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From the Abbot

It is my strong wish, as the new abbot of The Zen Studies Society, that we trust in the life-giving profundity of our timeless Zen practice.

Let's get real, we often say. And what we mean is, Hey: I'm human, and you are, too. No need to pretend to be otherwise. It's because we're in this human form that we can realize our buddha-nature; we're humans in the process of becoming buddhas, and we're buddhas shining our light as humans.

We're in a period of transition at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo. After 50 years' Dharma work in America, Eido Roshi has retired, and I've been installed as abbot.

I don't pretend for a moment that I can offer the fathomless insight that Eido Roshi has as a teacher, but I vow to do my very best to honor our rich Dharma legacy. I will uphold and adhere to the Buddhist precepts, and I will maintain our Rinzai Zen tradition in a manner that is rigorous yet compassionate.

If you wish to enter into a dokusan relationship with me, the proper procedure is to write a letter to Eido Roshi requesting to change teachers. If not, you are welcome to remain sitting in the zendo.

Change is never easy. I remember when my son, who is now 30, was a young child, and would have days when nothing seemed to go right—and then would master a new skill. Those growth spurts (crawling, walking, using language) always seemed to be preceded by unaccountable and ear-splitting crying jags.

There are changes that I envision. I want to cultivate an atmosphere that is harmonious, warm, open, and respectful of everyone. Since my way as a teacher is more relational than hierarchical, I look forward to sharing creative ideas with residents and visitors alike. I welcome past and current students with deep concern for continuing our heritage and love of the Dharma to take part in shaping the future of Dai Bosatsu Zendo. From time to time I would like to bring poets, artists, environmentalists, and other stimulating people to share what they do, and I would like to reach out to the wider Catskills community.

These changes will evolve organically; they are not to be hurried, but they have begun. Supporting and encouraging each person's practice in appropriate ways, taking note of individual needs and talents: this is Rinzai Zen in an American setting.

Snow and ice have melted; spring rains soak the earth, and the sun coaxes new buds to open. With the readiness of time, fruits form and ripen. Saturated with the incomparable practice of Buddha-Dharma, let us work together to realize the Great Way here at Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji. Namu Dai Bosa!

With deep gassho,



Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat

Shinge Roshi's Installation

On January 1, 2011 at 1:00 pm, 120 people gathered to witness the installation of Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi as the 2nd Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji. The ceremony, though quite simple in ritual, marked one of the most momentous transitions in the long history of The Zen Studies Society and in the continuing unfolding of Rinzai Zen practice in the West.

In the crowded Dharma Hall, Shinge Roshi stood before Eido Roshi, who handed a simple wooden staff to her. For a moment, each had one hand grasping the staff, and the two stood eye-to-eye. Eido Roshi released his grip, and the responsibility for a sangha and a tradition shifted from teacher to heir.

Shinge Roshi returned to the center of the room and offered a verse composed for the occasion. She then ascended the teisho platform and gave her first teaching as abbot.

After the teisho, the community celebrated with a luncheon. Eido Roshi offered encouraging words to Shinge Roshi and the sangha. Shinge Roshi briefly articulated some of her thoughts and feelings. And Soun Joe Dowling, president of the board of directors of The Zen Studies Society, also delivered a short speech in praise of the society's new abbot. The celebration concluded with the chanting of "Namu Dai Bosa" as each participant came forward to make offerings and receive the 2011 Be Safe/Be Well cards (ofuda).

In the following pages, we present a

selection of writings – transcriptions of Shinge Roshi's verse and teisho, excerpts from the speeches given during the luncheon, as well as, reflections on the occasion. We hope the reader will get some sense of the import of this great change in our sangha and will share our excitement as we move into a new era. ❖



Days of Preparation

by Meigetsu Rebecca Beers

We spoke many languages; we were Dharma brothers and sisters from Dai Bosatsu Zendo, from the Zen Center of Syracuse, from New York Zendo Shoboji; our faces were Japanese, American, German, and more. There was a palpable feeling of connectedness among the dozen or so people working in the tenzo – scrubbing and peeling and stirring and cutting and arranging – putting

together a beautiful buffet for the New Year's Eve dinner and preparing the meals to be served before and after the installation ceremony.

Not until the Zen Center of Syracuse began figuring prominently in the blogs, did I feel inclined to read any of the acrimonious commentary. I was surprised and saddened by the vitriol and angry accusations. My experience during five days spent at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, working in preparation for the installation ceremony and celebration, shone in such sharp contrast to the negativity happening online.

The experienced helpers were so kind to the novices. Sometimes I could not understand the spoken language of the tenzo, Seizan, who directed me to "cut" or "clean." But his intention and his humor were clear, and each of us gave ourselves to the various tasks. Lann Ikeno patiently showed me how to operate the knife sharpener. Manu Sassoonian shared squash-chopping and dishwashing duties. Kiyuu-san made sure that each of us tasted his freshly made mochi. Hoken Pascal Burkart's left hand held the marinated tofu, while my right held the tomato slices that we latticed together into pretty red and white dishes.

The ceremony itself was beautiful. The gentle kindness of one teacher toward his heir. The long moment when one roshi handed the staff to another roshi. The simplicity of the wooden staff. The connection of everyone in the Dharma Hall, breathing in each moment. The presence of students from all the decades of all the sanghas. Three sanghas – joined for days in preparation – and finally joined in ceremony, seamlessly and harmoniously. ❖

No Knowing

by Caroline Savage

For weeks, guest lists had been revised, menus perfected, and every detail of the ceremony scrutinized. No snowflake fell in an inappropriate place.

Everything was planned so carefully. Nothing was certain.

When I think about the Shinzanshiki ceremony on the first day of 2011, the moment I remember is colored by the flurry of preparations and laughter as two sanghas forged into one. It is couched in winter stillness, and still ringing from the previous night's "Kanzeon" chanting around the bonsho. It contains all of these things. But the moment itself seems so mundane, as to be forgettable: lining the zendo with chairs.

Up to that point, everything had been a blur. For many of the days preceding the ceremony, there was so much work to be done that evening zazen was cancelled. With an hour to go before the sitting that would begin the installation, I knelt on carefully washed floorboards, spacing all the seats just so. A senior student approached, bending to my level, with further instructions for set-up. An instant before he stood to leave, the constant stream of motion ceased flowing.

I realized: He doesn't have any more of a clue about what comes after this hour than I do. Nobody does.

It was the leap into the air before our wings opened—this exhilarating not-knowing. In an hour, everything would be different. The ceremony would celebrate a new abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo and a union of my two spiritual families. It

felt like the wedding of two halves of my heart. Praying that each family would appreciate the other; watching it unfold effortlessly.

Time catapults us ahead, and suddenly we are sharing a celebratory meal, lovingly prepared with Seizan and Jodo at the helm, alongside bodhisattvas from Hoen-ji, Shobo-ji, and elsewhere. It is impossible to separate the samu of the tenzos into its component parts.

I find myself sitting next to a senior Hoen-ji student evoking our lore—she is one of the "attic people," from the days before the Zen Center moved to its current six-acre, three-building home, when our teacher drew kindred spirits to the third floor of her home for meditation. The student recounts the burning of our carriage house Zendo, unable to contain quiet tears. The fire happened more than a decade ago.

You couldn't write a better story: these two temples, so rich with their own histories, new and old characters, challenges and glories—all meeting together on this glittering afternoon on the cusp of the Year of the Rabbit.

Most guests leave soon after lunch, including my beloved roommate. At the end of the day I am alone in my room, reflecting on this immensity. My gratitude for all who have come before me to build this mandala flows suddenly from my eyes; I am completely paralyzed with love.

The first day of the year. The first page of this chapter. Not knowing. No prescription. Just this. ❖

*Diamond snowflakes
everywhere refracting
the great Bodhisattva's
boundless light
From nation to nation
in endless succession
Receiving and transmitting
the Dharma lamp.*

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat



Hekigan Roku, Case 86:

Ummon's "Each of You Has Your Own Light" by Shingee Roshi

ENGO'S INTRODUCTION

Master of circumstances, he allows not the least speck of dust to escape. He cuts off deluded streams of thought, leaving not a drop behind. If you open your mouth, you are mistaken. A moment's doubt, and you have missed the way. Tell me, what is the eye that has pierced the barriers? See the following.

MAIN SUBJECT

Ummon spoke to the assembly and said, "Each of you has your own light. If you try to see it, everything is darkness. What is your own light?" Later, in place of the disciples, he said, "The halls and the gate." And later still he said, "Blessing things can never be better than nothing."

SETCHO'S VERSE

*It illuminates itself,
Absolutely bright.*

*He gives a clue to the secret.
Flowers have fallen, trees cast no shadows;
How can you not see, if you look?
Seeing is non-seeing, non-seeing is seeing.
Facing backward on the ox,
You ride into the Buddha hall.*

TEISHO

Let us begin by chanting Attha Dipa together.

You are the light. Do not doubt. You are the refuge. There is no other refuge. Light of the Dharma; refuge of the Dharma. No other refuge.

When I was composing the verse that I recited a few moments ago, I didn't know which scrolls Eido Roshi would

select for the tokonoma (sacred alcove) at either side of the altar here. But the Dai Bosatsu Mandala took care of it. On the left is Kongo Shin—Diamond Mind. On the right is Soen Roshi's haiku, "Snow of each nation melting into Namu Dai Bosa."

It was Soen Roshi who brought the Attha Dipa verse to us, having returned from a trip to India, where he saw this inscription in the stupa containing Shakyamuni Buddha's relics; it was the Buddha's final teaching to his disciples as they gathered round in anguish at the thought of his departure. What shall we do without you? How can we practice without your guidance? Be a light unto yourself, he said. You have your own light. When we sing Attha Dipa together, we are imbued with the conviction that it is true—or at least with the faith that it can one day feel true. Yet if we look at our daily comings and goings, our adversarial views and self-righteous opinions, we quickly find ourselves doubting. We don't feel the light within—rather than trusting in the lamp of wisdom, we fall into the darkness of ignorance, and nestle in the familiar cocoon of self-preoccupation, self-absorption. Then we wonder why we're so miserable, why we feel so cut off and isolated, gripped by fear and insecurity. But remember, Ummon, Rinzai, Joshu, Hakuin—all the great Zen masters of old, as well as the Zen masters of our own time—had to contend with their own doubts, their own struggles. Only through strenuous and uncompromising effort could they realize their own light.

