concern,” I retorted. “What I have told you is the truth and that is all there is to it.”

I was now feeling that even if there were scores of reporters at the temple they must be better than this miserable specimen and I told him to take me to the temple at once.

“But I want to keep you here as long as possible,” he bleated.

“I expect you do,” I replied, “but I do not wish to stay. Do you realise that the penalty for holding people against their will in Singapore is hanging?”

This worked like a charm. The car turned round at top speed and we sped to the temple.

The Chinese, who were waiting for me at the temple, were completely unruffled by what had happened and I was again amazed at the luxury and living standards of the priesthood. More than anything else I wanted time to think and this was the one thing that was not to be allowed me. I was never free at any time from a bevy of women and young girls who giggled incessantly,

gibbered amongst themselves and fingered everything within sight that belonged to me. This went on and on and all I wanted to do was—*THINK*. I have never been quick-tempered but this situation, after all I had been through, was just too much. I turned suddenly and roared at them to get out.³ In all my life I can never remember doing such a thing before this. I lay down on the bed to just be *still*—the mosquitos ate me through the open, unscreened windows and the girls giggled outside the door. Then came an official of some local organisation demanding to see me—I flatly refused. People poured into my room; the giggling and gibbering started all over again. I was told that newspaper reporters were all around the temple and had set up cameras with telescopic lenses in the windows of all the neighboring houses. I tried to go downstairs for a meal but the reporters burst the door down. I fled upstairs again and a young Chinese girl, who spoke excellent English, came to me. She was amenable to understanding my feelings and undertook to do something about what was happening. She also agreed to smuggle me out for a drive in the evening when it was dark. This she did—through a side door and over the back fence!

19th. January.

Since my arrival I have been besieged. In desperation I was finally put on a long-distance coach, just before dawn, to go inland where the abbot of a great temple will protect me. The abbot met me at the coach stop. He was roughly the same height as myself with the kindest pair of brown eyes; they could twinkle in an unusual way for a Chinese. With him were a number of white-clad members of the laity. He welcomed me graciously and we went to his temple where we had a long talk with the aid of an interpreter who spoke excellent English; the abbot himself speaks good English rather slowly. I talked much to the young interpreter about the situation I found myself in and the publicity hounds that I had met, asking him bluntly what everyone meant by it. He became sad.

“In the East,” he said, “a Westerner becoming a priest is a rare thing; the Christian missionaries always make a lot of trouble

about it. Because of this many Buddhists feel that they have caught a prize and so tend to turn the person into a temple pet rather than a genuine member of the priesthood. He is shown and pampered and always in the public eye. This is what has happened to your friend Rev. Jones.”

I was appalled. “But I want to do the thing properly,” I said, “and, whether you like it or not, I want to go on to Japan and study there. I am not willing to become a puppet in silken robes.”

It seemed that the abbot had understood this without any interpretation for his look was very compassionate. “I understand,” he said, “and I will help you.” The officials of the small temple I was to stay at came to collect me and I had the feeling that the abbot was slightly averse to this but he did not stop them, since it had been arranged by Rev. Jones, and so I went to my new home.

This temple has a bunch of Malaysians living in a separate part of its house as caretakers and the noise they make is absolutely deafening.

20th. January.

I have put up with the noise, as well as the constant visits of the temple officials, until I can stand it no longer.³ As politely as I could I asked the Malaysians to make less noise. The result was that the noise became twice as loud. The abbot of the big monastery came to see me this morning and I told him about the noise. He looked concerned but said nothing. With him was a representative from the leading news agency in the country who was very polite. He apologised for having to disturb me but the newspapers were printing so many conflicting stories that he had been sent to get the real one which he personally guaranteed to the abbot would be circulated to all the newspapers, thus stopping the rumours. Rev. Jones arrived this evening and he, the abbot and I had a conference.

“We must decide,” said Rev. Jones, “who is going to shave her head.”

The abbot said nothing and there was a long silence. Then I spoke.

“I did not want to be ordained here since I had arranged for it in Japan,” I said, “but, since I hear that if I do not go through with it the Christians will make much use of my refusal to ridicule Buddhism in the press, I am willing to be ordained here provided I go on to Japan to study afterwards. Can I choose who is to do the ordination?”

The abbot’s eyes kindled for a second and were instantly dimmed. There was another long silence.

“I suppose so,” said Rev. Jones.

“Then I choose the abbot,” I answered and saw Rev. Jones jump as if stung by a wasp. “I wanted to be ordained in Japan but I am sure Zenji Sama will understand my reasons, accept this ordination and still teach me.”

I could feel something between joy and relief coming out of the abbot in my direction. When he spoke, after another long silence, his words betrayed none of his inner feelings.

“Perhaps Rev. Jones would prefer to do it?”

“No,” said my friend, “not if she would prefer you. You go ahead.”

The conversation continued a little longer and then we all went to bed. The ordination is due to take place in the morning.

21st. January.

I slept well and ate with a good appetite this morning. I feel safe with the abbot, besides my family telegraphed to say that they are making no difficulties whatsoever with regard to the ordination. The ordination itself took place and, after the ceremony, the man from the news agency had a press conference with the other newspapers and I was left in peace.

22nd. January.

The abbot came on a bicycle to invite me to lunch at his temple. I am overjoyed at the simplicity of the life of both himself and his fifteen fellow priests which is much as I pictured it should be when I was in England.



The author being ordained in Malaysia by the Very Reverend Seck Kim Seng, abbot of Cheng Hoon Teng Temple, a Rinzai monastery in Malacca.

23rd. January.

I was awakened in the middle of the night by an unbelievable racket from the Malaysians in the other half of the house. What exactly was happening next door I still do not know and I had no desire to go and see. It occurred to me, however, that I was in a remarkably dangerous situation for the racket seemed to be of a particularly menacing variety. I felt that I should do something about removing myself from its vicinity. As I left the building something whistled past my ear. I ducked and darted round the corner, out of range, to the nearest telephone. A temple official returned with me to be told by one of the Malaysians that they objected to a foreigner in the house who told them to be quiet. The official pointed out that I was the priest of the

temple and they were only the caretakers. The quarrel lasted the rest of the night and half of the day with the official saying that he had grumbled about the noise himself many times. I went back to my room but felt a lurking danger there; the quarrel continued. I wished there were some bars on the windows. Finally, since the quarrel seemed endless, I went to the abbot's temple and told him the whole story. He said nothing but made a telephone call in Chinese. Two cars arrived, with several burly Chinese in them. We returned to my temple. My things were taken to the abbot's temple in less than ten minutes.

"What is happening?" I asked.

"You are coming to my temple where you should have been in the first place," he replied, "only Rev. Jones wanted you to be like him, independent."

It is the first time I have ever heard him openly disapprove of anything my friend does. I have been given a small room, neither elaborate nor poor, which will be mine until I go to Japan. I am to give the lectures Rev. Jones has arranged under the abbot's protection and sponsorship.

13th. April.

It was raining when the ship docked at Yokohama. Rev. Ichirō met me on the dock-side and, together with two or three other people, took me by car to the temple. I was shocked to find that there were several reporters amongst the people with him. It seems that the noise made by the Chinese newspapers may be duplicated here. I was taken to the temple tea house where, I am told, I shall stay until the temple officials decide whether or not I can enter the temple itself. I thought this had all been decided before I came. I am so tired; all I want to do is drop into bed and stay there for a week but there seems to be some kind of celebration on and every time I try to rest hordes of school children swarm into the house to gibber and giggle or else open the windows to stare in at me. Who was it told me that the Japanese were the politest nation in the world? Or is this silly gibbering simply the normal behaviour of females who have been suppressed and ignored for most of their existence?

At dusk Rev. Ichirō came and told them to go away and now I have time to write this. There is so much I want to write about my first impressions of Japan, especially now that it is bright moonlight outside in the really exquisite garden, but I am just too tired to do it. There seems to be no point in trying to study religion seriously if one is to be made a newspaper story from London to Sydney. Surely I would be better off to disappear somewhere in the mountains and teach myself.⁴

14th. April.

Rev. Ichirō came to the tea house to have lunch with me today. After the meal he told me that the officers of the temple were all discussing what name I am to be called by if I am allowed to stay.

“But I thought that had all been arranged,” I said, “about my staying I mean. Zenji Sama invited me over here; I have the letters to prove it. He said I was to become his disciple and study here.”

“This temple is not Zenji Sama’s private property,” said Rev. Ichirō with a certain amount of annoyance in his voice, “and there are many who feel he had no right to ask a foreigner to come here at all. In addition to this, you are a woman and this temple has never had a woman in it before.”

“Then what are all those girl trainees that I saw this morning doing here?” I asked.

“Most of them are here for this special period only. We are, at the moment, doing Jūkai and they have come to help. The others, who are here all the time, are not officially here; save one.” His English is a little quaint.

“That is a great idea,” I said, “women are here but not here. And you tell me this after I have come twelve thousand miles. Zenji Sama might have let me know and I could have considered whether or not it would be worth coming at all.”⁴

“Zenji Sama has very warm feeling for you,” he said, showing some slight anger in his tone as he said the words, “it is very strange to us that he should want a woman for a disciple in this temple.”

“Has he no other female disciples?”

“Oh, yes, many, but not here. They are all in other places.”

Suddenly his face darkened and he fumbled in his sleeve and produced an old newspaper cutting of the bombing of Hiroshima. He spoke in a voice that vibrated with emotion.

“This is a picture of Hiroshima; the poor, bombed city; but we must forgive and forget.”

It was difficult to know whether he was speaking to himself or to me so I said nothing. He looked up at me and I was startled by what seemed to be close to hatred in his eyes. “You say nothing?” he said.

“What is there to say? I was a child when the war started. I was scarcely adult when it ended. Many stupid, evil and wicked things are done in wartime. Many people suffered all over the world”

I stopped; there seemed nothing more to say.

“No country suffered as did Japan.”

There came a knock at the door and a tall, slender young trainee entered. Rev. Ichirō changed abruptly from the state he had been in and broke into a smile which somehow did not light up his eyes. He stuffed the news clipping into his sleeve and turned to the newcomer, half nodded to him and then turned back to me.

“This is Rev. Tarō. He will be looking after you. He will teach you all the little ways of the monastery. He speaks English slowly. Speak slowly to him and he will understand you very well. You can teach him better English in return for the help he will be giving you.”

Rev. Ichirō then rose and left the room quickly after a cursory “Sayonara.”

Rev. Tarō looked at me sideways from his position on the floor near the door and I could see that he was rather non-plussed with the situation. I poured out a cup of tea and offered it to him along with one of the cakes Rev. Ichirō had brought. He ate and drank in silence. Then he spoke very slowly and with a very strange-sounding intonation.

“Young Japanese not worry of war.”

I realised that he must have been standing outside the door for some time before knocking for he had obviously overheard the conversation; this would account for his slightly embarrassed air when he came into the room.

“Young Europeans too,” I said.

“Japan is fire country. Many mountains with fire in them. Many earthquake. Noise and shake not last long but, at time, very mighty. Older Japanese temper over war very like.” The English was queer but the meaning obvious.

I was amazed at his frankness and the genuine generosity and concern in his eyes.

“Thank you,” I said, “It did not worry me. Please do not be concerned.”

“All young trainees very glad you here,” he said. “Officers old; some pleased, some not. You be very careful? I will guard you. Zenji Sama, he very good. He love disciple very much. Japanese temper very hot, very quick; put in pocket, it burn hole if not taken out sometime. Rev. Ichirō mountain hot.”

I construed this as meaning a volcanic temper.

“Let me teach you how to use bowls,” he said.

We spent the rest of the afternoon talking whilst he taught me many things and took me all round the temple.

“When do you think I shall be allowed to enter the temple properly?” I asked.

“If you enter it will be quick or not all,” he replied.

It was supper time and he had to leave me. I am just too amazed at what is happening to be able to think clearly.

15th. April.

Rev. Tarō came to me early.

“When am I to be allowed to go to meditation?” I asked. “I have been here for almost three days and I am still told that I must not get up in the morning or go to the Meditation Hall.”

“I not know.” His eyes were lowered and his tone was mournful.

There was a long pause, then he said, “This morning I much beaten during meditation. I not know why.”

“I have some salve that might help,” I said.

He looked up eagerly. “You lend? It will take away pain?”

I nodded, got up and found it. He took it eagerly with both hands. There came a knock at the door and the bottle disappeared into his sleeve very quickly. A young trainee came in to fetch the breakfast things and departed.

“To-day you must go to Jūkai ceremonies,” he said.

“What’s Jūkai?” I asked.

His eyes were instantly cast down again. “I not know,” came the surprising answer. I found myself wondering if he was saying he did not know how to explain or if he was not allowed to. Another knock came at the door and Rev. Ichirō entered.

“To-day you will do Jūkai,” he said. “Please get yourself ready. It is a pity you have only yellow robes; they should be black but Zenji Sama does not mind.”

“What is Jūkai?” I asked again.

“A woman does not need to know. All she needs is to do it. Clean the room, Tarō.”

He swept through the door with a swish of his brown robes and I thought I saw a shade of dislike flit across Rev. Tarō’s face, then instantly wiped away.⁴ He went to the window and watched Rev. Ichirō go off down the garden path.

“Jūkai is Shushōgi,” he said cryptically.

“What is Shushōgi?” I asked.

“Chief Scripture. I will somewhere find copy.”

He disappeared and came back with a small book written in atrocious English; he then got a broom and started sweeping. I hunted around the back of the house, found another broom and started sweeping from the opposite side of the room. He stopped and stared at me.

“You can use broom?”

“Of course,” I said.

He broke into a big grin. “We can do real training together,” he cried. “Already you start at one side and me other. We will meet in middle and—no more dirt! They unfair—you cannot come to Meditation Hall but here is good Meditation Hall.”

We worked away and the room and the rest of the little house were soon spotless. I then made tea whilst he was finishing off the garden path.

“To-night,” he said, “ceremony is Reading of Precepts. Tomorrow is Confession night; very great and very solemn. Then you will see Zenji Sama’s blood and be recognised.”

