

Title	Note on "Yakusoku" (約束)
Sub Title	
Author	伊藤, 清司(Ito, Seiji)
Publisher	三田史学会
Publication year	1958
Jtitle	史学 Vol.30, No.4 (1958. 3) ,p.1- 1
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	Abstract
Genre	
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00100104-19580300-0145

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SHIGAKU

(THE HISTORICAL SCIENCE)

VOL. XXX (1958) NO. IV

The Essence of the *Zen* (禪) Sect Pictures

Teizo SUGANUMA

The *Zen* (Dhyana), that is "holy meditation" in its original meaning of the word, has its ultimate purpose in the great Enlightenment, and it cannot be attained with any conceptional knowledge; it is the supreme wisdom to be obtained beyond any power of speculation. By acquiring this great Enlightenment man may be delivered not only from the problem of life and death, but also from all the sufferings of a human being. The objective description of the motives, by which the founder of the *Zen* sect was inspired to the great Enlightenment, and the landscape paintings with verses have been numerous counted among the *Zen* sect pictures. But it is not appropriate to regard them as the essential ones. The essence of the *Zen* sect pictures should be the manifestation of the very content of the great Enlightenment. One of the good examples is "The Catfish Caught with Gourd" by Josetsu, a Japanese *Zen* sect priest in the early fifteenth century. And the writer believes that "The Paintings Representing an Anecdote of Hui-Neng, the Sixth Inheritor of the *Zen* sect" attributed to Tsu-Weng, "An Arhan and a Serpentine" and "Kannon, Monkeys and a Crane" by Mu-ch'i must be held in the special esteem as the typical masterpieces of the *Zen* sect pictures. In these works, full of smooth and soft strokes, the liberated mind of the painters is most clearly evinced. It seems to the writer that the painters, without having attained the great Enlightenment, create such masterpieces illustrating the very essence of *Zen*.

Notes on "Yakusoku" (約束)

By Seiji Ito

There was a custom in ancient China that people would pledge their love with a bunch of grass or a bundle of sprigs, as is told in the poetry of Shih-chin (詩經) and others. Why it developed into an emblem of love can be traced in the word "yakusoku" (約束). The bunch of grasses was originally a magical object in which the spirits of gods were meant to dwell, and this bunch of grasses turned into the token attributed as the power to summon one's sweet-heart whom one might wish to have as his company. "Yakusoku", i. e. "to bind" or "to bundle", therefore, came to mean "chigiri", i. e. "promise" or "engagement".