Ummon Bunnen Zenji is one of the greatest of all these masters. He founded the Ummon School. Even though his lineage did not continue, his teachings are very much alive today. They appear in five cases of the *Mumonkan* and 18 cases

of the *Hekigan Roku*, such as, Every Day is a Good Day; Golden Wind; Particle after Particle Samadhi; Staff Becoming a Dragon; Medicine and Sickness Cure Each Other. His poetic expression was powerful, abrupt, sharp and direct, not flowery, not refined—his words were few. He was a genius for laying bare the pure facticity of This. One of his most famous responses was just one word: "Kan!" (Barrier), which has resounded through the ages, just as has Joshu's "Mu."

Ummon was born in 864, late in the Tang dynasty, at a time of great political turbulence in China—from 842 to 845, there was government persecution of Buddhism and other "foreign" religions. Hundreds of thousands of monks and nuns were forced to return to secular life; thousands of monasteries and temples were destroyed. Gradually that government became weaker, and Buddhism had a resurgence. History repeats itself—we can see a similar resurgence beginning in contemporary China.

During Ummon's early monastic training with a Vinaya master, a rebellion took place and new leaders emerged. One of them became Ummon's sponsor.

At the age of 25, Ummon went to Bokushu's place. Bokushu had been a disciple of Obaku, but left monastic life, returned home to take care of his mother, became a sandal-maker, and lived as a recluse. He rarely allowed anyone to see him.

When he went to Bokushu, Ummon was in the grips of his own struggle—Who am I? What is this seemingly separate self that keeps rearing up and bossing me around, bringing suffering to me and others? Perhaps he felt as though he had no hope of breaking through. The story

goes that Bokushu always kept his door shut; whenever he heard footsteps, if he discerned something worthwhile, some vigor and readiness, he would say, "Come in!" Then, as soon as the student entered, he'd grab him and shout, "Speak!" At the slightest hesitation, he'd push him out and slam the door behind him. This is true dokusan—most of us are too kind. Even so, people fear dokusan; fear being exposed. Senju wrote generously and humorously about his dokusan "performance anxiety" in this issue of the *Dharma Connection*, Ho-en-ji's journal. Our fear of being exposed—it's funny, because the fear leads to amassing layers of crud, while what's being covered up is the real deal. Without the willingness to be exposed, how can the light shine through?

It's just like that story about the huge concrete Buddha in a war-torn part of Thailand, being moved on a flatbed truck to a temple in a safer part of the country; when the monks reached their destination at night, and tried to get the Buddha off the truck, it slipped and cracked. Later that night one of them took a flashlight to see how bad the damage was. He was shocked to find light shining back at him. In the morning, the monks examined it and discovered that the concrete was actually just a shell, which had evidently been used to conceal the real treasure within: a beautiful golden Buddha. I often quote Leonard Cohen's poem, "So ring the bell that still can ring/ forget your perfect offering/ there is a crack in everything/ that's how the light gets in."

The self we have so diligently constructed, and feel we must protect at any cost, is just a false shell—but we fear the cracking of that exterior. We want to control what others see, due to our lack of confidence in the golden light within.

There is a crack in everything—the ancient Mimbres people of the Southwestern United States were famous for their beautiful pottery—but they always left a crack, some kind of opening in each piece, so that the spirit—the light—could flow through freely. Seeking to make of ourselves a perfect offering, we seal ourselves in, becoming static, rigid, lifeless. After all, it's through our imperfections that we grow, develop compassion, deepen our understanding, until one day something takes us by surprise and suddenly that outer husk is shucked off.

This is what happened to Ummon. On his first two attempts to have dokusan with Bokushu, each time, he knocked on the door, and Bokushu said, "Who is it?" "It's Ummon." "What do you want?" Ummon said, "I'm not clear about myself.

Please give me your instruction." Bokushu opened the door, took one look, and shut it again. On the third day, Ummon knocked, and when Bokushu opened the door, Ummon stuck his foot in the doorway. Bokushu grabbed Ummon and shouted, "Speak!" Ummon began to speak. Bokushu gave him a shove: "Too late!" and slammed the door, breaking Ummon's foot. With that sudden Wham!—at that moment, Ummon had a great realization. He was cracked open; he saw the light of his true Self. Any iota of hesitation was gone.

Ummon stayed with Bokushu for some time, but Bokushu was quite elderly, and

he told Ummon to go see Seppo for training after enlightenment, a very important matter for anyone who shows promise as a Zen teacher. Seppo was renowned, and had about 1,000 monks training under him. From the beginning, Seppo and Ummon had a deep affinity, and Ummon spent many years there, and became Seppo's Dharma heir. After a period of further pilgrimage, he became the head monk at another monastery and then was appointed abbot there by the imperial ruler. Some years later, yearning for a more secluded life, he received permission to found a temple on a remote mountain. He was 64 when he settled on Mt. Ummon, and taught there until his death at the age of 85.

In all of his teachings, Ummon held fast—he gave out no storyline to hang onto, no metaphysical analysis, no theoretical explanation. He just pointed students back to their own light, cutting off their dependence on his or any others' insights—we can see many similarities to Rinzai's way of teaching. Here is a good example:

One day Ummon entered the Dharma Hall and said, "If, in bringing up a case I cause you to accept it instantly, I am already spreading shit on top of your heads. Even if you could understand the whole world when I hold up a single hair, I'd still be operating on healthy flesh.

*Ummon spoke to the assembly and said
Each of you has your own light."*

You must first truly attain this level of realization. If you're not there, you must not pretend that you are. Rather, you ought to take a step back, seek under your very feet, and see what there is to what I'm saying! In reality, there is not the slightest thing that could be the source of understanding or doubt for you. Rather, you have the one thing that matters, each and every one of you! ... You must neither fall for the tricks of others nor simply accept their directives. The instant you see an old monk open his mouth, you tend to stuff those big rocks right into yours, and when you cluster in little groups to discuss his words, you're exactly like those green flies on shit that struggle back to back to gobble it up! The old masters could not help using up their whole life-times for the sake of you all. So they dropped a word here and half a phrase there to give you a hint. You may have understood these things; put them aside and make some effort for yourselves, and you will certainly become a bit familiar with it. Hurry up! Hurry up! Time does not wait for anyone, and breathing out is no guarantee of breathing in again! Or do you have a spare body and mind to fritter away? You absolutely must pay close attention. Take care!"

So, not wanting to spread shit on top of your heads, nevertheless let's take a look at this case. Engo says in his Introduction, "Master of circumstances," referring to Ummon, "he allows not the least speck of dust to escape." Ummon holds fast, replying to his own statement ("Each of you has your own light") with half a phrase ("the halls and the gate") that can't be adopted as our own; there's nothing to gobble up. He demands our

effort, our close attention. "He cuts off the deluded stream of thought, leaving not a drop behind." Instead of giving us a toehold, he pulls the rug out from under us. "If you open your mouth, you are mistaken." Speak, speak! Too late! "If you doubt for a moment, you have missed the way." A moment's hesitation—a tenth of an inch's difference, and heaven and earth are set apart. "Tell me, what is the eye that has pierced the barriers?" When you see into—experience kensho with—these cases, they are not the leavings of ancient worthies, but have become your own flesh and blood—your own light.

Main Subject: Ummon spoke to his assembly and said, "Each of you has your own light." Of course no one owns this light. It is the same light, the same source, the one suchness. Yet each of us has our own awakening to this light, and our own vital expression, which no one else can experience, just as we cannot have someone else's experience.

Rabbi Susya said, a short while before his death: "In the world to come I shall not be asked, 'Why were you not Moses?' I shall be asked, 'Why were you not Susya?'"

Today I have taken the high seat for the first time, and today, the first day of the first month, is the first day of my role as abbot. My gratitude to Eido Roshi is far beyond any words. I have learned so much from him, and continue to do so; our minds are as one. Yet if I were to take this position with some idea that I should try to be like him, I would be doomed from the start. In the world to come—from this day forward—I shall

not be asked, “Why are you not Eido Roshi?” I shall be judged according to whether or not I am Shinge. Some of you may be disappointed; I won’t blame you. I intend to uphold the profound and dynamic practice here as it has been conveyed in our Dharma lineage, from Shakyamuni Buddha, Bodhidharma Daishi Dai Osho, Rinzai Gigen Zenji, Hakuin Ekaku Zenji, Takuju Kosen Zenji, on down to Soyen Shaku Roshi, Yamamoto Gempo Roshi, Nakagawa Soen Roshi, and Shimano Eido Roshi. Equally firm is my vow to uphold and adhere to the ethical principles of our Buddhist precepts. As we go along there may be changes you don’t agree with, but as we know, there is nothing that does not change. I invite you to work with me in a relational and open way. As we know, always there are some who leave and others who come. All I can do is to act according to my own light, which means acting in accordance with Dharma.

Ummon then said to his assembly, “If you try to see it, everything is darkness.” When young Joshu went to Nansen and asked, “What is the Way?” Nansen replied, “Ordinary mind is the Way.” Joshu asked, “Shall I try to seek after it?” Shall I try to see it? Nansen said, “If you try for it, you will become separated from it.” Joshu asked, “How can I know the Way unless I try for it?” to which Nansen said, “The Way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion; not knowing is confusion. When you have really reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can it be talked about on the level of right and wrong?”

“If you try to see it, everything is darkness”—How can you see your own light? As Meister Eckhart put it, “The eye cannot see itself.” If you try to capture it, if you try to characterize, define, or categorize it, then your own light is sealed up again, encrusted in concrete. In his Preface to the *Hekigan Roku*, Engo gives this verse:

*Boundless wind and moon—
the eye within the eyes.
Inexhaustible heaven and earth—
the light beyond light.
The willow dark, the flower bright—
10,000 houses;
Knock at any door—
there’s one who will respond.*

Ummon asks us, “What is your own light?” What is this light beyond light? Everyone has this light—knock at any door. The one who responds—the one who is ready, who has realized the eye within the eyes, is That One Shining Alone.

For some 20 years, Ummon kept telling his students, “Each of you has your own light.” But no one could respond; no one could speak when he asked, “What is your own light.” So as he often did, he answered for them: “The halls and the gate.” How wonderful! Just ordinary mind. Nothing special; no garnishment, no embroidery, no flowery metaphors. This light is shining everywhere, if we have eyes to see—in the Dharma Hall, the zendo, the tenzo, the sleeping quarters, the toilet rooms, the office—we are sheltered, given refuge by none other than this, Dhamma sarana—the refuge of the Dharma. And the gate—passing freely through, with no impediment, no obstacle, no encrustation,

nothing extra—this gate to the One and Only, as Vimalakirti put it; this opening to boundless wind and moon.