I tried to sort through this as best I could and then saw Rev. Ichirō coming up the path again. Rev. Tarō shut his mouth like a clam shell and disappeared as much into the woodwork as he could. Rev. Ichirō looked at the house in some surprise. Rev. Tarō told him that we had cleaned it together.

“Can I have a bucket?” I asked. “I need to do some washing.”

“You are used to such work?” he inquired with a measure of disbelief.

I had already been caught off guard with this type of comment and was determined that it should not again annoy me so I replied, “Oh, yes, I am quite used to washing clothes.”

“Good,” he said, “I will arrange it. The council has decided to call you Jiyu, which is the Japanese form of your Chinese name, Tsuyu. From now on all trainees here will call you by this name. Zenji Sama will not change it although he does not like it for you.”

“Thank you,” I said. “When can I go to meditation? I am now quite rested from my journey.”

“We must tell the reporters to come first,” he said. “The newspapers want to know when you meditate and take pictures of it.”

This got my temper out.⁵ “I am not a public show,” I exploded, “and I do not intend to become one.”

“Zenji Sama has done much for you,” he said coldly, “the least you can do for him is give some publicity to the temple.”

“That is not what he wants and you know it,” I was beside myself with fury now,⁵ “and besides, when am I going to see him? I have come from the other side of the world to follow him and, after four days, I have still not seen him.”

“You will see him to-night,” he replied, “and to-morrow he will receive you as a member of the Zen Church. A group of

ladies are busy making you a special kesa (priest's robe) at his request so that he can officially receive you as his full disciple. So much honour for you is not good. All trainees will be very jealous."

"I am deeply grateful for the honour Zenji Sama is showing me," I said, "but I came here to meditate. When am I to be allowed to do so?"

"Before you can you must ask permission of all officers here," he said, "I doubt if they will give it."

"Then by all means let us ask them," I said, "and, if they refuse, I can make arrangements to go elsewhere."⁵

He looked at me in surprise. "You want to meditate that badly?" he said thoughtfully, "I see."

He left the room. I went to the Reading of the Precepts ceremony this evening and was overjoyed to be with everyone for the first time.

16th. April.

At about seven-thirty in the morning Rev. Ichirō came to the tea house.

"Put on your robes and come with me," he said tersely, "we have to ask formal permission of all officers for you to enter this temple. It is Zenji Sama's order."

I got the feeling that the old abbot was warm tempered with his bunch of recalcitrant officers and did not want to make feelings run any higher than they might already be by keeping them waiting so got myself ready as quickly as possible.

Our first call was on the chief lecturer, Rev. Akira, who received me charmingly and, using Rev. Tarō, who was also with us, as his interpreter rather than Rev. Ichirō whose English was much better, said he was overjoyed that foreigners were coming to the temple and that he hoped that I was merely the first of many. He gave me a box of cakes and the interview was over. Rev. Ichirō did not look pleased. The next one we visited was the chief disciplinarian, Rev. Masao, who informed me, by way of Rev. Tarō, that there had never been a woman officially in the temple before but he was hunting through the rules to

discover how my entry could be legally effected. He then produced the *kyosaku* (awakening stick) and placed it in front of me on the table between us.

“Do you know what this is?” he asked through Rev. Tarō.

“Yes,” I said.

“The kindest *Kanzeon* is to be found in hell,” he said, “I shall not hesitate to use it.” He then turned his full attention to Rev. Tarō. “Teach her to recite the Scriptures,” he roared, “and bring her back in a week’s time.” As we left the room Rev. Tarō whispered, “He sergeant-major in army before become priest.”

The third interview was with the Director who seemed not to know what to do. He merely said good morning, looked uncomfortable and then fled from the room.

A young trainee came up to Rev. Ichirō, whispered something to him and I was taken to Zenji Sama’s room for the first time. The old man was reclining on magnificent cushions, grinning with pleasure at seeing me. He invited me to sit beside him and Rev. Ichirō glowered so much that he had to get up and look out of the window. Rev. Tarō looked frightened and once again tried to disappear into the woodwork. Zenji Sama and I had tea after which he had a photographer come in and take a picture of us together. I was taken to the next room where I and several others underwent the reception ceremony of the Zen Church. Again I was taken into Zenji Sama’s room; again fed; then sent back to the tea house in the company of Rev. Tarō. Maybe I shall be able to meditate the day after to-morrow. I hear I am to attend the Confession ceremony to-night.

Later.

The Confession ceremony took place at midnight as I had been told it would. There must have been hundreds of people taking part in it and I hear it only happens once a year. First in the procession, after the bells, came the male trainees who had not yet attended a *Jūkai* followed by the female ones. Then came a large number of old laymen and lay women and, finally, several hundred sixteen-year-old girls from the temple high school. Waiting for the long procession to start was somewhat

gruelling since the girls could not look at me without giggling; a fact which made it difficult for me to concentrate on the act of confession itself. Finally the procession began and wound its way through many scarlet-hung, tortuous corridors until we came to a small altar set within a recess in the hangings. Behind it sat the oldest priest I have ever seen. He gave me a small piece of paper which I took a look at and discovered that it contained one Chinese character signifying all my past evil karma. Each person was given a piece of paper similar to this. The procession continued until we came to another similar altar behind which sat another very old priest to whom we each gave back the piece of paper we had already received. The procession continued on to another altar behind which sat an old priest who was as immovable as a statue. For a moment I thought he was one until I saw the slight movement of his chest as he breathed. His paper thin hand took a pinch of incense whilst his eyes looked deep into mine and then he offered the incense in the bowl in front of him with such reverence that I was quite startled by it. The procession emerged from the red hung corridors into the Ceremony Hall and everyone sat on the floor in rows in front of the altar. When all were seated the three old priests entered and several young trainees brought in a great cauldron from which flames leaped. The three old priests who had sat behind the altars solemnly burned each piece of paper in the cauldron and, when they had all been consumed, uttered a great cry which electrified me and everyone else present. Some Scriptures were recited and then everyone went back to their rooms—I think. Rev. Ichirō called me to his room (it was the first time I had ever seen the inside of it) and made tea.

“Did you understand what was happening?” he asked, “The ceremony did not in any way seem to be causing you much of a problem.”

“The ceremony signifies the giving up of all past karma,” I said, “the turning over of a new leaf in life as it were. The priests have destroyed the bad karma with fire and scared away further evil with their great shout. Why should the ceremony cause me a problem?”

Rev. Ichirō looked startled. “That is very quick,” he said, “How did you understand the ceremony yesterday?”

“It was the Reading of the Precepts,” I replied, “The Precepts tell you how to live. The priest who read them wanted us to know how we were to live in the future after we had got rid of all our past evil karma.”

His eyes had narrowed suddenly, “You are too intelligent for your own good,” he said, “you must not understand such things with your brain only.”

“That is why I want to go to meditation,” I said. “When can I start?”

“We must think about it,” he replied, “we cannot make such a decision in a hurry.”

The interview was obviously over and I stood up. At the door I turned towards him.

“I am sorry if my brain bothers you,” I said, “since it belongs to a woman it is probably quite annoying for it to have come up with the right answers.”

His hand, in the act of putting away the tea things, stopped in mid-air and his jaw dropped open.

“Never has a woman spoken to me thus,” he said.

“Then I think it is about time that one did.”

Strange things were happening to me. Maybe I was just fed up with the attitude of mind that this man had to women and had decided to lay down the ground rules for both of us. Whatever the reasons, the ceremony seemed to have had the effect of making me reckless—or courageous, whichever way one prefers to look at it.⁶ His face suddenly broke into a big smile and even his eyes seemed to have kindled slightly.

“We will see how you manage with the next one,” he said, “it will take place at six o’clock to-night since it is already morning now. I will give favourable consideration to your wish to meditate. Understand that the first requirement for anything in Buddhism, however, is gratitude. Understand also that always my heart is good.”

I looked at him for a moment then turned from the door and made a full bow right down to the floor. As I got up he was grinning happily.

“You might even make it here,” he said and then he added, “Next time don’t speak to someone superior to you without sitting down first.”

I sat down immediately. “Good-night,” I said then rose and left the room before he had time to recover.

17th. April.

At six o’clock this evening we again went to the Ceremony Hall. When we were all seated Zenji Sama came in procession with many trainees two of which were carrying large lotus-blossoms, made of gold-lacquered wood, from which the smoke of incense issued. They advanced up the length of the hall and stopped in front of the altar itself. Zenji Sama ascended it and sat down upon a great chair placed there for him. The hall was dark except for two candles carried by two junior trainees who now also ascended the altar and knelt beside Zenji Sama, lighting him on both sides. Another trainee ascended the altar and, after some preliminary Japanese Scriptures and prayers which I did not understand, unrolled what looked like a roll of silk against Zenji Sama’s arm. Zenji Sama spoke quietly, in a very young-sounding voice for a man of his age, pointing to certain writings and circles on the silk. All the time his eyes seemed to be roaming over the assembled people and I had the feeling that he was hunting for me. I therefore made an effort to look at him and immediately felt his eyes full on me as he went on speaking. I heard him say something about England and felt sure he was trying to tell me something but it was his eyes that were telling me the most. Deep, silent and quiet, they seemed to be drawing mine into them and, not merely my eyes, but the whole of me. He ceased speaking and the trainee beside him folded up the silk and put it away carefully. A large tray of folded papers was brought and Zenji Sama seemed to be blessing them. Then, each in turn, we were led to the front of the altar where we were given one of the papers by Zenji Sama

himself. As he handed me mine he contrived to touch my hand. A thrill shot through me as I bowed and returned to my place.

After the ceremony I went again to Rev. Ichirō's room at his request. As soon as we had entered I bowed and sat down. He eyed me thoughtfully and began to make tea. Rev. Tarō entered softly and, discarding the cushion that had been set for him, moving it reverently to one side, sat directly on the floor. I carefully removed the one that was beneath me and placed it neatly on top of Rev. Tarō's discarded one. Rev. Ichirō said nothing but continued to make tea. When he had finished he said, "What of to-night's ceremony?"

"The words themselves I could not understand," I said, "for, as yet, I do not understand spoken Japanese. But I do know that Zenji Sama was telling me something and that he wants me very much."

"Have you looked at the paper he gave you yet?" he asked, "It is a copy of the silk certificate he was showing to everyone in the hall."

"It was too far away for me to see clearly what was on the one he was holding," I replied, "as for my own one I have not opened it in case I was not supposed to."

"Open it now."

I took the square-folded envelope, which had been made in such a way as to make finding its opening difficult, and turned it over. From observing Rev. Tarō I had noticed that one never tore anything open in a hurry or made a show of one's desire for a quick satisfaction of one's curiosity. Everyone sat silently whilst I carefully inspected the edges. I heard a faint chuckle from Rev. Ichirō as I finally found out how an opening was effected without harm to the envelope. I drew out a long sheet of paper on which were many red lines and circles with Japanese characters written upon them. Rev. Ichirō took it from me.

"What do you make of it?" he asked.

I already knew the Chinese characters for the names of several of the Buddhas and Patriarchs of Zen, as well as those for Zenji Sama's name, and I recognised them.

“It would seem to be a list of all the Buddhas and Patriarchs and masters preceding Zenji Sama,” I said.

“You can read Japanese?” his eyes were quick and searching.

“A little,” I replied.

“How do you understand the lines and circles?”

“The lines run through all the names from the time of Shakyamuni Buddha down to the present time,” I said, “and there seems to be another name written after Zenji Sama’s which, although it does not have the characters for my own name, I presume must represent me. As I understand it Zenji Sama has made me a part of his family.”

“Unless you can understand the red lines and circles this piece of paper is useless,” he said, “You must study it in detail.”

“What is this actual paper called?” I asked.

“Ketchimyaku,” he replied.

“What does the word mean?” I asked.

“It means the Bloodline of the Buddhas,” he said.

“Then the red lines represent the Blood of Shakyamuni Buddha which flows through the Patriarchs and masters down to the present time and on to me from Zenji Sama,” I said.

“The graphic picture is one thing,” he said with his eyes closed, “but the reality is another. You are understanding only in your brain and I have already said that it is too quick for your own good. I do not want to talk much with you because of the danger of feeding your intelligence. You must experience these things with your entire being. You must know what the Blood of the Buddhas⁷ really is.”

“When can I start meditating?” I asked.

“You are in too great a hurry,” he said with a return to his old expression of seeming dislike, “Jūkai does not end until after the ceremony that will take place at six o’clock to-morrow evening. When all the guests have gone, and the priests who have only come for Jūkai, we can consider what we are going to do with you. Good-night.”

I rose and left the room together with Rev. Tarō.

18th. April.

The last of the Jūkai ceremonies took place this evening. At six o'clock we all went again to the Ceremony Hall. After the preliminary Scriptures had been recited we were taken, in batches of twelve, to ascend the steps of the main altar where we sat down. On the other side of the altar, hidden from the congregation in the hall, sat Zenji Sama and the elderly priests whom we had seen during the Confession ceremony together with a large number of others and, behind them, the shrine of Keizan Zenji and Dōgen Zenji was illuminated so that the statues of these founders were clearly visible just above the heads of the assembled priests. As soon as we had sat down the priests, including Zenji Sama, rose and solemnly bowed to us and we bowed back to them. They then went in procession around the altar as we sat there, ringing bells and giving homage to Shakyamuni Buddha. They circumambulated the altar three times for each twelve members of the congregation and, whilst I myself was there, I had a distinct feeling that they were worshipping us as if we were Shakyamuni Buddha in person—not just me alone but all the others with me; and the altar and the hall and everything there seemed to be included. We returned to our places and the one word that Rev. Tarō had said to me about this ceremony continued to throb through my brain, "Recognition." We had been told how a Buddha behaves during the Reading of the Precepts, we had been cleansed from our karma by the fire of Confession; we had entered the family of the Buddhas; the Ketchimyaku was our family tree and this ceremony was the recognition of the Buddhist Church that we had been reborn, this time into the country of the Buddhas. When all had been upon the altar the priests made a circle around the congregation, stretching all round the hall and, ringing bells and chanting "Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha," circumambulated us three times. One thing puzzled me, however, and that was the very strange procession that we had made before sitting down in the hall for the Ketchimyaku ceremony. Zenji Sama had led us, carrying his staff and, I believe, his begging bowl, in a sort of follow-my-leader procession round the hall, up and

down and round and about, twisting and turning in all directions and in all places until he finally got to the main door from where he made directly for the altar, climbed it and sat down on top. The ceremony over Rev. Ichirō sent for me once more.

