

71. Learning to be Silent

The pupils of the Tendai School used to study meditation before Zen entered Japan. Four of them who were intimate friends promised one another to observe seven days of silence.

On the first day all were silent. Their meditation had begun auspiciously, but when night came and the oil-lamps were growing dim one of the pupils could not help exclaiming to a servant: 'Fix those lamps.'

The second pupil was surprised to hear the first one talk. 'We are not supposed to say a word,' he remarked.

'You two are stupid. Why did you talk?' asked the third.

'I am the only one who has not talked,' muttered the fourth pupil.