And then Ummon said, “Blessing things is never better than nothing.” Whatever lofty praises we can give it, however fervent our homage, it is just adding legs to a snake—superfluous, and therefore suspect. Something, no matter how wonderful, can never be better than nothing.

Setcho’s Verse: “It illuminates itself, Absolutely bright.” Have no dependence on anyone else’s light; your own light is none other than the great bodhisattva’s boundless light. But you must find out for yourself, not take anyone’s words for it.

*Have no dependence
on anyone else’s light;
your own light is none
other than the great
bodhisattva’s
boundless light.*

“He gives a clue to the secret.” Ummon tells us, “The halls and the gate.” Here it is—we’re surrounded by it, we’re permeated by it, through and through, wherever we go.

“Flowers have fallen, trees cast no shadows.” Nothing obscures this state of absolute clarity; it’s all revealed. There’s

nothing extra. The halls and the gate—the bare presence, illuminating everywhere.

“How can you not see, if you look?” When you try to see it, you’re lost in the darkness of ignorance; when you simply look, without looking for anything outside, you become a seeing eye. A seeing-eye dog for the blind—your compassion freely flows outward to whomever and whatever is seen; that’s your vow in activity. With your Dharma eye open to This, This, This, then indeed, the halls and the gate are alive. It could not be otherwise.

“Seeing is non-seeing; non-seeing is seeing.” Your usual way of seeing, scrutinizing and searching for what will benefit you, seeking outside for some useful thing, some informative saying, leads you right back into blindness. When you enter into Mu, all the conceptual clinging of the discriminating intellect drops away, and then you can truly see.

“Facing backward on the ox, you ride into the Buddha hall.” When you give up seeking after logic and direction, and give yourself over to absolute trust in Dharma—when you throw yourself into the house of Buddha—you are none other than a buddha, at this very time, in this very place; free, and completely at home wherever you may go.

On this first day of the year 2011, let us go forth together, giving ourselves away and finding refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Let us forge ahead boldly, guided by the lamp of our own light. ❖

Eido Shimano Roshi

Retired Founding Abbot

We've all gathered here at Dai Bosatsu Zendo to witness the installation ceremony of Shingeshitsu Roko Roshi, who from now on, I will call "Shinmei-san" – which means "New Life."

As you know, there are many Buddhist groups and Zen groups nowadays. And I respect their traditions and leadership. But, we have to be proud of this particular tradition known as The Zen Studies Society.

It was founded by Cornelius Crane in 1956 to support Dr. D.T. Suzuki's academic work at Columbia University. D.T. Suzuki is responsible for introducing Zen Buddhism to the West. He is, so to speak, the First Patriarch in The Zen Studies Society. His teacher, Soyen Shaku, brought Buddhism for the first time to America in 1893.

The society was created and, in the beginning, was quite active. But when D.T. Suzuki went back to Japan, it became an inactive organization. And then, I took over and shifted the society's emphasis from academic study to practice. With all your help, Shobo-ji was born in 1968, and DBZ was dedicated in 1976.

Today, Shinmei-san offered a verse: From nation to nation, this Dharma lineage, which is boundless, receiving and trans-



mitting... In our tradition, she and I are the only lineage-holders. I have deep trust in her insight and leadership. There will be no problem with this, as long as we work together like we have these three days.

Residents of DBZ, students of Hoen-ji, students from Shobo-ji, and others came together to work harmoniously. This is not a concept, but the reality of The Zen Studies Society mission. With each of your understanding and cooperation, I trust this will continue.

In any rate, thank you – for your friendship, your support, and your cooperation – these past 46 years in New York. And now I am 80 years old, so allow me to be emancipated from the heavy responsibilities.

And, as much as you supported me, please support and encourage Shinmei-san, so that she will grow. So that someday, this Lamp – coming from Gempo Roshi to Soen Roshi, from Soen Roshi to me, from me to Shinmei-san – will be transmitted to future generations. This is the unique part of Rinzai Zen practice; and this is what we are now.

Thank you again, and Happy New Year! ❖



Soun Joe Dowling

Board President

This occasion marks a new beginning for our society and American Zen. Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi, installed today as the new abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo and The Zen Studies Society, has been a true student of Zen for many years. She has dedicated her adult life to nurturing the roots of Dharma – here in the rich, diverse spiritual soil of America.

Her life preparation for her new duties has been a long journey. She has been married and has a child, a son, Jesse, who is here with us today. She has been a dynamic teacher in the college classroom and in the zendo, and she has written and edited seminal documents important in the history of American Zen. In addition, she has been very active in all the activities surrounding the development of Hoen-ji, the Syracuse Zen Center. Shinge Roshi has earned every one of her titles.

Therefore, let us all now take a vow to support her in this important work. She needs our help in so many ways – through our work efforts, our samu; of course, through our economic support; and especially through our own spiritual practice, our Zen. With Shinge Roshi's leadership and our support great things can continue to happen – here at DBZ, at Hoen-ji in Syracuse, at Shobo-ji in New York City, and throughout the wider American Zen community. ❖

Teisho Preface

by Fujin

On September 25, Yamakawa Roshi arrived at JFK together with five Shogen-ji unsui. After five years of absence, he finally returned to co-lead Golden Wind Sesshin along with Eido Roshi. I was asked to write a few lines about this event, but besides the names of the attending monks, I knew I could only misrepresent the impact his visit had on all the sesshin participants. So, I thought it would be more than fair to let you hear his own voice. Below, you will find transcribed the teisho he delivered on September 30. The attending unsuis were: Chitoku Zenji, Eiko Zenji, Souma Zenji, Daigen Zenji, and Keisho Zenji. The teisho was translated in real time by Wakana Nomura; the transcript was further polished by Eido Roshi, Wakana, and myself.

Mumonkan, Case 34

Nansen's "Wisdom is not the Way"
Yamakawa Sogen Roshi

KOAN

Nansen said, "Mind is not Buddha. Wisdom is not the Way."

MUMON'S COMMENT

Of Nansen, it has to be said that by getting old he resorted to shame. Just opening his stinky mouth, he exposed the disgrace of his own family shame. Be that as it may, only few are grateful for his kindness.

MUMON'S VERSE

*The sky clears, the sun appears bright,
The rains fall, the earth moistens.
With all his heart,
he has explained everything.
But I am afraid,
few are able to believe it.*

TEISHO

Today's teisho is about Nansen Fugen Zenji, who is a disciple of Baso Douitsu Zenji, whom I spoke about the other day. Nansen Zenji is a brother disciple with Isan Reiyu Zenji and Hyakujo Ekai Zenji. Yesterday's case was Case 33: "No Mind, No Buddha" which is very similar to today's subject. Case 33 is a story when Baso Douitsu Zenji became old, and today's case happens when Nansen Zenji is over 80 years old. In the *Nansen Goyou*, there is an episode: "A Monk asked Nansen: 'All patriarchs until Baso Douitsu Zenji said "Ordinary Mind is the Way." But master, you started to say, "Wisdom is not the Way!" All the monks are puzzled! Please guide us with your compassionate advice.'"

Of course, the questioner was being very sarcastic. In fact he was really criticizing Master Nansen. In the *Mumonkan*, Case 19, the topic is "Ordinary Mind is the Way." Joshu Zenji asked, "What is the Way?" Nansen Zenji replied, "Ordinary Mind is the Way." Joshu replied, "I already know that! But shall I reflect on it or not?" Nansen Roshi replied, "To reflect on it is to be separated from it!" Joshu couldn't understand. So, Nansen continued, "The Way has nothing to do with knowing or not knowing. Knowing is false knowing. Not knowing is blindness. It is as vast and

open as the great empty space." In Case 19, Nansen said, "The Way is like a clear sky. It includes everything, but the detail is not necessary." Hearing this, Joshu understood. So, to understand the origin of this Case 34, "Wisdom is not the Way", you have to be familiar with Case 19, "Ordinary mind is the Way."

The other day, I talked about the roots of trees. There are two kinds of roots: One is called the "main" root. The main root doesn't look essential to the survival of the tree. On the other hand, the side roots are taking in the water and nutrients and helping the tree to grow. The main root, which grows straight under the tree, does not have anything to do with water or nutrition. So, let us think about the great earth. Outside Dai Bosatsu Zendo, we can see many maple trees and other kinds of trees. At the beginning, each seed dropped on the earth then sprouted and grew. But the great earth is the same all over. Different kinds of trees like maple trees and oak trees need different kinds of water and nutrients. Dandelions sprout in the same earth but take whatever nutrients they need to become dandelions. This doesn't only apply to plants. Human beings are also born from the great earth. Dogs, bears, and monkeys are also brought up from the great earth. The earth contains all kinds of nutrients, which each being taken according to their need to grow. The Way is like the great earth. I would like you to remember this for now.

This main root is like our Buddha Nature. It goes straight down into the great earth. The side roots go sideways and, as I said before, they are responsible for getting water and nutrition. So, for what purpose do trees have a main root, after all? Why is it going deeply into the



earth? The only reason is to become one with Buddha, one with the Way. Do you see a similarity between our Buddha Nature and this main root? Trees grown in a nursery no longer have the main root [Editor's note: In a previous teisho, Roshi explained that because they are transplanted, once cut, this main root never grows back]. But we human beings don't have visible roots, do we? Where is it then? Though it is formless, how can we extend it deeply and firmly, and rely on it? Whether we are babies, or 60 years old, or 70 years old, it makes no difference. Whoever realizes the existence of this main root can extend it and depend on it. Your age, or your gender, or your origins make no difference whatsoever.

When Nansen Zenji was young, he constantly said, "Ordinary Mind is the Way." Fortunately a brilliant disciple, Joshu Zenji, got enlightened by hearing this saying. Unfortunately, we bumpkins might get relieved right away by hearing this saying. Whether we eat, wash our face, or take a walk, whether we speak to each other, the Way is right here! Buddha is right here. Hearing this, we become very grateful saying, "Oh, that's right!" And by doing so, we neglect the main root. So that is why, as Nansen Zenji became older, he started to say, "Your heart is not Buddha! The Wisdom of the Buddhist teaching is not the Way!" In terms of trees, it is just like their side roots. Your regular knowledge comes from the side roots. But this is just one part of the earth, not everything. We must become one with the Way by growing our invisible main root. This is summed up in the saying, "Mind is not Buddha. Buddha is not the Way."