“Jūkai is over,” he said, “What have you learned from it?”

“That I am neither the same nor different from when I entered this temple,” I replied.

“I do not want to hear your explanation,” he said, somewhat angrily, “if you have understood it, it will show in your daily life. Thank you for joining us.”

“Thank you for permitting me to,” I replied. I bowed and left the room.

21st. April.

Nothing has happened for four days. I went to Morning Service as I had been told to but there was no service taking place. Rev. Tarō continues to come but says absolutely nothing. He simply helps me clean up, brings my meals and then departs and that is all I see of anyone during the whole day. I wonder what I should do?

22nd. April.

I decided that to do nothing was definitely wrong so got up at about two o'clock this morning and went to the Ceremony Hall. I know that it is probably wrong to do such a thing but I am desperate. Rev. Tarō has already shown me where the Meditation Hall is so, finding nothing in the Ceremony Hall, I went there instead. I could hear steady breathing coming from inside it and peeped round the curtain. All the junior trainees were sound asleep upon their seats, wrapped up in large quilts. Outside the Meditation Hall there are a set of seats also so I settled down on one and dozed a little to wait and see what would happen. At about a quarter past three someone came running round with a bell and I heard hurried sounds of dressing in the Meditation Hall itself as the lights flashed on. I shook myself, sat up and got into the meditation position. Several trainees came to enter the hall (presumably they sleep elsewhere) and some

looked very startled at seeing me sitting outside. However, they said nothing, passed me and went in. I continued to sit. Several bells rang and some wooden clappers were struck. I had no idea what they indicated so just continued to sit where I was. Presently Rev. Tarō came out of the hall, gave me a strange look and settled down beside me. I carefully followed everything he was doing and, as the next bell sounded, turned to face the wall when he did. After what seemed to be a period of about an hour a wooden block was struck and Rev. Tarō placed his kesa on his head and recited a verse before putting it on. I put mine on my head too but could make nothing of what was being said. The bell then rang again and all the trainees came pouring out of the hall in procession to the Ceremony Hall. Rev. Tarō did not seem to know quite what to do so I charged off behind the others and he, looking really worried, followed me.

We got to the Ceremony Hall and everyone sat down. I did not know where to sit so sat down in the first available place. Zenji Sama entered and I saw his eyes kindle with joy when he spotted me. Rev. Ichirō came up to me and said, “You cannot sit here. You are not permitted to.”

“Where can I sit then?” I asked.

“I do not know. There is no place for you in this temple.”

I thought he was speaking literally but decided to answer him from a religious angle anyway.

“In the line of the Buddhas there is room for everything.”

“Not in this hall,” he replied.

A young trainee touched him respectfully upon the sleeve and waved in the direction of Zenji Sama. Rev. Ichirō went over to speak to him. When he came back he pointed to a spot on the floor behind all the other trainees and not really in the hall at all.

“You may sit there,” he said stiffly and swept away.

I settled down to do everything that the others did and thoroughly enjoyed the service. Later I asked Rev. Tarō to teach me the Scriptures that were being recited.

“I must ask permission,” he said.

When I saw him later I asked again.

“Rev. Ichirō will be bringing you something to learn them from,” he said.

“But Rev. Masao said that I was to come and see him in a week’s time from when I last saw him and recite them to him,” I said.

“Rev. Masao and Rev. Ichirō not such good friends,” said Rev. Tarō. “Not good idea to press matter.”

Rev. Ichirō arrived sometime later bringing with him a romanised copy of the Hannyashingyō (Scripture of Great Wisdom) and the list of the names of the Patriarchs which, he told me, is recited at every Morning Service.

“Learn these thoroughly,” he said, “and I am to tell you that you may sit outside the Meditation Hall every morning from now on, if you wish, and come to Morning Service also; however, it is at a different time every day.”

“Thank you,” I said. “How shall I know at what time it starts?”

“We cannot send someone all the way out into the garden with a bell,” he said. “Rev. Tarō will have to come for you each morning.”

Rev. Tarō winced but said nothing.

“When shall I be admitted to the Meditation Hall properly?”

He glared at me. “It is up to Zenji Sama,” he snapped, “If he wishes to break the rules here presumably he can whenever he wishes. In Japan women are slow; you must understand this. You are in Japan now.”

“Maybe Japanese women are slow,” I countered, “but, whether I am in Japan or not, and although my head is shaved as yours is, the skull, and the brain inside it, are still British and are going to behave like it.”

“How can a woman ever do what a man does?”

“According to the Shushōgi even a little girl of seven can be the celebrant at Morning Service if she is sincere in what she is doing. Dōgen Zenji says so and he meant it. He also says that there is complete equality of the sexes in Zen.”

“Do you dare to teach me the Scriptures?”

“No, simply to remind you of them.”

He paused. "Can you *really* put up with what these young men do here?" he asked.

"I can put up with anything that anyone can put up with anywhere," I said, "whether it be man, woman or animal." And then I stopped, appalled at what I had just said.

"We will see," he said and left me.

15th. May.

Absolutely no movement one way or the other with regard to my entering the actual community. Rev. Tarō tells me that they are quarrelling again over my being here and Zenji Sama is doing the equivalent of slapping their heads in order to make them agree with his wishes. Maybe I should not have come.

The rainy season began to-day, somewhat early according to Rev. Tarō, and the weather is becoming incredibly hot and sticky. In addition to this mosquitos are beginning to be something of a nuisance. Rev. Tarō says that mosquitos do not bite before the first of July which is the date that mosquito-nets are issued to the community. If this is true, I wonder why I am covered with bites at the moment?!? It is only May.

17th. May.

The rain is pouring into the tea house and there is no dry spot anywhere for me to put my bed. I asked Rev. Tarō if there was somewhere else I could stay for the time being but he merely repeated that there was no room for me in the temple. I also asked him if he could get me a black robe, so that I do not always have to wear this yellow one, and gave him five thousand yen with which to purchase one. He says he must ask Rev. Ichirō first.

18th. May.

I did not go to the Meditation Hall or Morning Service to-day. I was just too fed up with having to sit in a corner all night with nowhere to sleep because of the rain and a temperature which is gradually rising from a cold I now have as a result of being constantly wet. Rev. Ichirō arrived immediately after Morning Service, looking very worried, to know what had

happened. I have not seen Rev. Tarō at the time of meditation for some days now.

“Is there any place I can move to until the rain stops?” I asked Rev. Ichirō as best I could between sneezes.

“No,” he replied, “but I will get you a doctor.”

About half an hour later, a certain professor of medicine, of whom I knew and who was a friend of several people I knew in Malaysia, arrived. He spoke excellent English and had been amongst those who had welcomed me on my arrival at Yokohama. He looked me over carefully and decided that I must be in a warm, dry place. To him I told all my troubles concerning housing and my desire to enter the Meditation Hall.

“Will you speak to Zenji Sama for me?” I asked, “I know you have his ear and you can get to him without being stopped by anyone here. I have made several attempts to get to him but have been stopped before I have set foot outside the garden. There is no point in my staying here if I am not to be taught anything and I am certain that he is as anxious to get to me as I am to him.”

He looked concerned. “It may not be good for me to go against the wishes of the officers here,” he said, “they are very powerful. If they found out what I had done they may make life very difficult for me. This is a royal temple and the officers carry a lot of influence in high places.”

“If you do not help me then I had best leave,” I said, “for I have no-one else to turn to.”

“I will see what I can do,” he said as he left me.

This evening I was visited by a very small priest, the newest of all the officers here, having arrived only five days before I did. He introduced himself as Rev. Hajime and said very slowly, “I no speak English but can write.”

He had a young trainee with him who had brought a pad and pencil and I poured out, on paper, all that had happened to me, what I had been trying to do and how I thought it was best to leave since no-one would attempt to help me. He read it slowly then wrote, “I will arrange.” He rose and left the room together with the young trainee.

19th. May.

This morning Rev. Hajime came back again with two other officers and all three sat and looked at me as if I were an interesting specimen in a cage. One handed me a box of cakes and then departed. I was still in bed for the cold had got much worse.

An hour later five trainees arrived and I and my things were swept out of the tea house and taken to the main temple where we were installed in a large reception room. I and my belongings and bed make a pathetic dot in one corner; but at least it is dry.

21st. May.

Rev. Ichirō came to see me this morning. My cold is almost better and he said that I am to go to N.H.K. (the Tokyo television network) to make an appearance. I refused.

“You will go or you will leave this temple,” he said.

“That is fine by me,” I replied.

He left me and five minutes later three or four trainees arrived, picked up all my things and dumped them back in the tea house. I went with them. Rev. Tarō came too, looking glum.

“Please do it,” he begged.

“Not unless I know that Zenji Sama himself specifically wants it,” I replied. Rev. Tarō disappeared and came back, half an hour later, with a piece of paper on which was written one word in English beside Zenji Sama’s seal. The word was, “Please.”

Rev. Ichirō came in a few minutes later and I agreed to do the show. He said that he had borrowed a black robe for me for the purpose and helped me dress. At the studio he decided that my robes were not flashy enough for the producer and insisted on my using his. On the way back I felt so much as if I had been turned into an actor for publicity reasons that I just could not bring myself to speak to him at all.³

31st. May.

Still in the tea house. It seems that absolutely nothing is being done and the rain is still pouring in.

1st. June.

After Morning Service I heard a great noise in the garden and saw the thirty officers bearing down on the tea house, headed by a very small one, quite the tiniest man I have ever seen. They came to the door and crowded in.

“The officers have come to welcome you to the temple,” said Rev. Ichirō who was with them. “This is the *new* director, Rev. Shizuo, who wishes to welcome you in their name.”

The tiny little priest bowed to me delightedly with a roguish smile. Through Rev. Tarō he told me that he wanted me to come and meditate in the Meditation Hall from to-morrow.

They all drank tea and, as soon as they had gone, my professor friend turned up.

“I talked to Zenji Sama yesterday,” he said. “It was the first time I could get to him without others suspecting that I was going on your behalf. He is very sorry for what is happening but asks that you bear with him in his difficulties. He sent you this flower. Always, when you see it, know that he is thinking of you.” He handed me a lily, got up and left the room. To-morrow, it seems, I am to enter the Meditation Hall and I have to learn much before it. I am overjoyed.

2nd. June.

I have been moved into the main temple buildings again. Late last evening three young trainees arrived and moved all my things into a large room in the building furthest away from the Meditation Hall where, Rev. Tarō tells me, they put all those trainees which they feel sure will not make it. Oddly enough Rev. Hajime lives there too along with the two others which he brought to see me when I was ill. I suspect it is he who has made these arrangements. At any rate what people think of this particular house does not matter very much to me since it is both warm and dry *and* among the main temple buildings so I shall know what is going on.

This morning, at about two-thirty a.m., someone ringing a bell furiously ran along the corridors round the house and I got up hurriedly, washed and made my way to the Meditation Hall.

I sat outside it, as I had been instructed, meditated in my usual place and then went to Morning Service. After this I was given a stick of incense and told to stand outside the Meditation Hall door. To my horror I noticed a large number of people, carrying cameras and movie lights, coming down the corridor towards the Meditation Hall, led by Rev. Ichirō, and looked at the priest who was beside me for an explanation but he looked steadfastly into the distance. It was at about this time that I also noticed a young and slender trainee who had not gone into the Meditation Hall with the others and who seemed to be hovering not very far from me. Rev. Ichirō and his cameramen arrived outside the Meditation Hall and some came up to me, pushing their cameras into my face. I retaliated by turning away from them. This made them quite angry and one stepped inside the hall in order to try and photograph me from there. The priest who was standing with me was annoyed at this and turned to Rev. Ichirō who told him to be silent. It was then that the other young trainee, who I had seen hovering, came up and touched Rev. Ichirō on the sleeve. He said one word, "No." Rev. Ichirō turned, glaring at him, and then seemed to freeze on the spot. I was not to find out until later in the day why this young man had such power over him. At all events the reporters were relegated to the back of the corridor and not allowed either near my face or the door of the Meditation Hall.

The disciplinarian called my name and announced that I was to be formally admitted to the Meditation Hall; I, and the young priest with me, went in together. I offered my stick of incense at the altar and went to bow at the main altar. I then walked round the hall in greeting to all the trainees there before bowing to my own seat which was exactly opposite that of Zenji Sama himself. I have been put there, I was told later, since he wants to watch over me in person. When the ceremony was over Rev. Ichirō whisked me off to his room along with the reporters. Whilst he gave them tea, Rev. Tarō handed me a scruffy piece of paper on which was scrawled what seemed to be a daily time-table.

“Rev. Ichirō says that you are to memorise this so that, when the reporters ask you what your daily schedule is, you can tell them,” he said, trying not to look at me as he said it.

I scrutinised the piece of paper and stared at him; then I said, “But this is not my daily schedule and Rev. Ichirō knows it. This is a bunch of lies.”

He hung his head and looked miserable. “Please do not make life more difficult for me than it is,” he pleaded, “just say it. Otherwise I much beaten, on Rev. Ichirō’s order, in morning.”

“That is blackmail,” I said.

He looked up, worried. “What is ‘blackmail?’” he asked.

By now Rev. Ichirō had finished making his tea and was regaling the reporters with tales of my exploits. He turned to me. “Now tell the reporters what they want to hear,” he said. I stared at him, unbelieving. They started questioning me—about my private life, my love life, anything and everything that was useless or sensational. I refused to give them the answers they wanted to hear; if they beat up Rev. Tarō I cannot help it. When it came to the schedule I said that one had not been set up for me but that I hoped to talk about the matter with Zenji Sama. Rev. Ichirō, showing signs of fury which was ill suppressed, concluded the interview in a hurry and then turned to me.

