



en is Taoism disguised as Buddhism. When twelve hundred years of Buddhist accretions are removed from Zen, it is revealed to be a direct evolution of the spirit and philosophy of Taoism. Indeed, the literature known as the *Lao Tzu* and the *Chuang Tzu*¹ begins a continuous tradition that can be followed through the Ch'an of China to the Zen of present-day Japan. The formative writings of early Taoism are essentially the teachings of Zen.

The similarity of Taoism and Zen is first suggested when the term "Zen Buddhism" is separated into its component parts. This is implicitly done in some modern Zen teaching. But it is most apparent in the West's contemporary and nonsectarian sense of Zen, a fresh and innocent response with a clarity that is uncomplicated by the traditional interpretations and the historical assumptions which have seen Zen as an inseparable part of Buddhism.

This separation of Zen from Buddhism is clearly evident in the wide variety of popular literature that finds Zen to be a critical component in tennis, skiing, mountaineering, running, drawing, jazz, even "motorcycle maintenance." Indeed, Zen is understood in the common mind to be a ubiquitous, inseparable part of ordinary life. But always without Buddhism. Such a separation helps to reveal Zen's closeness to the essential character of Taoism. It is also a reminder of Zen's own admonition about the folly of becoming attached to any system of understanding—even Buddhism, and especially the religion of Mahayana Buddhism that has housed Zen in China and Japan for centuries.

Buddhism has its own doctrinal motives for connecting