Mumon Zenji seemingly criticizes Nansen Zenji – in fact he praises him – saying, "Nansen is getting really old; did he suddenly change his mind? His teeth are rotting; his breath has become foul; and now he's mumbling, 'Mind is not Buddha; Wisdom is not the Tao.' He is disgracing himself!" However, this is nothing but Nansen Zenji's utter kindness! This kind of kindness is recognized by very few...

Mumon's verse clarifies the meaning: "The sky clears, the sun appears bright. The rain falls, the earth moistens." Indeed, Mother Nature is teaching the Dharma like this all the time. But we fools cannot believe it. "Ordinary Mind is the Way" would perfectly do. But we ordinary people would tend to think, "OK, ordinary Mind is the Way! No problem, we can just get nourished by

the side roots! How easy!" And we might end up forgetting the main root. If we could just trust the Great Earth... but instead we are satisfied with superficial nutrients. It's OK, as long as you are well. But if the typhoon comes, you'll be toppled down for sure! That is why Nansen Roshi started to say, "Mind is not Buddha; Wisdom is not the Way." Today's teisho is over; there is no other point to make. But there are 45 minutes left, so please endure my talk a little longer.



The other day, while speaking with Shimano Roshi, we talked about a musical show on Broadway, which was directed and adapted for a Japanese audience by Dr. Hinohara. It's called, *Freddy the Leaf*. Hinohara Sensei is currently 98 years old, becoming 99. He is a medical doctor, and he was the president of Saint Luke's Hospital (a very prestigious hospital) in Tokyo. He is very strong for his age. He never uses an escalator, but he always uses stairs. When he is in a good mood, he skips steps and frightens everyone. As for his meals, he eats very little during day time and eats regular portions at night. I had a chance to eat with him, so I witnessed it. He lives in Tokyo.

One day he went to Hiroshima for a seminar, and rode the Shinkansen for five hours. During this five-hour ride, he did nothing but study for his lecture and prepare for his theses and talks. Moreover, once a week, every week, he writes an essay for a newspaper. A real superman! He graduated from Kyoto University. I have some good friends in Kyoto University who know him well. Last summer, before kakikoza (the summer seminar) at Shogen-ji, I spoke with a Kyoto University professor, saying I was intending to invite Hinohara Sensei. The professor nodded, saying, "Hinohara Sensei is not an ordinary person. We call him 'superman!'" Hinohara Sensei gave a talk at Shogen-ji during kakikoza. He sits too. His Zen teacher is a Korean monk. In the last part of his presentation, he related the following story:

"We are all currently alive. Me too, I am alive. I am told that I am very active for my age. But some day, I will die too. I am intending to live until the age of 120. Until the age of 110, my schedule is already fully booked. The last 10 years of my life, I will take it easy." He is an awesome person! "But eventually, even I will die! Upon dying, it's already been decided where I will go. I will meet Enma-san (the gate-keeper of Hell)."

Do you all know the gate keeper? You will all meet him sooner or later. Enma-san keeps a record of all your deeds and he decides where you have to go. You go... to Hell – this way! You go... to purgatory. And you... well... you endured a great deal – go to Heaven! How will this be decided? Hinohara Sensei described it like this:

"There is a scale. Where you will go will be decided by the scale. The scale has

two plates – one on the left and the other on the right – hanging down from both ends of the beam. The right plate describes the amount of time you spent for yourself. The left plate describes the amount of time you spent for others. The plates move according to your deeds, and you will know where you will go by looking at how the beam and plates tilt.

"In our case, I am sure the scale looks like this (showing the time used for ourselves much heavier). And without fail, we will go to Hell. However, the more you use your time for others, the plates will balance and tilt the other way... it's not too late!" Half-jokingly, Hinohara Sensei encouraged us to help each other.

"To go to a better place after this life, you must do good things for others. If you use your time for others, of course you'll go to a good place after you die. But if the plate which describes the amount of time you use for others gets heavier and tilts while you are living, it means that you are already in Heaven while you are still alive."

Hearing this, we all laughed hard. But we also felt relieved. This is so clear! And measurable! So, no matter how little, use your time for others. But hearing this, I realized something else. We say, 'it is for others' sake, but usually there is a thought left in our mind that it is also for our own sake. So the question is: how should you really understand this scale?

We are 6.5 billion people living on earth. This means there should be 6.5 billion scales – one for each of us. However Dr. Hinohara says—and I agree—that only one scale is necessary. Can one scale determine the fate of 6.5 billion people? Yes it can. How could it be possible?

Picture this: there is a scale with two plates. Like regular scales, one on the right and one on the left side. The fulcrum point is in the middle of the beam; the scale constantly rotates around its own center, and it can calculate the fate of a different person, according to where it faces. Every time it rotates, it will describe another person...

We only need one scale, and what is really important is the fulcrum in the center. Every person is supported and connected by just this one point. This point is common to every single one of us. This is what we call Buddha; this is Tao. I realized this while hearing this story.

Until September 12, I was in Taiwan for a few days. We did sesshin at Toku Gen Zen-ji. Choku-san, the abbot of Toku Gen Zen-ji, practiced at Shogen-ji. After sesshin, he took us around for some sightseeing. The place we went used to be closed to foreigners. It's called, "Kin Mon Tou," or "the Golden Gate Island." There are two islands with this name – a large and a small one. We went to the small one. From one side to the other, it may take only 45 minutes by car. But in the whole world, there is no island like this. It's a fortress. The entire island was transformed into a military base. It is a very rocky island; they made tunnels everywhere for building air-raid shelters, and the underground quarters look just like a huge colony of ants. The population of the army reaches 100,000, while the civilians only number 20,000. If an emergency, like a war, begins, all the civilians and soldiers can hide in the air-raid shelters and live safely for a while. Right now, there is no war. Twenty years ago, Taiwan and China made a cease-fire agreement. But until then, China had attacked Taiwan several times, killing many civilians.

In the zazen group which participated in our sesshin, there are two members who survived some trauma on this island. They are husband and wife. The husband guided us around. During the trip he told us an amazing story about his own experience during his childhood. In 1949, China was separated into two: the Peoples' Republic of China and Taiwan. Eight years later in 1957, China started to attack Taiwan. Kin Mon Tou is located between Taiwan and China.

The Taiwanese man from our group was born around that time. In 1957, he was in primary school, first or second grade. One day before the worst of the war broke out, he went home from school and did his homework. (From this point, his story becomes really mysterious; hearing it, we all became speechless.) While doing his homework, all of a sudden the room became pitch black. But the light was switched on. He rubbed his eyes and soon his vision returned to normal. So he started studying again. Soon after, the same thing happened again. This strange incident was repeated three times. He thought, "Oh, I must be too tired. I'd better go to bed." He went to his bed. There, his younger brother was already asleep. As soon as he reached his bed, a bomb exploded right above the desk where he had been studying. The desk was just a few meters away from his bed, so he became seriously injured.

He noticed a big injury on his head; his limbs and stomach were wounded. He could barely stay conscious. Though he could barely move, with his eyes he started to search for his younger brother. What happened to my brother? Is he all right? Then he saw him nearby, lying

unconscious. He thought his little brother might have died! He started to crawl toward his brother and dragged him out of the house. As soon as they got outside, the whole house crashed down. He and his brother were miraculously saved.

He then told us: "Because of this event, I am able to be here now." Later, he joined the Police School and became a policeman. He worked for the Guard Department in Taipei and served in several important posts. He didn't give us any further details, but said that he became a policeman because of this childhood story. Around this time, the people living in Kin Mon Tou had a hard time getting good jobs. He recently retired from the chief of the Police Department. Because he was very influential and talented, people asked him to stay longer. But nevertheless, he retired. He just said, "This is it." The wartime childhood event had brought him to become the head of the police department. The discreet man from Kin Mon Tou did not explain further. So I thought I need to think about it. Let's go back to his story.

Before the bomb exploded, he said his vision had gone black – three times. What does it mean? In *Mumonkan*, there is a koan, "Kokushi San Kan". Echu Kokushi calls his attendant three times. His attendant responds "Hai!" (Yes!) three times. It is very similar! The third time, the Taiwanese student moved to his bed, following the signal that Buddha gave him. But this is not the main point of the story.

First, the boy's life was simply saved by Buddha. Next, he had humane feelings,



while almost losing his own life. His heart made him search for his younger brother, and he became concerned about the little one instead of trying to save his own life. He forced himself to move so that he could check on his younger brother. And a second after, the house crashed down right in front of his eyes. And then he fainted. As a little boy, he realized something. So, he decided to become a policeman. With maximum effort, he became the head of the Police Department.

I kind of know why he decided to retire early. He used to be very ambitious and ready to pursue his own ideals when he became a policeman. But in reality he learned within an organizational structure it was impossible to stick to his own ideal. So, he became a tour guide. Not just an ordinary guide; he always takes people to the mountains. He said someday he'd like to go to America and climb the Rocky Mountains with us. The origin of his transformation was his pure heart.

Fifteen more minutes to go. I have another story involving pure hearts. This story is about young children aged 2 or 3. This is not my personal experience. I read this story in an article in a magazine. The person who wrote the article is a kindergarten teacher. It goes as follows:

Young children can't use difficult words; they always create their own funny words which make us laugh. One day the teacher overheard a conversation between two kids. They were just about to promise something to each other, saying, "Let's meet tomorrow or the day after, and play together," something like that. But they didn't know the proper word: 'promise' (in Japanese: yakusoku). Instead, the two kids came up with a word that sounds kind of similar to it. One of them said, 'yakekuso' (in Japanese, it means 'desperation' or 'abandonment') intending to say, 'yakusoku'. The two kids totally understood each other, while crying out "Yakekuso! (Desperation!)" for 'promise'. The two words in Japanese may sound quite similar to children, but the meanings are totally different. The teacher who heard it couldn't stop laughing. The story ended this way.

On the surface, it is just a cute and funny episode. But for me, somehow the words made me think of a totally different, yet a much deeper, meaning. We all make promises to each other. But how many of them do we really keep? So, those of us who are really sincere in keeping a promise need to be desperate about it.

I told this story during the sesshin in Switzerland. I was told there is also a word in German which means, 'desperation'. My disciple Sotan quickly looked it up in the dictionary. He found a German

word which means, 'to throw yourself away'. The Japanese word, 'yake' means 'throw away yourself,' not to think about yourself even for a moment. Just forget yourself! It's not merely a funny story, you see. 'Someone' must have made this teacher write this story. Who made her write this story? Don't you think it was God or Buddha? If you truly make a promise, you must throw yourself away. I was shocked when I realized this meaning.