“If you want to stay in this temple you will do things my way,” he hissed between thin lips.

“I will do nothing that my conscience will not permit me to do,” I replied, “and no power here or elsewhere will force me to.”

“Get out,” the hiss had grown more menacing.

I rose, bowed and left the room with Rev. Tarō looking terrified beside me.

“What is ‘blackmail?’” he pleaded when we were outside the room.

“Look it up,” I snapped and left him.

On the way to my room I again met the young trainee who had had such an effect on Rev. Ichirō. He handed me a lily of the same sort that the professor had brought me, bowed and departed. I turned it round in my hand, looking at it carefully. It was a white lily. I continued on my way, thinking over what had

happened rather miserably, for Rev. Ichirō had taken all the joy out of my entry into the Meditation Hall, when something seemed to happen to the flower. It was as if it was trying to tell me to do something. “Whenever you see it know that Zenji Sama is thinking of you.” The professor’s words ran through my mind. I turned round and, regardless of Rev. Tarō’s cries of fright, for he was following me, hurried off in the direction of the Chief Abbot’s (Zenji Sama’s) house with Rev. Tarō hard at my heels. On arrival at the house I was presented with a problem: how to get in without being caught by his staff. I turned aside from the door and made for the garden gate which brought a squeak of fright from Rev. Tarō. Opening the gate I walked into the garden with Rev. Tarō trying to pull me back. I shook him off. In the garden stood Zenji Sama, feeding his goldfish. He turned and smiled at me as I came up and bowed to him: I handed him the flower and his smile broadened. He motioned to Rev. Tarō to come forward but the latter was so terrified that he was grovelling on the ground. The old man stooped and touched him gently and he stood up very shakily. Zenji Sama spoke to him and then Rev. Tarō turned to me.

“Zenji Sama says you understood the meaning of his sending the flower,” he said, his voice squeaking with fright. “He wants you to have tea with him and to talk to you. He wants to know what happened at your entry and if you are happy about it.”

We entered the house and the staff members who were there looked up in some surprise and annoyance at seeing me with Zenji Sama but I decided to take no notice of them. We sat down in the abbot’s room and tea was brought. Through Rev. Tarō I told Zenji Sama everything that had happened to me during the ceremony but I got the feeling that Rev. Tarō was not translating what I was saying and told him so. He replied that he dare not tell Zenji Sama what Rev. Ichirō had done because Rev. Ichirō would treat him, Rev. Tarō, terribly if he knew he had told the truth of what had happened. The frustration was unbelievable so I took out a piece of paper and wrote, as best I could, what had happened and handed it to Zenji Sama. I had got to the state when I was beyond caring what happened to

anyone, myself included. Zenji Sama read it slowly and then looked at me with deep kindness and concern; he then turned the same glance on Rev. Tarō.

“Do not ever be afraid to tell me the truth,” he said, “I will protect both of you. Do not fear. Whenever I want to see you I will send you a flower. When the season changes I will send you a different one. Always come. It may be difficult to get to me but, if you truly want to, you will find a way as you have today. I suspected there may be trouble with reporters which is why I sent Rev. Shirō, my personal attendant, to be present at your entrance ceremony. Do not ever be afraid of telling me these things otherwise I cannot help or teach you. I will see you in the Meditation Hall in the morning.”

Rev. Tarō and I bowed and left the room. On leaving the garden, for we went out by the same route, he touched me on the arm and pointed to a circuitous path in the temple grounds. “Safer we go back that way,” he said, “in case we meet Rev. Ichirō. I much honoured by Zenji Sama to-day, many thanks to you. I show you many secret ways to reach this house since Zenji Sama desire it. You be very careful? If his staff see you they tell Rev. Ichirō and that very dangerous for me. I now in very dangerous position; as if split in two? You understand? I must be loyal to Rev. Ichirō who give me order to watch you and to Zenji Sama who say he protect me from Rev. Ichirō. Very difficult; I see much more of Rev. Ichirō than Zenji Sama; in many ways Rev. Ichirō more dangerous.”

“Don’t you mean split in three?” I asked. “What about your loyalty to me as a friend?”

“You only woman; no loyalty needed to woman,” was his reply.

“In that case good-bye,” I said, “I need neither you nor Rev. Ichirō and, if this continues much longer, I shall not need Zenji Sama either.”

I hurried off to my room leaving him standing there wondering what he had said wrong. It is obvious that I must learn to speak Japanese as quickly as possible and rely upon absolutely no-one other than myself.

3rd. June.

Rev. Ichirō came for me this morning to say that Zenji Sama wanted to officially receive me as his personal, monastic disciple and was doing so even against the wishes of all the officers of the temple. I asked Rev. Hajime if this was true and he said that Rev. Ichirō was a liar since it had been the express wish of *all* the officers that Zenji Sama *should* so receive me. My mind reels with the contradictory statements that these people come out with. One thing I know for certain; preconceived notions of the peace and quiet of a monastery are so much tommy-rot; in many ways the world outside seems to be much more honest. At least it is evil and knows it; here they are pretending to be good and are evil.^{4,8} I must stop this; if I think this way I shall get nowhere. I must stop my head from spinning.

4th. June.

No sleep from worrying about the seeming evil so sent a lily to Zenji Sama by the simple expedient of placing it on his front-door-step before meditation where he must see it when leaving his house to go to the hall. I then made my way to his house via the garden as soon as Morning Service was over. He was waiting for me in the garden, looking concerned. I had written down what I wanted to ask him and handed him the paper. I was appalled at what I had written but something in me just did not care any longer. It said quite simply, "I hear that all the officers here are against my becoming your disciple. Is this true?"

He turned the paper over in his hand slowly, and then wrote, "Who said this?"

"I do not want to tell you," I wrote back. He smiled and put the paper in his sleeve. Then he took it out again and wrote, "I shall receive you at eleven o'clock this morning. I never do anything I do not want to do." I bowed to him and left the garden.

At about ten-thirty Rev. Ichirō arrived with Rev. Tarō and told me to get ready for the ceremony. Whilst I was putting on my robes he was constantly muttering about too much honour being given to a foreigner and how jealous it was making all the other trainees.⁹ Finally I was dressed to his satisfaction and we



*The author with the Very Reverend Kohō Keidō Chisan Zenji
after the ceremony of becoming his official, personal disciple.*

went off to Zenji Sama's house. In Zenji Sama's private room were assembled a large number of elderly ladies. The ceremony was very simple and beautiful; I recognised it as being, in part, the same as the one I had undergone in Malaysia but much more intimate since it was not attended by a lot of newspapermen. When it was over Zenji Sama again wanted me to sit beside him for a photograph. We drank tea and I returned to my room with Rev. Ichirō still grousing at my side about jealousy on the part of the others.⁹ He stayed to lunch in the house in which I was living and kept up a conversation along the same lines all through the meal which was attended by the trainees who lived there as well as Rev. Hajime and the other two officers.⁹ As he spoke I saw ideas being put into their minds that had not been there before and I felt sure he was laying a foundation of mistrust against foreigners and women in particular.⁹ When he had gone Rev. Tarō said to me, "Rev. Ichirō really does not like you at all. He is determined to turn as many people against you as possible. I very worried. Now you will have no friend in this

house except, perhaps, Rev. Hajime. Very difficult for you; you cannot live in house if all people against you.”

“Why does he hate foreigners so?” I asked.⁹

“I think he hates you most for being woman,” he replied, “he himself not married. I think that is reason.”

“Do you think the other trainees here will take *much* notice of what he has said?” I asked.⁹

“It will really be up to other officers in this house,” he replied, “trainee always say ‘yes’ to officer even if he is wrong. This way he can live in peace and learn to live in Japanese world too. Any other way is unsafe. You very different; you not care if you make enemy or not so long as you tell what you think is truth; I not sure whether this is very courageous or very stupid; but I very like. I hope you win. I think Rev. Hajime like too; he very interesting man. Rev. Ichirō very powerful; some officers very frightened of him; not Rev. Masao, though, so he very like you. He in charge of beating in Meditation Hall so you reasonably safe there at least. Only you lack personal friends, I think.”

“Surely a monastery should be above cliques?” I said.

“What is ‘clique?’” he asked. I groaned in spirit. “Please, later,” I said. “I am very tired.”

He left me saying he would look it up.

5th. June.

My first Sesshin has come and the sitting is pure hell. It is, of course, impossible to move a muscle without getting oneself beaten and my back now looks like a mass of black and blue streaks. To make matters worse it has begun to break out in boils and, as the beating continues, the boils are bursting. The wall seems to writhe in front of my eyes as I sit and the floor seems to be coming up to hit me in the face as I walk. When bedtime comes I fall on the ground like a log and stay there until the bell goes at two a.m. I cannot eat for they eat so fast in the Meditation Hall that I am still chewing one mouthful when they have finished eating the last scrap in their bowls. The lectures drone on and on. The only thing that keeps me here is the feeling that Zenji Sama is sitting behind me on the opposite side

of the aisle. Somehow I feel that every time I am about to give up he enters into my spirit and holds it up. Every time the *kyosaku* is carried by I now jump in terror.

6th. June.

This morning, as the *kyosaku* was carried by, I jumped so much that the *tan* shook. And then I heard a voice in my ear; I could have sworn it said the words in English but I know that that cannot be for *Zenji Sama* does not speak any and I do not know how I heard them for he had not left his place. The words were, "Do not fear, just breathe naturally."¹⁰ Instantly I was flooded with a tremendous peace and the whole morning passed as if in a miraculous dream. This is surely the peace that comes to a person when he gives up the struggle at the moment of death.

As I went back to my room to rest at lunch-time I looked out of the windows of the long corridor and was startled by a strange sight. All the trees in the garden were shimmering with light, gleaming in a thousand different colours.¹¹ Something inside me wanted to bow but I could not tell what, so I bowed anyway. It was just too wonderful. Now, whenever I look out of the window, I seem to see it still.

7th. June.

To-day, the next to last day of *Sesshin*, something even stranger than what happened yesterday took place. My legs have got to a semi-crippled state from the constant sitting and I have to help myself along when I walk by holding on to the wall. I had just got to my room for the usual three-quarters-of-an-hour rest that always comes after lunch during *Sesshin* when the room seemed to disappear. Instead of being in my room I found myself in a long country lane and some sixth sense told me that the time was many centuries before this one. I was making my way to a large temple that stood on a far-away hill. There was absolutely no-one around and no sign of any sort of life on the road; just me, the long road, the hill and the temple. After what appeared to be an endless walk I arrived at the foot of the hill up which I hurried, young and eager. Halfway up the

hill (it was more of a mountain than a hill) were the main temple buildings and I waited in a long, arched corridor, overlooking the hillside, for someone to come to me. Presently a priest, whose face I could not see since it was hidden in the shadow of a *tatte-mōsu* (high hat worn by an abbot) of some kind of brown material, came up to me and began to abuse me, trying to push me over the parapet. I struggled with him, fighting, as it were, for my life. At that moment a very old priest, whose face was similarly hidden but whose robes were black instead of brown, came on the scene. He put a protecting arm around me and held me away from the other priest. Nothing was said; the brown priest bowed and left us. The corridor and black priest blurred before my eyes and, as I looked again, I saw that I was standing just inside the doorway of my room. I was definitely not asleep; yet it had been a sort of dream—I think.¹² I tottered to the one cushion that I had been given and sat down on it. There I fell asleep immediately only to be awakened, I have no idea when, later on by Rev. Tarō who told me that I would miss meditation if I did not hurry. I staggered to my feet and went to the Meditation Hall. The afternoon and evening flew by; the wall had taken on a glazed appearance, a sort of sheen. At bedtime I fell asleep immediately to awaken an hour later to write this.

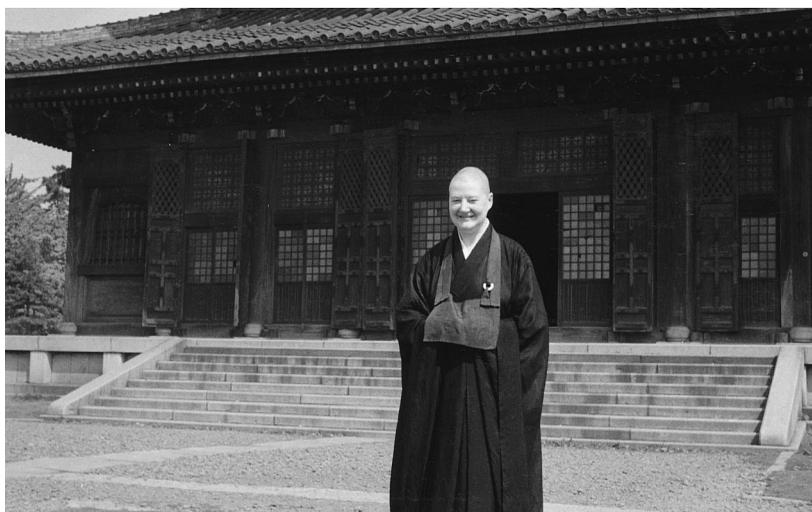
8th. June.

It was morning.¹³ I was back in the same temple on the hill except that the picture of it was even clearer than it had been at lunch-time. The old black priest was sitting in meditation opposite me, his face in deep shadow. He was still, silent, quiet. Instinctively I knew that he was sitting inside me and that he did not care if I lived or died for *he* would always be. My legs could drop off, my body turn to stone but he would sit still and quiet, neither calm nor uncalm. And yet he was not inside me; he was there with me when I needed him. I neither wanted to grasp at him nor push him away. What mattered did not matter; what did not matter The bell for morning meditation rushed by my door and I somehow got to my feet, dressed and went to the Meditation Hall for the last day of Sesshin.

