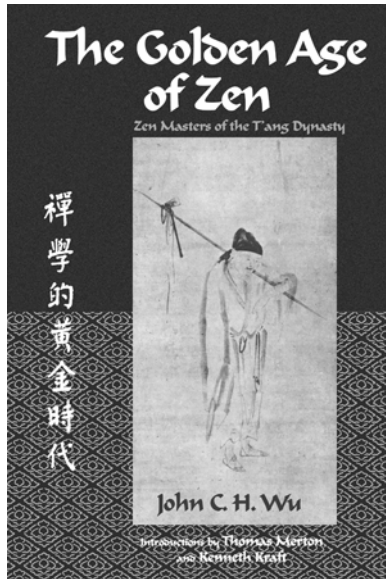


# *The Golden Age of Zen: Zen Masters of the T'ang Dynasty*

By John C.H. Wu



The great Chinese Zen masters of the 7<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> centuries laid the foundation for all subsequent developments within Zen Buddhism. Flowering forth magnificently during these centuries, the profound teachings of these masters, which are given voice in the pages of this book, may have been equaled by some of their spiritual descendants, but never surpassed. All readers seeking the 'spring' of Zen will find in these pages the refreshing words—sometimes enigmatic and profound, sometimes practical and humorous—of the earliest exponents of the tradition.

This classic work has been compared to the writings of D.T. Suzuki in importance, and it carries the same imprint of authenticity. Additionally, however, the author—whose correspondence with Suzuki is included in the Appendix of the book—reinforces several fascinating parallels between Zen and Christian mysticism by his inclusion of a masterful introduction by Thomas Merton, whose writings on Zen and Christianity are well known. All in all, *The Golden Age of Zen*, which traces the origins of Zen in Taoism and reflects the adamant vision of the first T'ang masters, is a perfectly flowing

study of the early history of the Zen tradition, and it is destined to be an important source book on Zen for generations to come.

## What others have said about *The Golden Age of Zen*

"A rich harvest of the sayings and training methods of the great Chinese Zen masters. Highly recommended."

—**Roshi Philip Kapleau**, author of *The Three Pillars of Zen*

"Here is a book that will do much to clarify the still very confused western idea of Zen Buddhism....This book will be a good place to make the acquaintance of what can be called the very quintessence of Buddhist wisdom."

—**Thomas Merton** (excerpted from the Introduction)

"Wu's book has long been a primary source for understanding the development of the hugely influential philosophy of Zen Buddhism by students and teachers alike. *The Golden Age of Zen* explores the philosophy's history, from its early connections with Taoism to the magnificent flowering forth of the whole movement in the hands of succeeding generations of Chinese sages."

—**Ingram**

"While never losing sight of the fact that intuition and tuition differ markedly, Wu does not allow the reader to fall into a stereotype of Zen as an anti-intellectual simplifier... [He] is not content to list anecdotes, but provides a wealth of background details to facilitate historical understanding."

—**Frank J. Hoffman**, West Chester University

World Wisdom



"Recommended for any collection with an interest in Zen or comparative religion."

—**Library Journal**

"Dr. Wu's [*The Golden Age of Zen*]: *Zen masters of the T'ang Dynasty* presents a thorough exposition of the watershed period in China from which developed everything we've come to know as Zen, both East and West. Students of Buddhism will find this book to be a rich source for understanding this significant period of Zen history"

—**John Daido Loori**, Abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery

This book is a rare treasure, proofs of the possibility to clarify the profoundest understanding of Taoism and Zen in their essential relatedness in a warm, poetic, non-academic prose. It reached me on my 94<sup>th</sup> birthday, moved me by its gentle wisdom, comparable to Daisetz T. Suzuki's *Essence of Zen Buddhism* and his quintessential essay "*Self the Unattainable*," which he wrote at the age of ninety. I will return to Dr. Wu's *The Golden Age of Zen* many times in the months or years still allotted to me."

—**Fredrick Franck**, artist, and author of *The Zen of Seeing*

### What issues are addressed in *The Golden Age of Zen*?

- ❖ What is the foundation of Zen and who were its earliest masters?
- ❖ What parallels may be drawn between Zen and Christian mysticism?
- ❖ How did the earliest figures in the history of Zen influence subsequent developments within the tradition?

### Which readers will be interested in this work?

- ❖ This book is a classic introduction to the lives and teachings of the first Chinese Zen masters of the T'ang dynasty. For any **student of Buddhism** who is seeking to understand the sources of Zen, this book is essential reading.
- ❖ **Students of Comparative Religion** will find that, through drawing upon his own vast scholarship, the author also makes many references to the most important writings of Thomas Merton on Zen and Christianity. This combination allows for a comparison of Zen and Christian mysticism without blurring the distinct identities of each tradition.
- ❖ All **spiritual seekers**, regardless of religious affiliation, will find inspiration in the wisdom, sometimes enigmatic and profound, sometimes practical and humorous, of the early Chinese Zen masters whose lives are chronicled and whose writings are quoted in this classic work.

