

ZEN MOUNTAIN CENTER REPORT

YASUTANI ROSHI AND SOEN ROSHI VISIT TASSAJARA

In July Zen Mountain Center was visited by the masters and teachers of the Zen Studies Society and affiliated zendos, and of the lineage of Nyogen Senzaki, the first Zen teacher in western America. In the group were Hakuun Yasutani Roshi, successor of Harada Roshi; Soen Nakagawa Roshi, abbot of Ryutakuji and Senzaki Sensei's choice as his successor in America; Eido Tai Shimano Sensei, resident monk of the Zen Studies Society and disciple of Soen Roshi; Robert Aiken, Chairman of the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu and a former disciple of Senzaki Sensei; Charles Gooding, President of the Los Angeles Bosatsu-kai, the organization of the students of Senzaki Sensei; Ryoju Yasutani Sensei, the son of Yasutani Roshi; and Hakuyu Maezumi Sensei, teacher at the Los Angeles Zen Center.

Suzuki Roshi had not known Soen Roshi and had only briefly met Yasutani Roshi, so this coming together in America was both unique and significant. Their feeling was that Zen should not be sectarian, that, as Yasutani Roshi suggested, "ancient Chinese Zen should be our model." Suzuki Roshi explained to the students later that "in China the Zen schools were formed by the disciples and descendants of the Sixth Patriarch. These disciples and descendants knew each other and considered themselves dharma brothers and would advise their students to leave them and go study with another of the Sixth Patriarch's disciples and descendants. Most of them came back to their teacher, but some did not. It is a good idea to give students freedom to study whatever teaching they want."