The beating got even worse this morning. Every hour we were all beaten by at least four different people so that I lost count of the number of times and no longer cared anyway. Whatever it was that was sitting with me—or inside me—or was me sat like iron and sat and sat and sat As they came around to do the beating I bowed with the *kyosaku* and it bowed back—I think. I must tell someone about what is happening to me; I cannot go on doing this without knowing what is happening—but I don't care what is happening—there is only sitting quiet and still. We went on sitting late and then *Sesshin* was over and *Rev. Tarō* came and slapped me on the shoulder saying he did not believe a woman could have done it and I leaped in the air and yelled as he hit the bruises and he said he was sorry and took me to a feast that had been prepared by some of the younger trainees and we ate

9th. June.

I woke up on the floor with half a dozen other people asleep all round me. We must have dozed off at the meal-table. I struggled to my feet and made my way back to my room with no idea of what time it was until I got there; it was twelve noon. I have slept the clock round. I think it is the 9th. but I am not quite sure; anyway it just does not matter. The young trainees in my house are very scared of being friendly as a result of *Rev. Ichirō*. I must talk to *Rev. Hajime* about it and see what can be done; what has happened to me is strange and I just do not understand it but I must accept it. So many things seem to have disappeared. I know when it is the first and fifteenth of the month since that is when we get beaten and I have tea with *Zenji Sama*; and I know when a day has a four or a nine in it since that is when they shave my head he who would gain his life must lose it that is Christian I think I have lost something and gained something I know not what life continues I sit.



The author in front of the Butsuden (Main Hall) at Dai Hon Zan Sōjiji.

1st. July.

I have been in the actual temple buildings now for over a month. It is so much better than being in the tea house which is strictly for visitors and nothing more. It is disturbing to think that, after coming twelve thousand miles, there should have been so much argument as to whether or not I ought to be here at all. I cannot help thinking that this particular problem should have been settled before I came over since it was Zenji Sama himself who invited me.

Thanks to the help of the three seniors in charge of this particular part of the temple I have been admitted to the Meditation Hall but it seems that there are still many people here who are convinced that I should never have been let past the gate. Perhaps this will change with time. How unreal everything sometimes becomes. This is a Zen monastery and this country is Japan. In the world I was a professional musician; in Malaysia I was Rev. Sumitra, the lecturer; Rev. Tsuyu to the Chinese abbot and here, Hō Un Ji Yu, Zenji Sama's disciple, half-accepted by some and heartily detested for being a woman and a foreigner by others. Rev. Ichirō says I am myself without hair and decorations. The world seems upside down and so do

I. My brain rocks and there is no-one I can talk to except Rev. Ichirō, who never comes at all, and Rev. Hajime who finally got me in here and with whom I can communicate on paper. The only thing I can possibly do in order to learn anything is to accept, in blind faith, everything that is happening to me, believing that it is all for my good, whatever it may be.¹⁴ If I do anything else then I shall always be saying that this person is good or that one is bad; I am here to get beyond the opposites; I must stop discriminating; whatever happens, whether they like foreigners or not, I must see what they do as being intrinsically good at all times, even when it works against me. If I do not then indeed I must surely go mad. I do not understand what has happened to me since Sesshin—no-one can tell me because they cannot speak English. I seem to sit still in transient darkness. The place I found during Sesshin has faded.

8th. July.

Rev. Minoru had a heart attack the day before yesterday and we had a farewell party for him last night before he went home to his own temple for a rest. Yesterday I found myself turned out of my room without an explanation, my things being dumped unceremoniously in the passage outside it whilst a bunch of people moved in leaving me with nowhere to go. I wrote a note to Rev. Hajime who inquired about what was happening and then told me that there had been a breakdown in communication somewhere. The people who had moved in had been promised the room a long time ago and no-one had thought to find another place for them when it was given to me. He suggested that he move into Rev. Minoru's room, which is now empty, and give me his since no-one will dare to try to move him out of Rev. Minoru's. Since I shall be occupying his, Rev. Hajime's, no-one can throw me out either. I moved in this morning. I have asked Rev. Hajime if he can teach me since Rev. Ichirō, whom Zenji Sama told to do it when he personally was too busy, seems never to have any spare time; Rev. Hajime says he must think about it.

9th. July.

This morning Rev. Hajime said to me, “Can you catch me?” Our conversation was, as always, on paper.

We had just come back from Morning Service and meditation and he was making tea for both of us in his room. For a moment I thought he was speaking in a literal sense and then something gave me pause.

“Yes,” I said, “I most certainly can.”

He chuckled softly. “We will see,” he said, “but first I must make sure you have a good translation of the Sandōkai and Hōkyōzammai.”

“I have a translation of them,” I said, “but it is in very bad English and I get the feeling that whoever made it did not particularly understand it.”

“Show it to me.”

I gave him the small book; he studied it for some time and then said, “This is wrong. The first two lines are most important and they *should* read ‘now you have so guard well.’ You do not have ‘anything’ or ‘nothing’ as such; you have, that is sufficient.”

“Then there is no point in my being here,” I said.

“Right. Why did you come?”

“To know that I did not need to.”

There was hesitation in my voice and he caught it. “When you know that you did not need to you will know that you ‘have’; and yet you will still ‘need to’. For many years Dōgen Zenji’s comment, ‘Always we must be *disturbed* by the Truth’, has worried me.”

The bell rang for breakfast and we had to leave it there. We did not get a further chance for discussion all day since he had to go to Yokohama to give a lecture.

10th. July.

Rev. Hajime’s comment about being able to catch him exercised my mind considerably during the night. Long before the bell went some sixth sense warned me to keep awake and it was well that I did. At about two a.m. I heard an imperceptibly soft sound which the sixth sense in me said was Rev. Hajime getting

up although it was against the rules to get up before the rising bell. I dressed quickly and silently and, flinging the rules to the four winds in my own mind, hastened to the door of his room with a lighted stick of incense; as he opened his door, fully dressed for meditation, he found me kneeling outside it as any good *jiisha* (assistant) of any master would. He chuckled softly. "Come in," he said. His bed was still on the floor. I put the incense stick in the bowl on his private altar and quietly put his bed away, then put on the kettle for tea. He watched me, smiling softly, and put tea in the teapot.

"To-day it was easy," he said, as we drank our tea, "it will not always be so."¹⁵

11th. July.

Am almost wandering about in my sleep as a result of staying one step ahead of Rev. Hajime but it was worth it. He has been making it progressively earlier and earlier each night until last evening I simply camped outside his room intending to meditate all night with the incense ready beside me so that at any moment I could be there before him. I have had less than an hour's sleep each night during the last week. He came out of his room at a little after eleven last night and told me to go to bed since he was going to do the same thing. I stayed up, however, feeling that he would depart whilst I slept. At a little after one o'clock I heard a faint movement and got the incense ready. As his door opened softly I was sitting outside the door with the incense. He called me into his room, took the incense from me, and said, "You win. After Morning Service we will talk." I went back to my room but did not sleep.

I hurried back from Morning Service whilst he was still in conference with the other officers and cleaned his room and got the tea ready. When he came in it was clean and fresh with the windows open and flowers and incense on his private altar. He sat down and looked at me for a long time.

"Can a foreigner really catch the Lord?" he asked.

“I thought Shakyamuni Buddha was born in India not Japan,” I said. “Since when have the Japanese been the descendants of the Indians?”

This made him angry.

“How dare you compare Japanese with Indians?” he roared at me in Japanese. I did not understand his words but got the idea that I had said something wrong from his face. Then his temper disappeared like a flash-flood and he grinned.

“Indians are black and we are not,” he wrote on the pad I had brought with me.

“So what?” was my response.

“How can any foreigner understand the mind of a Japanese?” he asked.

“Since Buddhism teaches that all is one, why shouldn’t a foreigner understand a Japanese mind?” I countered.

His temper flared up again. “Do you presume to teach me Buddhism?”

“If telling you such things is presuming to teach you Buddhism it would seem that such a presumption is necessary.” I was getting slightly annoyed.⁵

He dissolved into a grin. “Let us not quarrel. You have beaten me fairly in the first round of catching me but understand that “IT” flashes with great speed, faster than any eye can see. I have to be sure that you, a woman and a foreigner, are worthy of my attention.”

“Thanks very much,” I had to watch myself for my sarcasm was beginning to show.⁵ He took this for acquiescence in his opinions, however, for he produced a book and proceeded to translate certain passages from it into atrocious English. I studied them, carefully corrected the English, and gave them back to him. For a moment I saw anger show in him again and then he slowly and carefully went through my corrections. “Your English is fluent,” he said.

“It is only my native language.”

He looked at me and saw that I was still bristling slightly;⁵ he relaxed.

“We must not start off on the wrong side of the fence,” he said. “Let us start again.”

“Because I am a woman and a foreigner I have all the misfortunes of both senior and junior trainees and none of the advantages,” I said. “Do you think it would be possible for me to go to a women’s monastery soon?”¹⁶

“Zenji Sama is your master; you are, in many ways, his favourite disciple. It is doubtful if he will let you go. He sees you on the first and fifteenth of every month at his private senior’s tea-party. You are deeply honoured.”

“Cannot I be a junior trainee like other junior trainees? It is dangerous for me to receive such favours from Zenji Sama. As long as they come my way I shall be accepted by neither seniors nor juniors and you know it.”

“Does such a thing matter to you? It should not.”

“Yes, it does. Whenever the juniors have a dirty or hard job they want done they send for me; when the seniors have one they do the same thing. If I were an ordinary trainee I would not constantly have the problem of being regarded as Zenji Sama’s favourite. I know that I am new here but there are a lot of others who are newer than I am. I am a great believer in everybody starting at the bottom but I have always disagreed with the idea of staying there. Unless I can become an ordinary trainee like everyone else I see no point in being here.”¹⁶

“Dōgen Zenji was in the same position as you for five years in Tendōzan. He said the same things you have just said and finally wrote to the Emperor of China to ask him to do something about the fact that, because he was a foreigner, he was always put last in everything. It is something with which you must bear if you would study in the East.”

“I seem to remember that Dōgen Zenji’s letter got answered at the third try and the Emperor made a ruling that everyone was to go up the ranks equally according to the time at which he entered the temple. Maybe I should write to the Emperor of Japan.”

“Why don’t you?”

“Would the temple authorities here take notice of his answer, should he give one?”

“They might but I am not sure.”

The bell went for breakfast and we left the room. I must remember my resolve to take everything that happens as being for my good. I must not allow myself to be upset by silly, chauvinistic behaviour.

15th. July.

This morning I said to Rev. Hajime, “We are born men who can become Bodhisattvas and then Buddhas. What happens to us after that?”

“Nothing happens,” he replied.

“Do we continue to exist or do we cease to exist?”

“Why do you think about such useless things?” was his unexpected answer.

“You say it is useless because you do not know the answer any more than I do!” I said.

“Wrong. ‘Not life because not death.’ We must throw away such thoughts. You are seeing everything in this life as if through coloured glass, including Buddhism. We are ourselves.” As always, his answers were written.

“There are no answers to real questions so what is the use of asking questions?” I asked.

“Every answer is real,” he replied.

“Rev. Ichirō asked me if anything happened during Sesshin. I told him that the only noteworthy event was that everyone ate so fast that I was starving hungry and, as a result, had visions of an apple pie. He then threatened to give me thirty strokes with his kyosaku. But he did not tell me how to overcome the difficulty. Can you?” I asked.

“I can’t. Let the apple pie continue,” he said. I started to make tea.

16th. July.

This morning I wrote the following, “In Zen there is no goal—what do we gain? If we gain nothing why study Zen? If

we gain something then it is not Zen. As long as we want or do not want something we are not free from desire so to study Zen is wrong. The Scripture of Great Wisdom says, 'There is no attainment and no non-attainment.' I know what your answer will be, 'Just go on training,' but that doesn't help—I want the answer now."

"You are always thinking about external problems. Even when you think they are inside, still they are out. It is wrong to try to embrace infinity within limits. We are always apt to think of the teaching through our knowledge of books. Apart from such knowledge, we must understand for ourselves. We can at once directly become Buddha with this dirty body or we can become thieves and murderers. Why? Because we can practice Zazen; because we are enlightened. To sit is enlightenment itself. Dōgen said, 'Training and enlightenment are one.'" He sat back and looked at me.

"I do not know what I am looking for—I do not even know if I am looking for anything. Are all enlightened—are all Buddha? If so, simply by doing Zazen and sitting, I am a Buddha and so is every trainee here. Is what is wrong with me the fact that you are certain of your enlightenment and I am not certain of mine?" I wrote.

"You are thinking of a quiet Buddha, not a working one. Buddha is working through our hands and feet. Can a person who is behaving badly be a Buddha? Buddha is there when we do a thing with our right will, uncoloured by an ordinary point of view such as looking for money and position. To do right and not to do evil—this is Buddhism. There is no difficulty, nothing special."

"Please teach me how to accept all things unquestioningly—I do not care what you do with me in order to do it."

"Acceptance by body is endless training. In this sense there is no enlightenment, only training. There is no desire to get enlightenment; only endless training by body," he answered. "Others think that this must be considered from many sides, but we should go on without thinking anything. That is the true way through which Buddhahood can be represented in the world. Buddhism is not a thought or 'ism' or feeling; it must be a fact."

“If a woman shaves her head and becomes a trainee, may she return to the world again and grow her hair or is this wrong?” I asked.

“Not wrong. No-one can disturb her,” he replied, “But if she realises the truth completely she will not turn back.”

“The reason why our type of Zen is thought so little of in the West is because it is believed to be easy whilst other forms are hard and difficult. Europeans like hardness and strict discipline—Americans like everything to be easy. Is our form so easy?” I asked.

“It is never easy. What are they looking for outside of the actual world?” he asked.

I heard the bell and had to leave the room.

One of the three seniors in this house is always trying to give information on how to sit properly. He is very small and old but seems to be greatly respected as a lecturer, representing the temple on important occasions. This morning he came to my room together with Rev. Hajime. Rev. Hajime introduced him as Rev. Sansaburo. He immediately wanted to know how I was doing with regard to my meditation. As always, we conversed on paper.