And I started to think something more. We have been given this life. Because we were given this life, we can be here today. At the time we received our life, did we promise something in return? With whom did we make a promise? To the one who sent us here. Not to our mother or father. To a much bigger existence. I think you get it: to God and Buddha. Isn't it why Hakuin Zenji said, "Sentient beings are primarily all Buddha"? So, which promise did we make, after all? Since we all were born as a child of God or a child of Buddha, the promise is already decided: To live a life according to Buddha's way, God's way.

This is what Nansen Roshi is talking about. "Ordinary Mind is the Way" is fine. But most of us forget this promise and end up taking the easy route. Then, it's no longer OK. In this case, your ordinary Mind is not at all Buddha! You all think you have Buddha's wisdom, but this is far from being the Way! Those of you who can heed this, no matter what Nansen says or how he looks at you, it doesn't matter after all.

Don't we do sesshin in order to keep this promise? Isn't it why we practice Zen? If you are willing to keep this promise, how will you do it? There is only one way! You must throw yourself away! ❖

Hekigan Roku, Case 45

Joshu's "Seven-pound Summer Robe"
Eido Shimano Roshi

ENGO'S INTRODUCTION

If he wants to speak, he speaks, and none can rival him throughout the whole universe. When he wants to act, he acts, and his activity is peerless. The one is like shooting stars and flashing lightning, the other like crackling flames and flashing blazes. When he sets up his forge to discipline his disciples, they lay down their arms and lose their tongues. I'll give you an example. See the following.

MAIN SUBJECT

A monk asked Joshu, "All the dharmas are reduced to Oneness. But what is Oneness reduced to?" Joshu said, "When I was in Seishu, I made a summer robe. It weighed seven pounds."

SETCHO'S VERSE

*You brought a piece of logic
To trap the old gimlet,
But do you know the meaning
Of the seven-pound summer robe?*

*Now I have thrown it away
Into the Western Lake
The pure wind is blowing under my feet.
To whom should it be imparted?*

TEISHO

On June 3, 1961, Hannya Kutsu Gempo Giyu Zenji entered Senge (continuing teaching in another realm). He was 96 years old. This teisho is dedicated to him. Every Dai Bosatsu Day, since 1976, we call all innen Patriarchs' names, either at Sangha Meadow, in the main entrance, or in the kaisando. Beginning with the 20th century, except for Soyen Shaku



Roshi, I was blessed to meet them all. Each master had his own wonderful passion to teach, and so it is inappropriate to say who was best among them. But for me, Gempo Roshi was the most influential. Without Gempo Roshi, his Dharma heir Soen Roshi, and Soen Roshi's friend Nyogen Senzaki, the Dai Bosatsu Mandala sangha was not born; consequently, we would not be here today.

So, who was Gempo Roshi? To state it briefly and directly, he was a man of virtue. Furthermore, he thoroughly realized the principle of the universe and assimilated it in his everyday life, whether he met the Emperor, Prime Minister, monks, nuns, lay people, or even beggars. After his departure, his body was cremated, and his ashes buried in five different places: at Ryutaku-ji; at Shoin-ji (Hakuin Zenji's temple); at

Empuku-ji in Kyoto, where Gempo Roshi last practiced as a monk, (his teacher, Shoun Shitsu Zenji, was the abbot of Empuku-ji, and his remains are buried there as well); in Wakayama Prefecture, where he was raised by his step-parents, and at Sekkei-ji in Shikoku, where he was ordained.

As he often said, after his death he would work much harder, as has been the case for Nyogen Senzaki as well. While some of us will be forgotten within a few years after passing, Gempo Roshi has increasingly been encouraging us, each of us according to what we do. Like the hokku (Dharma drum), when you strike gently, it responds gently. When you strike strongly, or properly, the sound comes out accordingly. Not only Gempo Roshi or the hokku, but our practice is according to our deeds. There are no miracles, no shortcut, and no effort is ever wasted. But many of us think that there must be a shortcut, or that we may be exceptional. The Dharma is equal to all; this is what Gempo Roshi is teaching us again and again.

Hekigan Roku, Case 45, Introduction: "If he wants to speak..." In this case, "he" means Joshu Zenji, but it could also mean Gempo Roshi. "If he wants to speak, he speaks, and none can rival him, throughout the whole universe. When he needs to act, he acts, and his activity is peerless." When Gempo Roshi was the retired abbot of Ryutaku-ji, his lay student, who was quite old and living alone in Mishima City, wrote him a postcard. Due to desperate loneliness she was saying, "I'm sick Roshi. I'm dying." Gempo Roshi went to her house. As soon as the door opened, Gempo Roshi said in a loud voice, "Hey Baa-san, (affec-

tionate expression to call an elderly lady), I understand you are dying." Her face turned red, and she immediately transformed and stopped complaining. When someone is living with the Dharma, in the Dharma, the spontaneity comes out—Vital Zen.

"The one is like shooting stars and a flash of lightning..." This morning, right after shinrei, there was a flash of lightning in the eastern sky, followed by the first spring thunder. Only once – in perfect timing. "The other is like crackling flames and a flashing blaze..." This is a description of how teachers in the ancient days used to teach their students. "When he set up his forge to discipline his disciples, they lay down their arms and lose their tongues... See the following."

A monk asked Joshu, "All dharmas are reduced to Oneness." According to Buddhist teaching, there is no accidental birth. Always, there is a cause and an effect. We call it, "innen sho," and we are here because of this. About Oneness, someone said, all the Tripitaka (the entire Buddhist teachings) can be condensed into the *Heart Sutra*, and the *Heart Sutra* can be condensed into one word, "sunyata." So all dharmas are condensed into One. Or according to Esoteric Buddhism, the universe is condensed into Vairocana Buddha. According to the Pure Land School, the universe can be reduced to Amitabha Buddha. According to Christianity, the universe can be reduced to God, or the Christ. Science may say, the universe is made of atoms, so, all dharmas, the sun, the moon and stars are reduced to atoms.

Up to this point, there is no problem. But further, what is this Oneness reduced to? Like the well-known theory, God created Heaven and Earth – then who created God? Or, the Tripitaka being reduced to sunyata. What is sunyata reduced to? What are atoms reduced to? What is Vairocana Buddha reduced to? What is Mu reduced to?

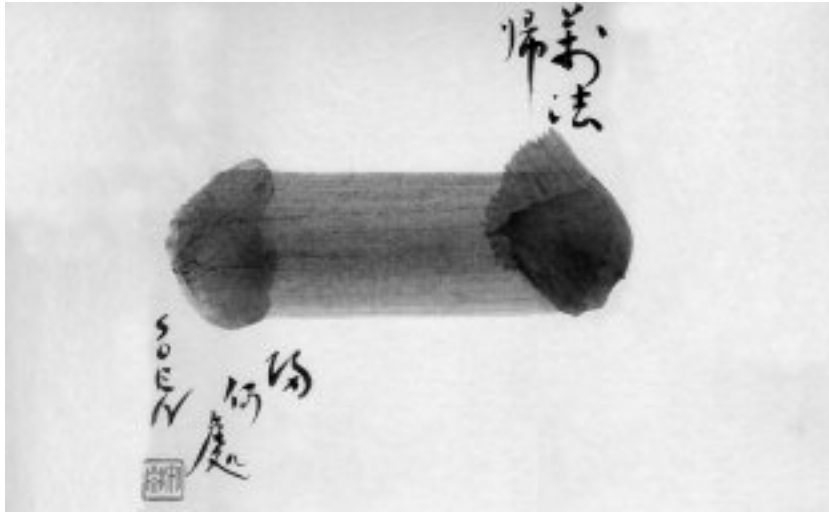
This monk's question itself needs further examination. Is the Dharma to be reduced or multiplied? Just as the relationship between essence and phenomena.

In *Believing in Mind*, by Sosan Ganchi Zenji, there is a well-known passage: "One in all, all in One: if only this is realized, no more worry about your not being perfect." And: "The two exist because of the One. But hold not even to this One. When a mind is not disturbed, the ten thousand things offer no offence."

So we say, "Oneness." Suppose I ask someone, "One plus one is what?" You may say, "What a silly question! Of course, two." Then what is ONE? Like this gong is ONE. In this case, there is not a single thing which is perfectly identical. Only this ONE. Like each one of you, no matter how similar you look, there is no one in this world who is exactly identical. Each one of us is identically above the heaven and beneath the earth; you alone are the World Honored One! In the true sense, this ONE is impossible to define. Goethe, the German poet, called it "an open secret." It cannot be defined. Mathematicians admit their theories are based upon assumptions. So, we assume "one plus one is two" based on this unknown One.

The monk asked Joshu: "What is this One reduced to?" Joshu replied, "When I was in Seishu (where he was born), I made a summer robe. It weighed seven pounds." If you try to comprehend this through your logic, you will fail. Yet, if you see this question and this answer from unbounded condition of mind, appearing and disappearing according to our practice, the dialogue makes perfect sense. "When I was" is a time; "at Seishu" is a place; "robe" is a thing; and "seven pounds" is the weight. Are they not all beautifully manifested phenomena of Oneness? When Gempo Roshi spoke on this subject, he became like Joshu Zenji. So naturally, he would say, "When I was in Tosa (where Gempo Roshi was ordained), I wanted to have a robe. By chance, a robe-maker from Kyoto came, and I asked him to make a summer robe for me. He replied, 'Ookini.'" The literal meaning of this is, "big" or "large" or "great" but people in Kyoto say this instead of "Thank you!"

The reason they use this expression is that our heart becomes large when we are filled with gratitude. In Tokyo they say, "Arigatou gozaimasu!" Yet, you can feel the difference between "ookini" and "arigatou gozaimasu." In Japanese we say, "Kotodama," which means the miraculous power of the language. There is a gentle-heartedness coming from hearing "ookini." Joshu's reply came so gently: "When I was in Seishu, I made a summer robe. It weighed seven pounds." His answer beautifully expresses: "What is Oneness reduced to?" With explanations, the taste will be lost. "Ookini" has nothing to do with a summer robe. Just, "Great!" Gentle-heartedness. Of course, Gempo Roshi never explained further. Yet, all the tension falls away from our



heart and shoulders. This is the effectiveness of Zen dialogues.

The section in *Rinzai Roku* called “Kamben” means, “to test each other.” But the real meaning is how to convey the Dharma, how to exchange words, using everyday language. Words become like bow and arrow, hitting the bull’s-eye. God created Heaven and Earth, but who created God? “Ookini”: softening the questioner’s heart and mind, yet expressing so clearly how great God is.

