

TO TAME A TIGER/ZAZEN'S SCRIPTURE (published August 1962, Wind Bell #9)

TO TAME A TIGER

A government official named Shiba visited Hyabujo Mountain and was taken by the great beauty there. He decided to ask a monk to build a monastery on the mountain.

He chose between two monks, Karin and Isan (Reiyu Zenji). Isan was chosen when Shiba watched the way he walked. Karin, who was seen first, was not discouraged by not being chosen. Years later when Karin was known as a famous Zen Master, he lived on a remote mountain and his Zen was known by birds and animals.

One day a government surveyor came across a hermitage on a mountain and found a great tiger standing at the gate. The tiger disappeared into the hut, and soon an old Zen Master came out. He was Karin.

The kind of Zen which walks an elegant way is quite different from the kind of Zen which tames a tiger. Nevertheless, both should be a creative form of the transmitted original Zen from Buddha. We should acknowledge the ways of both monks as the pure and fully transmitted zazen as well as recognize the ways as the restriction placed on each monk by a particular occasion. In other words, we should not be captivated by some particular form of Zen nor should we discriminate some particular type of Zen. Zen must be always creative.

ZAZEN'S SCRIPTURE

Zazen is scripture itself. To do zazen for weeks or hours is to bring scripture into being. No scripture is left out of zazen, Buddha's whole life teaching is there. In zazen Buddha (we) creates scripture, Buddha (we) creates Buddha. In zazen we are Buddha.

Checked by Gordon Geist 1999