“I am getting a great amount of pain in my legs,” I wrote, “and there seems no means by which I can alleviate it.”

He asked to see my cushion and studied it carefully then he said, “This cushion is the wrong size for you. Most people think that the larger they are the larger the cushion they require but this is not so. A small cushion, never more than about eight inches across, is all you need. But it must be high. You are getting the pain because you are sitting fully on a large cushion instead of sitting with just the tip of your spine on it. If you sit fully upon it your circulation will be impaired and you will have pain. If you sit only on the edge of it, so that your thigh muscles are touching nothing whatsoever, your body balance will be correct, your circulation will not be damaged and you will be able to keep your spine tucked in. By these means you will learn not only how to sit properly but also find your meditation greatly improved.”

“I thought you had to keep your spine straight,” I said.

“You do,” he replied, “but, at the waist, the spine *must* curve inwards or you will slump and become ill. We call this type of sitting ‘having a straight back’ but it is not straight. Many people put their spines partially in this position but, for meditation, they must be held as if you were standing at attention and not sitting on the floor; yet without strain. After a little this way of sitting becomes quite natural and the improvement in health is so great that you will wonder why you ever sat in any other way. But you will not find sitting in an easy chair at all comfortable after getting used to this type of sitting.”

“I sat down in the meditation position just now and have tried to hold my spine as you say but it really hurts to hold it in as much as you have just pushed it.”

He examined my back, vertebra by vertebra, tracing them with his fingers where they poked their shape against my robe. Suddenly he yelped happily, grabbed me around the neck, put his knee in my back and gave a shove against my spine. There was a resounding click and I found that I could move my spine much more freely. He continued to feel down the vertebral ‘knobs’ and did the same thing in two more places; the third one went off so loudly that I was quite startled. He then motioned for me to sit down again and once more pushed my spine right in, as far as it would go, at the waist; I was sitting on the edge of my cushion, as I thought, but the pushing on my spine resulted in my seeming to slide forward and only sit on the very tip of the cushion. Immediately I felt a great difference in the ease with which I could sit and also a great loss of weight in my back and head.

“The pain in your legs will soon disappear now,” he wrote for Rev. Hajime to translate, “now we must see about your mind.”

He wrote a lot of things on the paper but Rev. Hajime seemed to have some trouble in working out their English meaning. In the end Rev. Sansaburo grabbed the dictionary and hunted in it. Presently he found what he was looking for and handed it to me. I studied it; the word he was showing me was

‘right.’ I nodded but he was not satisfied. First he pointed to the left, shaking his head, then to the right and nodded.

“Not left,” I said, “only right?” I looked hard at Rev. Hajime.

“Not exactly,” said Rev. Hajime.

Next Rev. Sansaburo pointed at the floor, shaking his head, and then at the ceiling, nodding.

“Up, not down?” I wrote but Rev. Hajime seemed to be mentally scratching his head and gave me no help. “One way?” I asked.

“Like water,” wrote Rev. Sansaburo.

“Water only flows one way,” I said and he nodded happily and wrote, “Gyate, gyate, haragyate.”

“Gone?” I asked.

“No,” cried Rev. Hajime and then wrote, “Going, going, always going, like water.” He then added, as an afterthought, “Water bright.”

Rev. Sansaburo seemed to have become galvanised by something and uttered the first word of English I had ever heard him speak.

“Bright,” he cried; he had obviously found several words at once, “mind bright, not dull; bright, bright.”

I sat still for a few minutes, thinking hard, then I took the dictionary and found the Japanese for positive and negative and wrote the following:—

“The mind must always be bright when meditating, always positive and never negative, looking upwards and not downwards, always flowing on and clinging to nothing just as water flows.”

Rev. Hajime read it carefully and translated it into better Japanese for the other one could make no sense out of my attempt. Rev. Sansaburo nodded in obvious delight and wrote, “Good for the beginning, later nothing at all but, in the beginning, there must be brightness and flow with no holding on. When brightness becomes usual one does not notice even brightness.”

“Then what I decided a little while ago was right,” I wrote, “I must take everything that happens as for my own good, whatever it may be.”

Rev. Hajime nodded. “Always you must *believe* that everyone has good heart for you,” he wrote in his atrocious English. “If you not do so you never become peaceful at all; Buddha must be seen in all thing.”

Rev. Sansaburo was writing busily and Rev. Hajime translated, “The attitude of the mind is just as important as the position of the body when you meditate. If the mind is not right the meditation will be useless. Zen teaching is to just sit but it is more than just sitting and yet it is just sitting. Wandering thoughts are like pain in the legs; if the mind is right in its attitude, thoughts pass as traffic on a bridge and we watch from beneath the bridge without being involved in the traffic; if the attitude of the body is right the pain in the legs and other places passes in the same way and neither our body nor our mind is disturbed.”

The bell went for the hour of working in the garden and we all changed into work clothes and went out together. It has never ceased to amaze me how these old, senior priests rush out to do hard work whilst many of the juniors have to be almost forcibly dragged.⁴ I wanted to think about the conversation we had just had and, being a bit annoyed with my fellow juniors who have done very little to be friendly in the past couple of months, went off by myself to dig up weeds instead of joining the main body who were removing daisy roots in another part of the grounds.⁵ I was busy digging away when I suddenly discovered the chief disciplinarian digging beside me very quietly; *and* it seemed we were rapidly being joined by a large number of others who were digging in *my* daisy patch. Quite soon I realised that they had formed a circle round me and were digging inwards towards the centre where I was digging. Thinking that I had come to the wrong place, and not wishing to cause problems, moreover all I wanted to do right then was think, I moved off to another patch several hundred yards away. The circle converged on the centre I had vacated, one set light to the pile of daisy roots and everyone dispersed. I went back to concentrating on what we had been talking about. Then I noticed that Rev. Sansaburo and Rev. Hajime were quietly working on either side of me. Opposite, some

twenty yards away, was the chief disciplinarian and, before I knew it, a huge circle was formed of which I was part. Rev. Ichirō came up to the circle and somehow fitted himself in between Rev. Hajime and I. He busily cut away at the weeds and then whispered in my ear, “You should dig deeper.” At first I thought he was referring to the weeds and then I knew that he was not. We all arrived at the centre of the weed patch more or less simultaneously and someone thrust a box of matches into my hand. I lit the pile of weeds and they left me to tend the fire, moving on to another patch. As soon as I had got it going I left it and went off to another place, determined to think, but the circle formed around me again and Rev. Hajime whispered in my ear, “Now is the time of digging up weeds, not thinking.”

“But I can think whilst I dig,” I said. He produced pencil and paper.

“Not if you dig properly,” he wrote. “When you are digging weeds you are digging weeds; when you are thinking you are thinking. Right, not left, has many meanings. Also we train together, not alone up mountain. When one is enlightened all is enlightened. You are trying to cut enlightenment but it cannot be divided, we are one circle, not two, no-one is outside Buddhism.”

“What if enlightenment wants to be cut from me?” I asked.

“That is enlightenment’s problem, not yours. Your problem is not to cut enlightenment.”

“So I must train with others whether they want me or not,” I said.

“You are not their problem and they are not yours. That you train or not makes no difference to enlightenment but it does make a difference to you. By training yourself with others you train enlightenment and enlightenment trains you. No-one can do your training and you cannot do theirs.”

The bell rang for the end of the period. Somehow I know what he was talking about but how the heck does one put it into words?

17th. July.

Rev. Sansaburo collapsed in the Ceremony Hall and I am nursing him. It is fifteen years since I walked out of the study of medicine and into the study of music; perhaps I was a coward. Rev. Sansaburo has had a stroke and it has paralysed his left side. Now, instead of the happy little priest who has helped me so much by simply sitting beside me during meditation and putting me in the right position when I was sitting incorrectly, there is a helpless lump of flesh, half of which is useless. His wife has come and will not let him rest and, because of my poor ability at speaking Japanese, I cannot explain the danger to her. It is my fault; I should have known the language better before I came. Sitting here in the middle of the night, watching him dance with death, is like watching the tragedy of the world for the death of one man is the death of the world and the life of one man is the life of the world. The disease of one man is the disease of the world too and so Rev. Sansaburo has become all men and all men are Rev. Sansaburo. And I must sit helplessly by and watch, knowing that this must come to all men and to me. What can I do? I have come twelve-thousand miles to find the answer. There is none. Why am I here? It is all so useless. I seem to be crying the tears of the world.

19th. July.

Rev. Ichirō called me to his room this evening although I was nursing Rev. Sansaburo. I was somewhat worried at leaving my post, even for only a few moments, but knew that I dare not disobey the summons. When I got there I found Rev. Ichirō in a fury. Cringing on the floor was Rev. Tarō.

“How dare you do something as dedicated as nursing someone?” he demanded, his face dark and his eyes nothing more than slits. “You, a foreigner, know nothing of such a dedicated thing. You will leave doing this at once and return immediately to your room. I will speak to Zenji Sama in the morning; I doubt if he will allow you to remain in the temple. All you do is try to show off because you are a woman.”

“But I must stay until Rev. Sansaburo goes to hospital. I have promised the doctor and he says that Rev. Sansaburo must not be allowed to be alone even for a minute for the next four days.”

“If you return to that room I will have every officer in the temple against you and have you removed. Get out and take this book with you.”

Rev. Tarō grabbed my arm and pulled me from the room. “Let go for walk,” he stammered, “very hot night; cooler outside.”

I was too surprised by the whole incident to give thought to a possible double meaning to his words. He had picked up the book on our way out. We went into the grounds where the music of the OBon dance festival was sounding clearly across the loudspeakers near the gate but I was too dazed to do anything except walk; at the back of my mind a nagging worry persisted about Rev. Sansaburo and leaving him alone. We said nothing as we walked and presently we were joined by one of the other juniors from the house in which I lived. He asked Rev. Tarō why I was not with Rev. Sansaburo and Rev. Tarō told him. The other looked very worried but said nothing. After some minutes I regained some of my original presence of mind.

“I have got to go back,” I gasped, “he could die if he is not watched all the time. The doctor said that the next four days are absolutely critical. Whatever Rev. Ichirō does I must go back.”

The one who was walking with us said something to Rev. Tarō who nodded.

“What did he say?” I asked.

“He says he knows how important it is that someone is always with Rev. Sansaburo.”

I stopped where I was. “I *am* going back,” I said, “and nothing anyone can do will stop me.” And then I started to cry; whether from fury, anger, disgust or just plain fear for Rev. Sansaburo I had no notion.

“Why must you go back?” asked Rev. Tarō. “What is so important about Rev. Sansaburo? Many priests die every year and other priest have no notice of it. Their own training is much more important.”

As I stood there looking at him, disbelief filled every part of me. Then, from somewhere inside, came an answer. "I must go back because he *is* Buddha,"¹⁷ I answered. "Look at him; can't you see? Even dying he shines; I don't know how to explain it to you but he does. As far as I am concerned he is Buddha in person and my duty is to be with him."

I turned away from them and hurried back up the garden path at a run which was illegal for a trainee but I just did not care any longer. In the hall I met the chief guest master who scolded me for leaving Rev. Sansaburo and wanted to know why I was so untrustworthy. Tearing myself away from him I rushed back to the room to find Rev. Sansaburo sleeping quietly and settled myself down to spend the night watching. It seemed that the brightness in the room had increased but this could simply have been the result of my overwrought state.

Rev. Tarō came in and begged me to leave the room since he would be badly beaten if I disobeyed Rev. Ichirō. I refused. In the end, after I had almost screamed at him to look at the man in the bed and have some respect for the sick and dying, he said he would tell Rev. Ichirō and slunk out of the room.

Rev. Ichirō arrived and, between gritted teeth, informed me that he would see Zenji Sama in the morning. I didn't care.

"As far as I am concerned," I said, "Rev. Sansaburo *is* Buddha incarnate; I have met him here on earth and, should I die to-morrow, I am blessed eternally for having had the honour to nurse him."

He gave me a strange look and left the room.

20th. July.

I had just taken Rev. Sansaburo's temperature and pulse when Rev. Ichirō came into the room. I did not hear him come and was unaware of his presence until a voice over my shoulder asked, "Is it a good temperature and pulse?"

I turned round. "Yes," I said, quite simply.

His whole demeanour had changed and he was almost fawning, a fact which I found somehow both distasteful and unnecessary.¹⁸

“I spoke to Zenji Sama,” he said, his eyes were veiled but I could detect that they were not exactly friendly. “He says you may miss the laymen’s Sesshin to do this.” His voice was trying not to grate on the last sentence.

“Thank you,” I said.

“It is not enough to see just one as Buddha,” was his next comment, “all are thus. You must be able to see all as Buddha.”

He rose and left and Rev. Tarō crept, almost whimpering, into the room.

“What happened?”

“Zenji Sama says that I can continue to nurse Rev. Sansaburo.”

Rev. Tarō looked stealthily around him as if fearing eavesdroppers. “How did you understand that he is Buddha? What did you see? I try so many years to see.”

“It isn’t seeing exactly,” I replied. “It is sort of—knowing without words; and seeing with your heart and—still you see.” I broke off for what I was saying made no sense. He gave me a queer look, half bowed and left the room.

21st. July.

I have had three hours sleep in forty-eight. The junior trainees are furious over my nursing Rev. Sansaburo because, I am told, they think I am doing it in order to impress Zenji Sama. When the relief nurse came from the hospital I tried to get some sleep this morning but one of the juniors played his clarinet, regardless of the rules, full-blast outside my door and made sleep impossible. In the end I went to the graveyard and slept on one of the tombs. It was so peaceful there. The dead are true friends. This place is quite terrifying in many ways. Living amongst these junior trainees is, for someone of my age, like living amongst strange and dangerous children. Zenji Sama must stop showering favours on me or living here will become utterly impossible.

But Rev. Sansaburo is getting better with every hour. I hope and pray that he may regain the use of his limbs. I want to see him walk and laugh again.