Setcho’s Verse: “You brought a piece of logic to trap the old gimlet (Joshu). Do you know the meaning of the seven-pound summer robe? Now I have thrown it away into the Western Lake.” And the last part is a bit difficult to translate: “Atai no seifu, tare ni ka fuyo sen?” “Atai” means “under my feet.” The pure wind is blowing under my feet... spirit of ookini is moving! To whom should it be imparted? If we think “To whom?” you may feel uneasy, but now that you have sat for a week, everyone

feels the cool wind blowing in our heart. We share this coolness, this ookini-ness; I trust everyone understands what is meant. Enjoy it together. The moment we make a sentence, the meaning is lost. That is why Joshu’s Mu is so powerful. It is not a sentence. Just Muuuuuu...

In *Orategama* (The Embossed Tea Kettle) by Hakuin Zenji, there is an impressive saying. “Don’t chant, but do zazen. Don’t read books, but do zazen. Don’t do samu, but do zazen.” Considering that zazen is Oneness, and chanting, reading books, and samu work are phenomena, you can interpret Hakuin Zenji teaching on a deeper level.

As in human relations: if you have genuine gratitude, even if you don’t say so, others will surely feel it deeply. Pure wind is blowing over Dai Bosatsu Mountain. Hannya Kutsu Gempo Zenji Dai Osho, ookini. With immense gratitude, we will march on. So please encourage and guide us all. ❖

Reflections on Soen

by Seisen Norah Messina

The piece for the newsletter has been written and re-written many times since I was put on the spot. My instinct when asked to do anything to help is to say, yes. However, the request evoked so many memories, that weeding them in order to present a concise piece of factual interest is another matter. I have scrapped what I’ve attempted so far... There is so much material that to cut it down to essentials when it all seems relevant is a koan.

What a dilemma... working on it.....
What to do?

Here goes!

The largest rock in the garden at Shobo-ji was re-located from its original resting place in rural Pennsylvania after Soen Roshi spotted it on the way back to New York, having visited Bethlehem Steel as guest of Bill Johnstone (vice president of the company and husband of Millie, an early member of Shobo-ji). The rock was the final touchstone needed to complete the garden. Soen Roshi, delighting on seeing the resulting harmony, said drily, “Now I know why it’s called Bethlehem Steel.”

So, Wednesdays at Shoboji...

After morning service – breakfast, cleaning, fund-raising mailings. Those of us who had jobs left. A few stayed behind to clean the zendo, repair cushions. When that was done, *Rinzai Roku* study, sutra chanting, informal question and answer sessions. Among other activities, being a

painter, I chose to stay rather than face an empty canvas. (Some cop-out.)

Community spirit growing organically through the need for an oasis during the Vietnam-era in New York... Before the internet was hatched there was no alternative but to take to the streets to voice our protests. A cushion of one’s own in this clean space was a luxury reducing me to tears of gratitude.

Soen Roshi’s way in balancing our activities one morning involved us in haiku. Full of references to growling tigers, i.e. hungry bellies, Soen Roshi declared, after reading a few of our first attempts, “These are not haikus. They are New Yor-kus.”

His Joycean wit and playful constancy cut through cultural attitudes and made one realize the discipline which goes into the manifestation of genuine spontaneous enjoyment of life.

Some random thoughts...

Being around Soen Roshi was serious fun. He delighted in quoting passages with dramatic flair from an eclectic range of literature (Goethe’s *Faust* especially)... He brought Noh masks depicting all the usual suspects – anger, greed., jealousy – and handed them to one person or another to try on during a sitting... then watched their discomfort with delight... On a visit to Israel he composed a haiku after floating in the Dead Sea and recited it to us during teisho on his return...

Before DBZ, we would hold week-long sesshins in Litchfield at The Daughters of Wisdom convent, transforming a large space into a zendo... beautiful atmosphere, in a country setting... even a good sized pool with a high fence on the grounds... which I couldn't resist. One break I was luxuriating in a quiet swim when, after a few minutes, a head popped up – Soen Roshi. He must have been under the water for quite a time. I discovered what great lung capacity he had. He would dive in and swim under water three or four laps back and forth without coming up for air. I breathed a sigh of relief when he finally surfaced, thinking I'd have a lot of explaining to do when I got back to the zendo.

Stuff really does get in the way...

Scraps...

A midnight kinhin down a country road in Litchfield to stand in a meadow listening to the sound of crickets... twilight zazen during Holy Days Sesshin in 1974 on the upper floor of Joraku-an listening to the shakuhachi of Soen's friend, Watazumi Doso Roshi... Soen, when asked what he felt was the most important quality in life, without hesitation said, "Friendship." His teaching was direct.

There's so much more... however... the deadline.❖

The Tale of Kaisan Sama

by Yamakawa Sogen Roshi

A Note on the Text

by Fujin

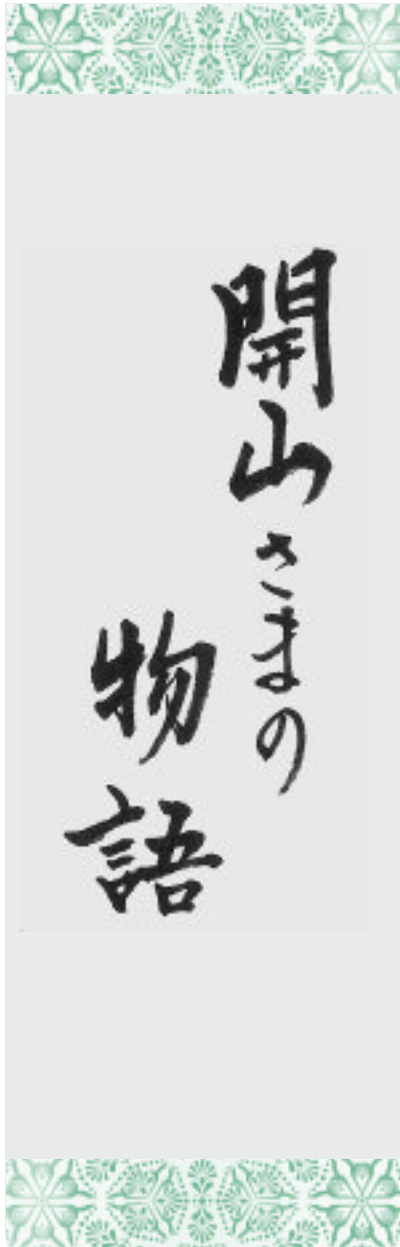
Kanzan Egen Zenji is very little known by the public. And it was actually his wish to remain so. In the preface to *Selected Teishos on The Gateless Gate*, Yamakawa Sogen Roshi writes, "The Masters of the Inzan Mino Line (To Rin Ka, to which Kanzan Egen Zenji belongs) referred to themselves as belonging to 'gudon no keifu' (lineage of dullards). They preferred not to be known by the society at large and seemed a bit self-conscious about their own lack of learning and sophistication..."

Yet, in this age of communication and information, it seems that such a great Zen teacher can no longer stay anonymous. Though some part of the upcoming story may be legend, Yamakawa Roshi undertook the challenge to gather as many facts as possible. The Japanese monthly magazine called *Myoshin* published a section of his writings on Kaisan-sama. Kanzan Zenji, being the founder of the Myoshin-ji temple complex, and therefore of the entire Myoshin-ji school, throughout the chapters of his story is referred to as "Kaisan-sama" – "the Venerable Founder."

We are very indebted to Yamakawa Roshi, who graciously granted us permission to translate it into English. Eido Roshi translated this section with help from Junko Kawakami and myself. The

translation work goes on, and the story will continue in future issues of The Zen Studies Society newsletter.





“New Star”

This story begins in Shinano, Japan (present-day Nagano Prefecture).

Shinano is a beautiful mountainous region with opulent vegetation. Summers are always short there. The summer this story took place was particularly short. It was as if autumn came as soon as spring ended. This kind of weather unfailingly brings bad crops. The farmers became gloomy, and they looked up to the sky with resentment.

In those days, there was a civil war in Japan, where inferior people rose up over their superiors. The society was chaotic. The people of Takanashi (a small fiefdom in this region) were not an exception. The combination of societal chaos and bad weather made people want to curse Heaven and Earth. Yet even under such unfavorable circumstances, the Lord of Takanashi ruled the territory with wisdom. He was aware of the sufferings of the farmers and reduced their taxes.

One night, after many days of drought, a surprising and terrifying incident occurred. It was an unusually quiet night. The sky was bright with stars. Suddenly, the air got so chilly that people started to shiver. Simultaneously, a thunderclap made people cover their ears in terror. Thousands of shooting stars appeared and disappeared, disappeared and reappeared, as if attacking people in a crazy dance.

Everybody was aghast at this unheard of phenomenon. Some tried to run away – without success. Others held their heads; some invoked the Buddha’s name. Many became insane. There were those who even tried to plunder, to commit murder. It was a horrifying and fearful night. This great incident continued for a few hours. It kicked people to the bottom of a pit of fear, and no one had the courage to look up to the sky.

Therefore, nobody was aware that a big star was quietly born and began to glitter in the far corner of Heaven. It was 734 years ago, the second year of Kenji (1277 CE).

“Birth”

That year, autumn came much earlier than usual, even in the remote part of Shinano. When the time for harvest came, as was expected, it was a poor crop – less than half as much as usual. Despite this unfavorable situation, people did not run away to other regions because the Lord of Takanashi reduced their taxes greatly. But it was extremely challenging to survive with this small crop until the following harvest, for the farmers as well as for the Samurai. In fact an outstandingly cold winter followed. The hardship made the struggle for survival intense and bitter.

However, people in Takanashi supported and helped each other. They did not waste even one grain of rice or small piece of vegetable. Perhaps because of

this, and despite the bitter cold weather, people felt some warmth in their hearts. Also, the news spread that the second child of Lord Takanashi would soon be born. That news made people happy and full of hope.

At the end of the year, a traveling monk appeared by the castle of Takanashi, where the snow was deep and where few people could be seen outside. Only a few households made offerings to this traveling monk. But at the same time, some of those who made offerings to the monk did so with great sympathy. Perhaps this monk gave a good impression through his elegant dignity.

At dusk, the monk began chanting sutras by the gate of the castle in front of the living quarters. When one of the Lord’s vassals realized this, he spoke to the monk. The monk told him a mysterious story.

“In the past few months, around this time of day, I have noticed that up in the sky above your living quarters a new star was born. This must be an indication that some noble individual will be born in your castle soon.”

