

The disciple asked for a word of wisdom. Said the master "Go sit within your cell and your cell will teach you wisdom." "But I have no cell. I am no monk." "Of course you have a cell. Look within" (p. 14). "I wish to become a teacher of the Truth." "Are you prepared to be ridiculed, ignored and starving till you are forty-five?" "I am. But tell me: what will happen after I am forty-five." "You will have grown accustomed to it" (p. 19).

The anecdotes in the book speak for themselves.

**T. Kadankavil**

**Robert E. Morrill,**

*Sand and Pebbles* (Shasekishu): The Tales of Muju Ichien, A voice for pluralism in Kamakura Buddhism, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, pp. xxii+383.

The book contains translations and summaries of *Shasekishu* (*Send and Pebbles*) and selected translations from *Zotanshu* (*Casual Digressions*) of Muju Ichien (1226-1312), a Buddhist of Kamakura, Buddhism. Introduced by a historical sketch of the period, this book also contains a biography of Muju. Illustrations, charts, a chronology, glossary of terms, notes, an extensive bibliography and an index guide the reader into a seldom seen corner of old Japan.

It is believed that with the establishment of the military government at Kamakura in 1192 in Japan, a period of the Latter Days of the Law had begun after two millennia since the death of Sakyamuni (Sri Buddha), a period lasting ten thousand years in which human institutions and practice of True Law would be on the decline and human ability to reap the fruits of enlightenment would also have badly deteriorated. Muju Ichien knew this theme of decline well, and its variations appear throughout his writings. In this context, Muju seems to assume the role of a moralist either because of his austerity or his fondness for moralizing. Yet Muju could be of some interest to modern man because he is basically a story-teller. "His current reputation rests mainly on the insights which he provides us into the everyday life of Kamakura Japan, often presented with a sense of humour which survives the differences of time and place" (p.ix, x). Even if one has no interest in the doctrinal theorizing of Muju, one cannot easily ignore it if one wishes to know the rich Buddhist allusions in the stories. Muju was a person deeply conscious of our common human concerns. In order to understand him we have to enter his world with patience and a willingness to meet him on his own terms.