



9.5 X 10.5 in Original paintings sent to artist, Louis Schanker (Louis Schanker) offering condolences on the Death of his wife, blues singer, Libby Holman. The two signatures are from two of the major Zen masters in America. (see below)

<http://www.zenstudies.org/>

## THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY

EIDO T. SHIMANO ROSHI, ABBOT

The Zen Studies Society was established in 1956 to assist the Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki in his efforts to introduce Zen to the West. In 1965, it came under the leadership of a Japanese Zen monk, **Eido Tai Shimano**, who shifted the emphasis towards zazen (Zen meditation) practice. With his dedicated energy, and the help of many dharma friends and supporters, two centers for Zen practice came into being-- New York Zendo Shobo-Ji, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji, deep in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York.

In 1972, Eido Shimano Roshi received dharma transmission from Soen Nakagawa Roshi, and today serves as the abbot and spiritual teacher of these two zendos in the Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition.

**New publications from The Zen Studies Society are now available.** There is an important new translation of *The Book Of Rinzai* by Eido Shimano Roshi, as well as *Selected Teishos On Gateless Gate* by Yamakawa Sogen Roshi. Order now at our Monastery Store.

### RINZAI ZEN BUDDHISM IN AMERICA

On America's Bicentennial, July 4, 1976, a Rinzai Zen Buddhist monastery opened deep in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. Situated on 1,400 acres in the Catskill Mountain Forest Preserve, International **Dai Bosatsu Zendo** Kongo-ji continues to offer an ideal setting for authentic Zen practice to persons of all religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as to lay and ordained Zen students.

Students from all over the world gather to receive traditional monastic training and enjoy the opportunity to actualize true realization and understanding through deep, introspective inquiry. Zen training utilizes the discipline of structured daily zazen and work, with the guidance of Abbot Eido Shimano Roshi and the support of the Sangha (community).

# Soen Nakagawa

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

**Sōen Nakagawa** (1907 - 1984) was a Japanese teacher of Zen Buddhism in the Rinzai tradition. A highly creative and enigmatic figure, he was abbot of **Ryutaku-ji** monastery, an accomplished poet, and was a notable influence on the transmission of Zen to America. He was a student of **Gempo Yamamoto** and **Keigaku Katsube**, and was a dear friend of Nyogen Senzaki.

Nakagawa was born in Keelung, Taiwan, the son of a Japanese military doctor. His family was Pure Land Buddhist, and he lived at **Gangyo-ji**, a Pure Land monastery, while a humanities student at Tokyo's Imperial University. Passionate and artistic, Nakagawa was inspired by his academic Buddhist studies and admiration of the haiku poet Basho towards the practice of zazen. Despite his innate shyness, he founded a campus sitting group in the 1920s, and began formal zen training as a layperson at nearby **Shorin-ji**, a Rinzai temple near the university. In 1931, immediately after finishing his graduate studies, he was ordained a monk by Keigaku Katsube and became a resident of **Kogaku-ji**. While there, he continued refining his own haiku and calligraphy skills. Nakagawa befriended **Dakotsu Iida**, a locally renowned haiku poet, who helped him publish his first poems. He also met Gempo Yamamoto, who was abbot at the nearby **Ryutaku-ji** monastery. Nakagawa decided to leave Katsube and begin study as a disciple of Yamamoto in 1935. A year later, he published his first collection of poems, "Shigan" ("Coffin of Poems") to good reviews. Through his publications, Nakagawa was introduced to Nyogen Senzaki, who at the time was a zen teacher in the United States. Senzaki helped arrange Nakagawa's first visit to America when he came to San Francisco in 1948. The two remained close friends, confidants and pen-pals until Senzaki's death.

In 1958, Nakagawa was installed as Yamamoto's successor as abbot of Ryutaku-ji. Much of the creativity Nakagawa had exhibited in his art now surfaced in his teachings and he became known for practical jokes and curious tricks that, to the zen establishment were sometimes seen as disrespectful. He also retained much of the humility and openness to new ideas that had marked him throughout his life, exemplified in his highly unusual habit of attending sesshin at another roshi's monastery (in this case, **Daiun Sogaku Harada** at **Hosshin-ji**).

Nakagawa was a lively teacher and attracted Western students with his unconventional and mischievous style. Philip Kapleau, Robert Baker Aitken and **Eido Shimano**, three significant zen teachers in America, all studied under him. In particular, Nakagawa became involved with an offshoot

of D.T. Suzuki's Zen Studies Society in New York, which is today a Zen Center, instead of an academic society, under Shimano. Nakagawa stepped down as abbot in 1973 and died at Ryutaku-ji on March 11, 1984.

## Shunryu Suzuki

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

**Shunryu Suzuki** (鈴木 俊隆 *Suzuki Shunryū*, dharma name *Shogaku Shunryu*) (May 18, 1904 - December 4, 1971) was a Japanese Zen master of the Soto school, who played a major role in establishing Buddhism in America. The Japanese Soto-shu religious organization sent him to San Francisco, USA in 1959 to attend the needs of a small Japanese-American temple, Sokoji, in San Francisco's Japantown.

At the time of Suzuki's arrival, Zen had become a hot topic amongst some groups in the United States, especially beatniks. San Francisco counterculturalists found Suzuki and asked him to explain Zen. Suzuki limited his explanation to an invitation to sit zazen. "I sit zazen every day here at 5:40AM," he is quoted as having said, "and if you're here, you can sit, too."

The predominantly Caucasian group that joined Suzuki to sit eventually formed the San Francisco Zen Center with Suzuki. The Zen Center raised money to buy a hot springs resort, Tassajara, which they turned into a monastery. Soon thereafter, they bought a building at 300 Page Street in San Francisco's Haight-Fillmore neighborhood and turned it into a Zen temple. Suzuki left his post at Sokoji to become the first abbot of the first Buddhist training monastery outside of Asia. A collection of his teishos (Zen talks) were bundled in the books *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* and *Not Always So: Practicing the True Spirit of Zen*. His lectures on the **Sandokai** are collected in *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness*. Suzuki's biography is captured in David Chadwick's 1999 book *Crooked Cucumber*.