Upon hearing this, the vassal was surprised and remained half suspicious. But taking it as a good omen, he reported this to Lord Takanashi. Soon after that, on January 7, the second son of Lord Takanashi was born. He was named Komazoshi Asa Akemaro.❖

新星

今でも緑豊かな山々が連なる美しい信濃の地（現在の長野県）、そこから物語は始まりました。

奥信濃の夏はいつも短いのですが、その年はとりわけ短く、春が済むと続いて秋が来たようでした。こういう年は決まって凶作で、その害を一身に被る農民は暗たんだる気持で空をながめていたのです。

高梨城下の人々も、この下克上と後に呼ばれる世の中の混乱と、それに輪をかけたような気候の不順に世をのろいたくなるのでした。せめてもの救いは、高梨のお殿様の善政で、領民の塗炭の苦しみをよく承知され年貢の負担を軽くしてくれたことです。

しかし有ろう事か、わずかの夏の日照りが続いたある夜、人々がこの世の終りかと驚き怪しみ、怖れることが起きたのです。それは異様に静かな星夜の日でした。だがゾクツとした冷気が辺りに満ちると同時に、音もないのに耳をおおうような轟きがして、夜空を星の数よりも多い光線が現われては消え、消えては現われ、さながら光の乱舞のようになって襲ってきたのです。

誰もがその異常な流れ星に仰天し、ある者は逃げまどい、ある者は恐れおののき頭を抱えて仏名を唱え、たくさんの者が狂気に目覚め、略奪や殺人までするという、それはおぞましくも恐ろしい光景となったのです。

数時間ものこの大異変は、人々を恐怖のどん底に落とし入れ、そして空を見上げる気持さえ奪ったかのようでした。

それ故、その時はるか天空の一角に、一つの大きな星が静かに生まれ、光り輝き出したことを誰も気づきませんでした。

これは今から七百三十年ほど前、建治二年のことです。

誕生

その年は、奥信濃に駆足のようになつて秋がやってきました。そして田は刈入れの時季を迎えたのですが、やはり大変な凶作で、例年の半分も収穫できませんでした。それでも領民が他国に逃げ出さなかつたのは、高梨の殿さまが年貢を軽減してくれたからです。

しかし、少ない米で家臣を始め城下の領民が、来年の秋まで生き抜くのは並大抵ではありません。実際、ひととき厳しい冬が襲来して、艱難はし烈をきわめます。だが領民の多くは、一粒の米、一切れの野菜も無駄にすることなく、互いに支え合つたのです。それ故にでしょうか、さすがの苦寒も心なしかほの暖かくみえます。それと共に、高梨家に第二子誕生の兆しが、人伝に耳に入ってきて、領民の心には何とはなしに、喜びの気持が湧いてくるのでした。

さて、その年の瀬。雪が深くなり人通りの少なくなった城下に、一人の托鉢僧が現われました。托鉢に応じる家は稀でしたが、同じように困じきつた人の情けでしょうか、快く喜捨をする人もあつたのです。この僧が、どこか威厳があり氣品を漂わせて

いたためかもしれません。

そうして黄昏時、城の門近くまで来た僧は館を望むようにして読経を始めました。それに気付いた家臣が、暫くして声をかけると、不思議なことを語つたのです。

「数か月前よりこの刻限になると、館の上空に新しい星が出現し、いよいよ輝いておられます。これは定めてお城の中に貴き方が生まれるしるしでありましょう」

それを聞いて、驚き怪しみながらもこの家臣は吉報と、殿さまに注進したのです。程無くして、年も改まり正月の七日。高梨公に第二子が誕生しました。

その御子は駒曹司朝明磨と名づけられます。

Woven into the Dai Bosatsu Mandala

by Manu Sassoonian

Like a dim, lightweight, and aimless comet that periodically nears the sun, brightens, and moves on, I have been in the orbit of The Zen Studies Society for many years.

I first came to Shobo-ji for the pre-Christmas art sales, where I bought pottery and a scroll. One year, I came with some friends for the New Year's Eve celebration. We did zazen, chanted Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo, took turns sounding the gong, and after midnight went to the second floor for a party.

My first visit to Dai Bosatsu Zendo was with the Ohashi Institute where I was learning shiatsu. This was my first practical introduction to Zen, and changed my understanding and practice of shiatsu. In a week full of Zen and excitement I felt I needed little sleep and had even less. Naturally, after the retreat was over, as I started driving down the hill away from the Zendo, my mental and physical condition also headed downhill. With great effort I stayed awake until I reached the first gas station in Livingston Manor. I bought the largest container of coffee they sold and drank it black.

This was one or two weeks before Obon, and four of us from the shiatsu retreat came back to DBZ for the Obon ceremonies. I was then asked to volunteer as a shiatsu practitioner during the Healing and Wellness weekend by Seppo, who was the tenzo as well as the organizer of the wellness program. I have been lucky to be able to come to many of these events every year as well as many samu weekends, anniversary celebrations, ordinations, and two weddings.



Another lucky encounter for me was when, on a re-supplying mission during one of the retreats, I drove Eido Roshi to New York City. Up to then, my relation with him had been formal and even distant. The reason, and I can't avoid this confession, is that I have never done a sesshin or a dokusan. During the ride, we talked of many things as two friends would. Roshi talked about the Carlsons and their part in building the Zendos. I had known Chester Carlson from the early 60s only as the inventor of the Xerox process. In fact, for more than a decade I had worked for a large corporation as part of a team trying to build copying machines to compete with Xerox. It was an interesting coincidence that he was connected to my profession and responsible for my spiritual life. On that trip, my admiration for Roshi as a person was added to my respect for his accomplishments and position. During many occasions when we met or worked together, I have come to love him and understand the affection that the residents of DBZ have for him, even though the schedule he has put in place is demanding, and the discipline that he has imposed is strict.

This explains the paradox that DBZ is a most loving environment and a place of rigorous discipline.

I often encourage my friends to come to the Zendo because I believe they will have a wonderful and unusual experience and also be of help to the Zendo. Only twice did my good intentions embarrassingly misfire. I had suggested to two friends that they would enjoy volunteering during an Obon weekend, and we arrived at DBZ a few days early to help with the preparations. One of the friends, who had been carrying a heavy load at her job, was so taken with the calm beauty there that she decided she had come to an ideal place to rest; we changed her status to "guest". The other friend felt so uncomfortable in the unusual place that she decided she could not stay, and a sangha member gave her a ride to Livingston Manor to take the bus to New York. So thanks to the gentle understanding of the residents, the situations were resolved; and both people are still my friends. On the other hand, many more of my friends have joined the sangha; and we often come to the Zendo together. Last year we were lucky to celebrate Thanksgiving at DBZ, and also the New Year and the investiture ceremony of Shinge Roshi as the new abbot, before the severe winter storms and prodigious snowfalls made driving upstate difficult.

But now Zen is my focus and my center. When I cannot go to DBZ, I stay in touch with the sangha by going to Shobo-ji. Or, as happened early this year, when one of the residents from DBZ was invited to a meeting of Columbia University's Buddhist club, I also went to the gathering. It was wonderful to participate in sitting with the students, who generously

insisted I sit on a zabuton and a zafu although there were not enough for everybody there. And it was wonderful to listen to the DBZ resident's talk and the questions and answers. Two weeks later in DBZ I saw several large boxes filled with zabutons and zafus addressed to the club at Columbia.

I had been intrigued by Japan for a long time, and my visits to DBZ increased my fascination. Last summer I visited Japan for the first time. For three weeks, my friend and I traveled from Tokyo southward as far as Yakushima Island which has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. It is a magnificent nature preserve with waterfalls, rivers, and mountains covered by trees, many of them over several thousand years old. It is also home to many birds, monkeys, and deer that, like the animals at DBZ, do not fear people. We stayed with sangha friends or at hotels and inns and visited ancient shrines and monasteries. The people were invariably kind to us. Once, when we were in a small noodle shop having some udon, a rainstorm started. When we were ready to leave, the two kind ladies who ran the shop insisted on giving us two new umbrellas.

Like everyone I know, I have been saddened by the news of the earthquake and tsunami and am concerned about the possible effects of the radiation and the frequent aftershocks. Many years ago I read a haiku that that Issa wrote when his daughter died, and at times of tragic events I repeat it:

The world of dew
is the world of dew,
and yet, and yet-- ❖

Climbing Mount Fudo

by Fujin

As the saying goes, “You must be careful what you wish for!”

My pilgrimage to Shikoku Island has brought many unexpected teachings and experiences. But one in particular stands out as the most meaningful on the whole journey, so far.

One morning, I prepared to ascend the trail to Temple 45, Iwaya-ji (Rock Cave Temple), whose honson (altar figure) is Fudo Myoo. Fudo Myoo has been the main protector and “provocateur” in my practice since my ordination. I met many fellow followers of the Way through this karmic link. On that beautiful morning, my spirit was unusually uplifted, as I was thinking of a legend I had read about Iwaya-ji.

Legend states that the temple was donated to Kobo Daishi by a mysterious female recluse named Hokke-Sennin. Was she a shaman, or just a woman well advanced in Buddhist training? Kobo Daishi carved two statues of Fudo Myoo: one in stone, kept in a cave at the rear of the temple; and the other in wood, enshrined in the hondo. By keeping the stone statue in the cave, Kobo Daishi ensured that the entire mountain needed to be worshipped in order to worship the statue. This way the mountain remained sacred, just as it has been in Shintoism. Over time, every rock and cranny of the mountain became sacred. This temple is one of the nansho (hard-to-reach) of Ehime Prefecture, and is one of the sites where mountain recluses and wandering holy men once performed their religious disciplines.

Had I not read this legend, I wonder whether my experience would have been different.

In any case, within minutes on the trail, I literally felt that “every rock, every blade of grass...” were representations of Fudo Myoo. I was flying through rather than climbing the trail, with the most joyous heart I can remember experiencing in Shikoku. The further I climbed, the more powerful and majestic the mountain became.

The temple itself is at the end of an increasingly steep path. The final climb consists of 250 steps to the temple entrance, and this is the only way up to the temple (this is not unusual on the pilgrimage; most temples have a separate path for motorized pilgrims, buses, etc.). Every few yards, a representation of the Myoo family greets you by the side of the trail, (Fudo Myoo, Gozanze Myoo, Gundari Myoo, Daiitoku Myoo, and Kongoyasha Myoo) and, finally, a HUGE rock seems to be falling from heaven towards you. And in the center of this rock, the small temple is encased.