Rev. Ichirō got very angry with me because I took a bath. The trouble is that the temperature is well over ninety in the shade and, because I am a woman and they have not yet got the female bath-house finished, I cannot legally take a bath anywhere. I have to beg the pardon of those who had not yet bathed. I had no idea it was against the rules. I find out the rules as I break them. I have asked at least three people during the past few weeks to tell me what the rules are so that I can keep them but they only laugh at me and say that Zenji Sama is making his own for me. How can I help breaking rules if I do not know what they are?

If I had not felt pain and suffering so keenly I would have gone on studying medicine but it seems so useless since we are all doomed to die—better far to learn to live by illuminating the spirit. We are all living dead.

To-day I have been here one hundred days! To-morrow I should officially be allowed to go out but have been told that, for me, it will be two hundred days since Zenji Sama has made me his favourite. I could not go out even if I were permitted for I am so tired I would probably be run over by a car. As I was taking Rev. Sansaburo's temperature this morning Rev. Hajime told me about the problem of my going out. It seems that Zenji Sama's favour is creating special rules in the minds of some who feel that I shall be spoiled. I must remember that this is all for my own good. Whatever is happening it is so that I may be helped. Before he left this morning Rev. Hajime said that I must be very careful here or it will break my heart.

23rd. July.

Rev. Sansaburo goes to hospital the day after to-morrow and I shall return to my room beside Rev. Hajime. In some ways I shall be glad to return for it is very stuffy in Rev. Sansaburo's room. His wife will allow no windows to be opened. I wonder if she realises how dangerous it is to sleep like this? The weather is incredibly sticky and the thought that I am not allowed a bath is rather frightening. Whatever will my body be like four days from now? With insects of every

variety crawling round on the floor my feet and legs and hands are covered with bites. I sat with my feet in a bucket of water to-day to keep the insects away from them during my spare time. To-morrow most of the trainees go away for the OBon Festival but I have nowhere to go and so must stay here. In a strange way I feel truly a trainee for I have no home now and the only money I have comes from the Chinese abbot. I have no room of my own and the clothes I wear are not mine. I am too tired to meditate.

24th. July.

Rev. Sansaburo goes to hospital to-morrow. During the night he asked me to recite the Daihishindharani with him but fell asleep before we were halfway through it. I could imagine his thoughts as we said it for, just before, he had held up his useless left hand with his right one and smiled at me sadly. For a man who has spent his life in the emulation of Kanzeon the loss of one hand is as the loss of five hundred arms. This will be his last night in the temple—to-morrow he will hear the meditation bell and the dawn drums for the last time. And the world goes on unheeding and uncaring. It is all so useless. Yet it is for such as he that Wordsworth wrote:—“Take him, O death, and bear away whatever thou canst call thine own; Thine image, stamped upon this clay, Doth give thee that, and that alone. Take him, O great eternity, the wind that shakes the tree can only drag its petals in the dust.” I can accept death as inevitable without fear, and life too, but I cannot understand why either should be necessary. My brain reels and staggers—I can no longer sleep in peace by day or night. I must find the answer.

I wrote about this in bad Japanese and showed it to Rev. Sansaburo when he awoke. He read it slowly and studied it carefully, then he scrawled one character on the paper—it meant acceptance.

“But I don’t care any longer,” I wrote, “I am so apathetic that nothing matters. The stupid behaviour of the juniors here, their petty jealousies, life, death—I don’t care whether I live or die.”

His ears had pricked up and his eyes had become animated as he read my words; then he wrote, "Good. Become apathetic. Be destroyed. This is the immaculacy of MU!" His hand dropped the pen and I thought he had fainted but he was merely closing his eyes. His wife came in (she had been visiting a friend down the hall) and scolded me for opening a window.

25th. July.

Rev. Sansaburo went to hospital at ten o'clock this morning. The ambulance bumped much on the bad road that constitutes the temple drive-way. Rev. Toshio came to see me bringing a beautiful flower vase which he said was a present from Rev. Sansaburo who had noticed the flowers I had been putting in Rev. Hajime's room. It is the first time I have ever had any contact with Rev. Toshio and I sincerely hope that I shall see more of him. He used to be chief lecturer here before he became seriously ill and he radiates something that is elusive and beautiful and which I want very much. Rev. Sansaburo radiates it too but in a different way and with a totally different atmosphere and yet it is the same thing. Rev. Hajime has it sometimes but seems to be running round in his own thoughts too much for it to show at all times. I wonder if this is the "Lord" he was telling me I must catch?¹⁹ If it is then it is easier to see in some than in others; in some, indeed, it is not even elusive.

26th. July.

I wonder why I am becoming so selective in what I write down of the various day's events? Or maybe it is just that doing the night-nursing of Rev. Sansaburo has dulled my memory. Yet it is odd that I should not have recorded the following incident yesterday. Just before the ambulance came to take Rev. Sansaburo to hospital Zenji Sama and quite a number of the officers came into the room. I was sitting in the far corner watching Rev. Sansaburo's wife preparing him for the journey and wondering if I would ever see him alive again. Zenji Sama knelt down beside Rev. Sansaburo and said something quietly to him then he turned round to face me and said "Thank you" in

Japanese in such a loud, clear and young-sounding voice that it seemed to echo off the walls of the room. Again I experienced the same piercing, gentle glance he had given me during Jūkai and the same physical thrill as when he had contrived to touch my hand during the ceremony. He turned and left the room and it was as if the sun had gone,²⁰ leaving the room dark, gloomy and cold. It must just be my tiredness; but I could have sworn that there was more light in the room when he was in it than when he left. I *know* why I did not write this down; I felt a bit odd about writing it; suppose somebody picked this book up and read it? Whatever would they think? Fooey to what they might think; this is my diary and I am writing what happened. If others read it and do not like it then that is their problem.

I slept in my old room last night and the reception I got when I returned to that part of the temple was quite chilly. Rev. Hajime has gone away for the OBon festival in his own temple and will not be back again, he tells me, until term starts some time in October. Most of the other trainees have gone off also and, in all this huge temple, with its thirty separate houses and departments, there are but four officers and ten or so trainees; or so it seems—there could be some more for all I know. This was all I counted during Morning Service.

Later.

I have just discovered that there are no officers at all in this particular house from now until next term and the only other person here with me is the one who played his clarinet whilst I was trying to sleep during the time I was nursing Rev. Sansaburo. He came upstairs a few minutes ago to tell me that he has never before been subjected to having to take meals with a woman and he is not going to do so now. It seems that Rev. Ichirō is very annoyed that I am still here and is an especial friend of his. He informed me that if I wanted any food, or a bath or anything else, I would have to go out into the town to get it since I am not allowed to go to the kitchen and he is not going to give me any of the food that is sent up.

On going downstairs later I discovered that he was sleeping off the mid-day heat (it is about thirty-eight centigrade if the gadget in the house-kitchen works) and that so much food had been sent up for us that he had been quite unable to eat it all. Since he dare not throw it away openly, without being beaten and thrown out of the temple, he had put it in paper and hidden it behind some pipes under the sink. I found it, took what I wanted whilst he continued to snore, and there was an end of the problem. If he is going to continue to sleep his time away during the entire month there should not be much difficulty for me, at least with regard to food, but the loneliness is going to be considerable. And if this is the behaviour of a trainee in a monastery—what the hell have I got myself into?⁴

27th. July.

I decided that the atmosphere here is just too oppressive for me to stay in it all day long.⁴ There is almost no-one about, the Meditation Hall is absolutely empty for most of the day and I can literally meditate for as long as I want to, and when I want to, without being disturbed. It is interesting that the one place that neither that apology for a trainee⁵ downstairs nor Rev. Ichirō think of looking for me is in the Meditation Hall. I have also found out that there is a bun shop on the opposite side of the road from the cemetery gate so I will live on buns until the others get back. It is very difficult not to have hateful thoughts about these two but I must try to overcome them, I really must. What a hell-hole this is.⁴

11th. August.

I have been spending most of my time during the last few weeks meditating. This morning I rose as usual at three-thirty for meditation and Morning Service. On my return, round eight-thirty, I found the trainee downstairs still asleep and became really angry.⁵ I went to the kitchen to collect my breakfast and, to my amazement, there was one of the old priests, who had been to Morning Service, quietly down on his hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen floor. He was not complaining

that most of the juniors were still in bed but simply getting on with his work, doing what had to be done.²⁰ My anger just disappeared—there was something about the quiet old man that made all the nonsense in this house this summer seem very unimportant. After seeing him I went back and cleaned the upstairs of the house I was living in. Later I went to weed Zenji Sama's garden and, on the way back, found Rev. Akira quietly washing the long corridor by himself.²⁰ The simple actions of these old men sparkle like stars in a dark sky. I must remember to keep in mind the words of Rev. Hajime, "In the world there are various sorts of people but they are not your problem. You must worry about yourself and not about them. It is not your concern that they want to be lazy."

28th. August.

It is wonderful what a peaceful meditation can do. I have been going to the Meditation Hall every day since my last entry and the owners have got to know me quite well at the bun shop; I can now even speak a little with them in Japanese, thanks to their kind help—and they are laymen and the chap downstairs is a trainee!⁴ I must *not* think that way—judging. Stop it. To criticise others is to break the Precepts; and to go and buy buns outside the temple walls is breaking the rules!⁵ I am awfully glad this is a two-story building for the downstairs has not been cleaned since the others went away. In a country where there are so many insects and a hot climate nothing could be more dangerous. I have spread flea powder all over the bottom stair leading to this floor for my own protection. Dealing with the mosquitos is quite enough. I shall be glad when everyone else gets back.

30th. September.

The other three juniors living here got back this morning; on seeing the state of the house they immediately rushed off to see Rev. Ichirō and he came up here in a furious temper saying that it was my fault that the downstairs was flea-infested. I tried to tell him that it was not my fault since I had not been allowed

downstairs during the whole of the summer holidays but he would not listen to me. I threatened to tell Zenji Sama about it and he stormed out of the room. A few minutes later the senior of the downstairs juniors came up to see me, looking very worried; he was carrying a large bowl of food that he had had sent in from a restaurant; he placed it in front of me. Saying that I must understand that I was very welcome in the temple, he ended by telling me that he wanted to take me out to dinner that evening. He spoke atrocious English and had obviously looked up all the words before-hand.

“I am not hungry,” I said.

He was non-plussed for he could not understand me but I pushed the bowl away and he understood.

“Must eat,” he screamed, “I order.” He rushed away leaving the bowl on the floor of my room.

A few minutes later up came the junior who had been so rude and unfriendly during the summer; he too was carrying a bowl of food, much more expensive than the one that had previously arrived.

“Must eat,” he said, “We Japanese love foreigner, flowers, children.”

He sat and watched me; I do not think I have ever before or since seen such a mixture of dishonesty, hatred and suppressed fury.⁴ We stared at each other for quite some time but my last two months in the Meditation Hall, coupled with the hour a day I had spent working in Zenji Sama’s garden in order to weed it, although he was away, now stood me in good stead. Under normal circumstances I would have smashed my fist into his sneering, childish face but instead I merely said, “Later,” turned and walked into my room and closed the screen door. I heard him rush downstairs; then high-pitched words in the room below me. I wrote a letter to Rev. Ichirō, setting out quite clearly what had been happening during the summer holidays as fairly as I could, and delivered it to his room. On my return I found the trainee who had brought the first bowl of food waiting outside my door, dressed to go out.

“We go out,” he said, “we eat together in restaurant; everyone see. Japanese man eat with foreign woman.”

His voice was pleading, almost pitiful. Something inside me wanted to vomit and then a voice, which I would never have heard had I not been meditating so much, said, “Why not go out with him? He is obviously terrified of what the other one has done. It may make peace with them. If you refuse all overtures of friendship you might as well leave.”²¹

I put on my outdoor clothes and we went off together into the town. He took me to a restaurant where he ordered huge ice-creams and avidly watched me eat mine. When we had finished eating he gulped and started to say an obviously memorised speech.

“You eat with me. In public I eat with foreign woman and I Japanese man. Very great thing. Now all world know we trainees very great man. You not say word about what happen during summer, see? You tell Zenji Sama not good for you in temple. We all friend now. You understand?”

My desire to vomit was increasing and it was *not* from the ice-cream.⁴ I spoke very slowly and distinctly.

“Buddhism teaches the control of selfishness. Why are Japanese men so selfish?”

After looking up a couple of the words, which I repeated, in the dictionary he had brought with him, he was silent for a long time.

“Woman baby factory,” he said eventually. “Man give much pleasure to woman in getting baby. So man much superior. From birth he preferred in all things over woman.”

I started to laugh; not a nice, amused laugh, but a rather nasty one and surprised myself just as much as I angered him.⁵ I stopped abruptly. I knew that there was some sort of a limit I was reaching; it was as though I was gripping the sides of a slide hard, so as not to go flying down it, for fear of what I might do.

“After all,” I said, “how can I expect Japanese men to be unselfish when they have been treated as gods from the moment they were born? If they do not know what the word ‘selfishness’ means they can hardly be expected to do something about it.”²²

I was gripping the arms of my chair strangely, desperately, as if they were the sides of the slide. My nails bit into the upholstery and tore it in one place. He noticed and swore quietly under his breath saying that “Foreign woman must not tear Japanese restaurant.” How I stopped myself from hitting him I do not know.⁵ I thank whatever powers there be for meditation.

“Buddhism very difficult,” he said. “Control selfishness not possible.”

Something inside me crashed about, things seemed to be threshing around from side to side in my head. Somehow I rose and left the restaurant with him muttering behind me. I am not sure how I made the door or negotiated the roads outside, I just did. Now, as I write this, it is as if everything that has ever lived within me is dead.²³

4th. October.

I do not think that I have been back to my room, since writing the previous entry, until now. I found a large tomb in the graveyard, complete with its own private garden and summer house, and have been staying there instead. Term does not start until to-morrow so all should be well. I do not know if I have eaten and it does not matter at all. When one is dead, food is unnecessary and something has surely died in me.