### Additional Publication Information

*The Golden Age of Zen: Zen Masters of the T'ang Dynasty* contains a fascinating introduction by Thomas Merton, entitled "A Christian Looks at Zen," and a new foreword by Prof. Kenneth Kraft.

*The Golden Age of Zen* has an expected publication date of Spring 2004 and a price of \$19.95.

## About the author of *The Golden Age of Zen*

### John C. H. Wu



Wu Ching-hsiung (1899-1986), known as Dr. John C. H. Wu, was an author, lawyer, juristic philosopher, educator, and prominent Catholic layman. He was president of the Special High Court at Shanghai, vice chairman of the Legislative Yuan's constitution drafting committee, founder of the *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, translator of the Psalms and the New Testament, and Chinese minister to the Holy See in Rome (1947-48).

John C. H. Wu was born in Ningbo. His father came from a modest family and with little formal education became a prominent banker and philanthropist in Ningbo. The youngest of three children, John C. H. Wu began his Chinese education at the age of six. In April 1916, while attending a Western-style secondary school, he married. In 1920 he graduated at the top of his law class at Soochow University's Comparative Law School.

After further study in the US and Europe, Dr. Wu accepted a research scholarship at Harvard Law School. On his return to China in 1924, he became a professor of Law at his alma mater in Shanghai, and within three years he was appointed Principal of the School of Law. Upon entering private practice in 1930, he soon became one of the most sought after lawyers in Shanghai.

A chance reading of the autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux in 1937 sparked John C. H. Wu's conversion to Roman Catholicism. The Thérésian message of God's love, together with unbounded faith in God's mercy, struck him with the force of a revelation. Wu had found the Methodist brand of Protestantism emotionally cold and had already investigated Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Later, his translation of the Psalms into Chinese, commissioned by Chiang Kai-shek, was published in 1946 to wide acclaim.

In the spring of 1945 Dr. John C. H. Wu served as advisor to the Chinese delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco and later that year Chiang Kai-shek named him as the Chinese minister to the Holy See. Wu presented his credentials to Pope Pius XII in February, 1947. During his mission to the Vatican, Wu completed a Chinese translation of the New Testament, rendered in the classical Chinese style (published in Hong Kong in 1949). In 1949, he moved to the US and held posts at both the University of Hawaii and Seton Hall University.

John C. H. Wu authored and translated numerous books and articles on many subjects including Religion, Philosophy, and Law. His works included translations of the *Psalms* and *New Testament* into Chinese, *The Interior Carmel*, *Tao Te Ching* of Lao-tzu, *The Golden Age of Zen*, and the autobiographical *Beyond East and West*.



About the author of the introduction to *The Golden Age of Zen*:

Thomas Merton



Thomas Merton ("Father Louis") was born in France in 1915. After studying at Cambridge University (UK), and Columbia University (US), Merton entered the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani in Kentucky (US) in 1948. He soon became known throughout the world for his poetry and prose, influencing countless souls through his profound spiritual reflections in such works as *New Seeds of Contemplation* (1961). Merton also wrote works of social and political criticism such as *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966). Many recognized him as one of the earliest and most moving contributors to meaningful inter-religious dialogue. He was both a committed Christian and one who appreciated the riches of other spiritual traditions. His *Mystics and Zen Masters* (1967) and *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (1968) contain many of his essays on Eastern subjects, particularly Zen, while his *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (1965) is a rendering into English of the essential teachings of the renowned Chinese Taoist sage. It seems that Thomas Merton's prominence as a contemplative monk and public thinker has only increased since his tragic and untimely death in 1968.

About the author of the foreword to *The Golden Age of Zen*:

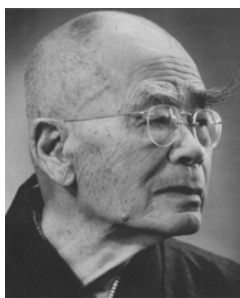
Kenneth Kraft



Kenneth Kraft is Professor of Religion Studies at Lehigh University, specializing in Japanese Zen and the new field of engaged Buddhist studies. In 1984–85 he was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University's Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies. Kraft has also taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, and the Stanford University Japan Center in Kyoto. His book *Eloquent Zen: Daito and Early Japanese Zen* (1992) was selected as an "Outstanding Academic Book" by *Choice* magazine, while his anthology of present-day Zen masters and scholars, *Zen: Tradition and Transition* (1988), is widely used in college courses. He has lived in Japan for five years and traveled extensively throughout Asia.

About the subject of and contributor to the Appendix:

Daisetz T. Suzuki



The work of D. T. Suzuki should need no introduction to any student of Zen in the West. Starting in the 1920s and lasting till his death in 1966, Suzuki played a key role in the popularization of Buddhism in the Western world, particularly for Zen. His work was also largely responsible for a reawakening of interest in Zen in his native Japan. His long career resulted in 32 volumes of writing in Japanese, more than 30 titles published in English, many lectures given around the world on Buddhism and comparative religion, and numerous students and collaborators who to this day have carried his work forward.