A few moments ago I found a letter on the desk in my room and have just read it. It is a scathing tirade from Rev. Ichirō saying that it is all my fault that there are fleas downstairs and that they never had any until foreigners came to Japan. I have to beg pardon of everyone in the temple for being here and causing such a thing to happen. It is my fault that the trainee downstairs has had his summer ruined.²⁴

5th. October.

There is no way in which I can comment on to-day; all I can do is report.

After receiving the letter from Rev. Ichirō it was as if everything and I went into an adagio dance. It was dark, I do not know the time but it was after the official bedtime. I remember

putting the note into my desk drawer, taking a few clothes from a cupboard and putting them into a small suitcase, putting on my outdoor clothes and stowing my passport in my pocket, turning out the light. Like an automaton I left the room, closed the door softly and made my way to the stairhead. It was pitch dark, darker than I ever remember and the stairs were narrow, old and dangerous but I paid no heed. At the bottom I made for the nearest door and out into the garden. Without turning, without noticing that I was even using my feet, I glided down the path, away from the temple, away—away—away. If this is how they want it, then let them keep their temple; if this is their understanding of the oneness of Buddhism then I have indeed come to the wrong place. A small ball was appearing before my eyes, getting larger, brighter. I was losing my numbness—coming to from an anesthetic? The form of the old priest I had seen during Sesshin seemed to crystallise in the ball, his face in shadow, just a shape—a blotch? A dream? A voice sounded hollow inside me; an echo in an empty church after evensong, when the doors are closed and the organist sits in the organ loft, his instrument silent. How often I had done that—how often. The echo—louder, louder; the blotch—brighter, brighter. Outside me? Inside me? Sitting still—still and hard as iron—anchored. The echo—soft, clear. “You could be wrong”—“You could be wrong”—“You could be wrong”— — —

My feet—whose feet? or I—but who am I, what am I?—turned round and went back up the path, through the door, the main door,—why?—it does not matter any more—along the corridors to the foot of the stairs. It is light, I can *see*; is it dawn—so late already? The stairs need washing and I fetch a bucket of water from the kitchen; the whole house needs cleaning, putting in order—I wash the stairs—the water must be dirty and needs changing. Looking into the bucket—water needs changing—the water is clean—never was there any dirt—only clean, sparkling water, abounding with life, fresh, pure. I drink of you, clear water, delicious water, I throw you over my unclean body—the house is unclean—it must be put in order—

for the Lord of the House is coming—the Lord of the House is here—he never went away—was never gone.

Did I walk up the stairs to my room? Or fly? Was I carried? My consciousness seems to ebb and flow. Is it the same day? Great swirls of mist, clearing.²⁵ A little girl in England coming home from school, longing to tell her mother her geography lesson—“Mummy, mummy, do you know where sugar comes from? It’s sugar cane.” A trilling, sarcastic laugh—“What a *wonderful* thing to have found out; aren’t you *clever*.” Something snapping shut inside—swirls of mist, clearing—a little girl, bigger now—“Mummy, mummy, please come and watch my gym class. All the other mothers have been.” “I’m very busy, child, go and play”—something snapping shut—mist, swirling, clearing—“That child’s eye is infected; she must see a doctor”—“I have no time to-morrow; I must get the cakes ready. Let her aunt take her”—“It seems I must just take time off from work to do it”—swirling mist, clearing—How beautiful the sea looks—a thousand diamonds sparkling across a crystal mirror—“Peggy Kennett, you have been put at the bottom of the class in that seat because you are useless and the personification of laziness, not to stare like an idiot out of the window”—“Sorry, madam,”—the sea is a dirty grey—how soon clouds hide the sun in England—swirling mist, clearing—the crystal sea, the diamonds dancing, the sun high in a blue sky, so rare these days, so very rare—“Oh, sea, how long before I cross you? How long? Somewhere there must be someone with a smile in his heart that will match the smile in mine and we two will know each other”—a voice within, “Be still, be still just a little while longer; be still”—“Peggy Kennett, you have been detained after school to do your homework every day for a year. We are all thoroughly fed up with you here. We shall be glad when you go”—“Be still just a little while longer; the smile exists; be still—not long and I will come”²⁶—swirling mist, clearing—A male voice, “I’ll swear she is not an idiot; I’ll swear it. Let me have her for a bit”—swirling mist, clearing—a terrible, rending quarrel, it is as if three people have hold of me

and pull me in different directions—a voice says I am old enough to have rights—mist swirling, clearing—I want to hurt people, I want to hurt everyone—I am sixteen, the war rages, my father is dead, the bombs fall everywhere, no sleep, people quarrelling, pulling me this way and that—I have rights—I want to hurt people so much—the sea is a dirty grey, railed in by barbed wire; someone grabs me and pushes me over the parapet of the promenade while a 'plane dives down and sprays it with machine-gun-fire—someone holds me close to the parapet—I do not know him—is love thus, always from the unknown?—in all this horror does love still exist?—Did it ever exist?—Be still, be still, a little while longer—I must believe the voice²⁶—I want to hurt everyone, I want to hurt—swirling mist, clearing—I, the useless idiot, I have been awarded a university degree—“Mother, aren't you pleased with me? Please say you are proud of me”—“If you were a boy it might make some sense. Your brother now, he is the one who should have it, not you; he needs it”—I hate you, I hate you, I hate you, I want to hurt you—swirling mist, clearing—It is so cold in London, I have no money to buy food, no place to live, no rooms available anywhere—four of us in Hyde Park—“Where are we going to sleep to-night?” “It's the fault of those damned West Indians; there's no work and nowhere to live. What the hell did we fight the bloody war for if we are only to give the country to the damned wogs?”—“I saw a bombed out building that looked as if it had a couple of usable rooms”—“And get pinched by the ruddy coppers? not ruddy likely”—“Molly's pregnant, she needs a warm place to sleep; we're all coughing our lungs out in this smog”—“I'm going to immigrate to America; no bloody good staying here”—“Australia's for me”—“I like England, somewhere there must be someone with a smile in his heart”—“You are an idiot, Peg, patriotism is the opium they feed us so we won't complain when we get bullets in the backside; they want to make sure the wogs can sit down if we can't”—“Molly's still pregnant and she's coughing her guts out”—“We could take her to the Salvation Army Shelter”—“We might as well all go;

at least we'll get a streaky rasher on fried bread in return for bawling a hymn or two"—"Maybe there'll be a job in the morning"—swirling mist, clearing—"But it's a beautiful apartment, mother, and I am making over a thousand a year now so maybe Aunt Alice would like to come and stay with me and take the burden of her illness off your hands; I will be able to get her a nurse as well"—"There's no need to flaunt your money at me, and your aunt does not want to leave your brother and me"—Aunt Alice lying stiff and cold on the floor; she had tried to get out of bed when no-one answered her bell in the nursing home—swirling mist, clearing—Zenji Sama in a London hotel—"Come to Japan; become my disciple"—how to get the money?—but I have a university degree, something will turn up—be still, be still, just a little while²⁶—the sparkling crystal sea, beckoning, calling²⁶—swirling mist, clearing—this is good-bye, I tried so hard, I suppose I tried too much, once I told you that I loved you as much as ever could be loved and you had laughed with your friends and said that the child said such silly things—the smile is still inside but hidden—by accident we met, you and I, as mother and daughter, but we were as ships that pass in the night, dim shadows seen and soon gone—we are together on the dock, there is nothing underhanded here, but we passed each other long ago—how do you say farewell to a mother whom you have never met?—swirling mist, clearing—"If this house is dirty it is all the fault of the foreigners"—Rev. Ichirō's face—swirling mist, clearing.²⁷

And as each successive wave of mist cleared it was as if a life had passed and left behind a different person—each layer that went left me thinner, more transparent—Shakyamuni Buddha saw his past lives—the little girl, the angry young woman, all are as if past lives—they are not me; in me is all that is left of them²⁸

"Term has started," said Rev. Tarō. He was looking down at me where I lay, half drowned in water, on the floor of my room. "Get up, you must come to the Butsuden (Main Hall), it is Bodhidharma Day." I sat up; Rev. Tarō gleamed with a

radiance from head to foot.²⁹ I clasped my arms around him and hugged him.

“Are you all right?” he asked.

“Oh, yes, yes,” I replied.

“Come on, hurry. Rev. Ichirō is in an absolute fury because you are still here.”

“Where is he? I must see him.” I changed my robe, after bundling Rev. Tarō unceremoniously out of the room, and raced down the stairs to Rev. Ichirō’s room. He was preparing for the ceremony. I sat down on the floor and bowed.

“Thank you,” I said and it seemed that my voice put the same sound into the words that I had heard from Zenji Sama at the time of Rev. Sansaburo’s illness. Rev. Ichirō turned to stare at me but all I could see was that his body gleamed with light from head to foot as did Rev. Tarō’s.²⁹ There was no way of telling him how grateful I was; I looked at him for a long moment and then left the room. I went to the hall and to the Bodhidharma ceremony; the trainee from my house who had refused to eat with me glared as I walked in; I bowed to him, overjoyed to see the glory of light around him—and around everyone else and everything there.²⁹

When the ceremony was over we changed and weeded the garden for a couple of hours. Someone put a large praying mantis on my head. Normally I would have screamed at the touch of an insect and they knew it. I carefully took it from my head and admired the golden glory that surrounded its body²⁹ and placed it on a weed that had the same glory on its fronds.²⁹ How simple and exquisite is this world in which we live; we bother ourselves with outside things, thinking they are all of life when they are, as was my past, but shadows in a mirror, seen through the swirling mists of our own delusions. There is nothing more than to go on doing that which has to be done for the Smile exists everywhere; the Heart in which it dwells is in all men, all things, it is in the glory of the sunset and the glory around the weed, the life of Zenji Sama and the life of Rev. Ichirō. And I wept great tears for having despised the food that had been brought to me as a peace-offering for it had been sacrificed to

my delusion; I had not seen its glory. Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, the stupid delusions of men and women, none of these things matter; “I am right”—“No, I know that I am right”—to hell with “isms”—*Nunc dimitis, Domine*—Now you have, so guard well—and I am so unworthy.

6th. October.

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. Behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice. My beloved spoke, and said unto me, ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.’

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains.”

All day yesterday and all last night my heart has been singing, singing everything, anything. I do not know where the above comes from except that it is somewhere in the Bible.³⁰ Every day of my life for ten years I was forced, whether I would or no, to learn two verses of the Bible at school. Stray lumps like the above have gone gliding by me with a meaning and a joy I have never before known. Chunks of Latin, always thought of as a chore, have gone by too, all with a different feel, a depth before unseen. I watch them float by; they lull me as in a cradle of joy and all I can feel is an exquisite adoration and gratitude for them.

Rev. Hajime returned this morning and came immediately to see me. He seems very worried about what Rev. Ichirō and

the others downstairs have been doing during the summer. I really do not know what there is to be concerned about.

7th. October.

Rev. Tarō went with me to the port authority of Yokohama to-day to collect some things of mine that have been sent on from Malaysia. He seemed very frightened of the officials who wanted to inspect them at the customs but there was nothing to be concerned about. They were really very charming and did not charge me anything. I wonder why he keeps looking at me so queerly?

When we got home he came upstairs and had a long talk with Rev. Hajime who came in to see me immediately afterwards. It was about six o'clock and we had just finished supper. He looked at me for a long time and then said, "What have you been doing during the summer?"

"Oh, nothing that really amounts to much," I replied. "There was really nothing to do here."

"Did you sleep?"

"At nights."

He gave me an even stranger look. "What about the daytime?"

"Well, there was nothing to do and I was a great nuisance being in the way here, a stray woman, and all that, so I used to go to the Meditation Hall and sit there. I didn't upset anybody by being there, really I didn't. Nobody else was there when I went." Then I gulped at the memory of what a terrible thing I had contemplated only a few days earlier. "I almost did a terrible thing," I said, "I almost ran away. I had got as far as the bottom of the drive when I thought that I could be wrong and so I came back."

"What else happened?"

"Oh, nothing of any importance; I just realised that I had been wrong about everything and everybody and now I am back again, that's all."

He left the room for a few minutes and came back with someone I did not know, a very old and quiet priest. He looked at me for a long time and then got up and left together with Rev. Hajime.

On his return Rev. Hajime said, "I have just spoken to Zenji Sama. You should become Chief Junior; you are worthy."

"What is a Chief Junior?" I asked.

"Later I will explain. Now I want to translate something for you." His English had improved considerably during the summer and I realised he must have been working on it. My own Japanese has also improved greatly and we found that we could even begin to converse a little without having to write everything down on paper first. He fetched a book from the cupboard in his room and, with the use of a huge dictionary, began translating some of it into atrocious English. I took what he had written and studied it. Something rang a bell inside me as I read; despite the strange English I knew the meaning. I wrote out what he had written in my own words in good English and handed it back to him. He went through it, looking up any of the words I had used that he did not know and then looked at me.

"I did not know you had reached such place," he said, startled, "You *understand* this."

"Rev. Hajime, let's get on with translating some more." It was as if my heart and body and every fibre of me was hungry for more of what I had just read. Abruptly he got up and left the room again. On his return he said, "Zenji Sama says that you must be careful, very, very careful or we shall break your heart."

"You can't! It is an absolute impossibility," and I laughed at him from the bottom of my being.

He smiled softly and then said, "Do not stop here, never be satisfied; always you must be *disturbed* by the Truth. Do not stay with clarity, do not be satisfied with peace. He who is satisfied dies. Go on, go on, always going on, always *becoming* Buddha but never become Buddha." He looked at his watch.

"It is long past bedtime," he said, "We must not disobey the rules."

I rose, bowed and left the room for bed with the Diamond Sutra saying softly in my head, "Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world, as a child's laugh, a bubble in a stream, a phantasm, a dream." The things I had seen of my past life were like



that—shadows in a mirror—the silly things that had happened during the past month or two were like that too and all I have to do is watch them float by, interested but not concerned. Oh, Holy Buddha, I take *Refuge* in Thee.