On the way up, I started to hear, faintly first, then coming closer, the chant of a pilgrim. It was the repetition of a dharani, with some unusual intonation, like a song. Finally a man and a woman passed me and greeted me; the man was the one chanting ceaselessly. Though they were in their mid-fifties or so, both pilgrims were exceptionally agile. While I followed closely the path ahead of me, they skipped some turns, cutting through the ditches. Their “religious atmosphere” was very inspiring to me.

After they passed me, as I thought they were out of sight, I came upon the biggest statue of Fudo Myoo I have ever seen. He, too, was encased in a rock, and maybe 20 meters tall: Red Fudo. I stopped, put my packs down, and started to chant sutras. Midway through my chanting, I heard some steps near me and the sound of someone lighting incense and a candle. Throughout my chanting, I felt some presence near me. When I had finished, I saw the two pilgrims bowing to me and asking me where my temple was. After a brief exchange, we proceeded together toward Iwaya-ji. He resumed his chanting.

The legend mentions that Kobo Daishi carved and enshrined a statue of Fudo Myoo somewhere in a cave, on that mountain. I was just wondering where it could be, when the couple stopped, and the lady showed me a key she was holding. To the left of the trail, there was a small gate. The man asked me abruptly, “Are you coming with us?” Assuming they were going to that cave, I joyously said, “Hai!”

They opened the gate and closed it behind us. Looking up, all I could see was

a mountain rising straight up. The wall of the mountain was cracked open in two, and in the middle, a rope was hanging. Without a word, the couple started to climb into the crack, holding on to the rope, their feet pressing each side of the mountain. He was still chanting. I followed the lady, climbing last, in my robes and rope sandals, my packs, monk’s hat and staff. Not knowing whether we would return the same way or not, I didn’t think about leaving any of my things behind.

Every now and then, the lady would ask quietly, “Are you okay?” I could only reply, “Hai... Okay.” In fact I didn’t have the leisure to wonder whether I was okay or not. I had to focus 100% on my steps, gripping the rope, the packs, my hat and the staff, this awkward bundle of my being climbing up... to where??

The pilgrim’s chanting was the lifeline to which I could trust the whole situation and just continue ahead. Some 15 meters on, the rope-climb ended, but the ascent continued. I looked up at a second mountain, as steep as the first one, but instead of a rope, there was a thick metal chain to hold onto. Sometimes I had to stop, wondering where I could secure my slippery sandals, and just consider how I could proceed safely. The pilgrim’s dharani propped me up at each step.

The ascent up the second mountain led to a wooden ladder, with each rung of the ladder over a foot apart. Still clutching my hat, bags, and staff, I proceeded up the ladder, unable to look right or left, up or down, focusing on the one step I was taking: right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot...

NEWS

Some 10 meters higher, we landed on a round rock, about five meters in diameter, on top of which was a small shrine, housing... Buddha knows what figure! As the surface of the rock was very small and uneven, I ended up crawling on all-fours, and vaguely bowing to whatever figure was enshrined.

By then, I had guessed that we would return the way we came – all backward! The couple seemed imperturbable: the man still chanting, ceaselessly. Down we went, blind steps on wooden ladder, sliding down Mountain No. 2, and then Mountain No. 1. Safely back in front of the gate, I realized at last what had just happened: Fudo Myoo had granted me a remarkable test of trust! The lady locked the gate, and without a word, we proceeded up the trail to the temple.

Reaching the gate of the temple, they turned around, smiled, and then the man said, “What a great chance it was, that we could do this together!” I nodded, speechless. Together we entered the gate of Iwaya-ji. I never saw them again. After I finished chanting at the main altar, I sat down on a bench, contemplating how much of the inner landscape had changed during that short encounter. ❖



Forestry Practice at DBZ

by Shinkon

Another era came to a close at DBZ in 2010 – we stopped logging on the monastery property. When several residents and sangha members began to voice concern about the health of the surrounding forest, we called in an independent forester, Mike Greason, for consultation. Mike came in and walked the land with us. With good evidence, we decided that letting the forest regenerate is the best plan at this time.

Instead of felling trees on the property, we will purchase tree-length timber at the best prices we can find. The timber will be trucked in. The process of getting burnable wood into the monastery will remain largely the same as it has been. The residents will block the timber and, with the help of many samu weekend participants, split and stack the wood in the shed.

The Nature Conservation groups that we have consulted agree with our direction at this time. They see the forest the same way we do – both as a living thing, and as a resource in need of management. It will cost approximately \$5000 per year to purchase wood in this way and fill up the woodshed (depending, of course, on how much is burned each winter).

A possible companion plan – to single out stressed or diseased beech trees on the property for felling – may be put into effect. (Beech is a non-native species that has wreaked havoc on forest stands on our property and throughout the Northeast.) This would be another way

to support the rehabilitation of the forest, while still yielding firewood. However, an endeavor of this type would require substantial resources and planning.

For the time being, we can feel very positive about letting the forest regenerate. And samu workers need not worry – there will still be plenty of blocks to split this spring and summer.

Hailstorm Patio

by Fujin

Over the past three years, the monastery entrance had been showing clear signs of aging. Having undergone more than 35 winters of snow and ice, and countless visitors treading on them, the stairs and the patio were visibly... tired!



During the summer, a Dharma sister kindly offered to help with DBZ maintenance and made a generous donation, asking that it be put to good use. The front stairs immediately came to mind. After consulting her, we were well-advised by Peter Lombardi, our former zomu, who recommended an acquaintance in the landscaping/building business.

Looking at our budget, we decided to replace the front part, which is the width of the front entrance doors, and the whole of the staircases. The blue stone that we chose is more than three times as thick as the original stone. The work was done carefully and efficiently by a wonderful team of professionals under the leadership of Chris McVey. They spent a week and a half at DBZ, depending on the weather, and completed the overhaul just before Golden Wind Sesshin.

Speaking of that weather... They endured the most unexpected and devastating hailstorm DBZ has seen in the last 20 years. In the middle of September, it hailed half-inch stones for 20 minutes. The workers ran like crazy and drove their cars under the trees. Tree leaves and everything green in the garden was shredded to confetti. We ended up with pounds and pounds of bruised tomatoes...

After the storm was over, the property was covered by a one-inch icing of hail pebbles that lasted a couple of days. The outside temperature was only a little cooler than normal for September.

The resident sangha of DBZ would like to thank this anonymous Dharma sister from the bottom of our hearts for making this construction possible. Every time we enter or leave the property, her generosity is being greatly appreciated and remembered. Chris assured us that the new stone patio and stairs will last twice as long as the previous ones.

Jukai 2010

by Tenrai

On November 6, 2010, the last day of Harvest Sesshin, Eido Roshi performed a Jukai ceremony officially recognizing six Dharma students as Zen Buddhists. Each Jukai student vowed to obey the ten Buddhist precepts and received a Dharma name along with a rakusu as a symbol of their commitment. Two students took Jukai for a second time, thus renewing their vows and receiving new names. This ceremony was especially poignant as Eido Roshi had announced his December retirement, and this was known to be his last Jukai ceremony. Everyone present could feel the preciousness of that great opportunity.

Pascale Burkart	Hoken	“Rich Austerity”
King Dexter	Kogaku	“Cultivating Mount Fuji”
Frank DiFillipantonio	Togai	“Transcendent Lamp”
Tim Hale	Yushin	“Bravely Cautious”
Matthew Klein	Zenryo	“Good, Good!”
Janice Wilde	Myoen	“Mysterious Dharma Connection”
Official change of Dharma name:		
Brenda Nightingale	Komyo	“Radiant Emptiness”
Komyo’s ordination name:	Seido	“The Way of the Great Vow”
Nancy Berg	Shin Nen	“Stick to your Beliefs”



Aiho-san’s Retirement Party

by Zuiho

On December 10, 2010, New York Zendo students, past and present, joined together to offer their gratitude to Aiho-san for her years of service. On that day, she retired from her post as Director of Shobo-ji, after tirelessly giving herself to all aspects of running the zendo. For years, Aiho-san did everything from meticulously tracking the finances to lovingly arranging beautiful flower offerings on the altars.



The celebration followed the Fall Training Closing Teisho, Eido Roshi’s last as abbot. Approximately 75 well-wishers gathered in the Dharma hall for cake and refreshments. Soun Joe Dowling, on behalf of The Zen Studies Society board of directors, presented Aiho-san with a retirement gift. Kanze Liz Roberts presented her with a card and small gift on behalf of the sangha.

In a short speech, Aiho-san expressed her gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve the Dharma and the sangha for so many years and her happiness at “finally being able to take a little rest!” She then led several rounds of her favorite Dharma song – “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” After some brief closing remarks by Eido Roshi, he and Aiho-san and the Japanese sangha members in attendance sang the sentimental Japanese folk song “Furusato” (My Hometown).

Truly New York Zendo Shobo-ji would not be the same without Aiho-san’s unflagging devotion and service. We once again bow deeply in gratitude and wish her a restful and contented retirement.



School Visits to NYZ

by Zuiho

New York Zendo Shobo-ji happily welcomed two groups of students from area schools this year. In January, nearly 60 students and teachers from the Thornton-Donovan School in New Rochelle came. Several weeks later, Professor Karen Pechilis of Drew University brought students from her East Asian Religions course.

The Drew University students joined activities on one of our weekly Beginners' Nights. The night's schedule was slightly modified to accommodate such a large group of newcomers. In addition to the usual orientation and zazen, Seisen Norah Messina moderated a question and answer period, putting her wit, light-heartedness, and years of passionate practice to good use. The students, teachers, visitors, and sangha members met for informal discussion, tea, and cookies to close the evening.

The sangha members who assisted with the event all agreed that the students sat well and came with sincere, open hearts. For 15 years, Professor Pechilis has been introducing her students to the practices and traditions that they study in the classroom. Later in the semester, the class will visit our karmic cousins on 69th Street, Urasenke Chanoyu Center.

The Thornton-Donovan School prides itself on its hands-on, progressive education with an international focus. According to Headmaster Doug Fleming, "Although we are independent and non-denominational, there is a spiritual element - paying homage to all beliefs - which permeates the campus and all of our activities." Their visit was part of the school's week-long Glory Days event. All four grades of their high school spend the week visiting the spiritual homes of different religious traditions.

For many of the students, it was their first time in a Buddhist temple and their first time to practice meditation. To start the afternoon, Shoteki Chris Phelan gave a brief talk on the history of the temple. This was followed by a discussion of the history and beliefs of Buddhism and Zen, during which many of the students displayed impressive knowledge of the subject. After an orientation on posture and breathing, the students sat their first period of zazen. A lively round of questions, answers, more questions, and observations ended the day.

The Many Works of Kiyuu-san

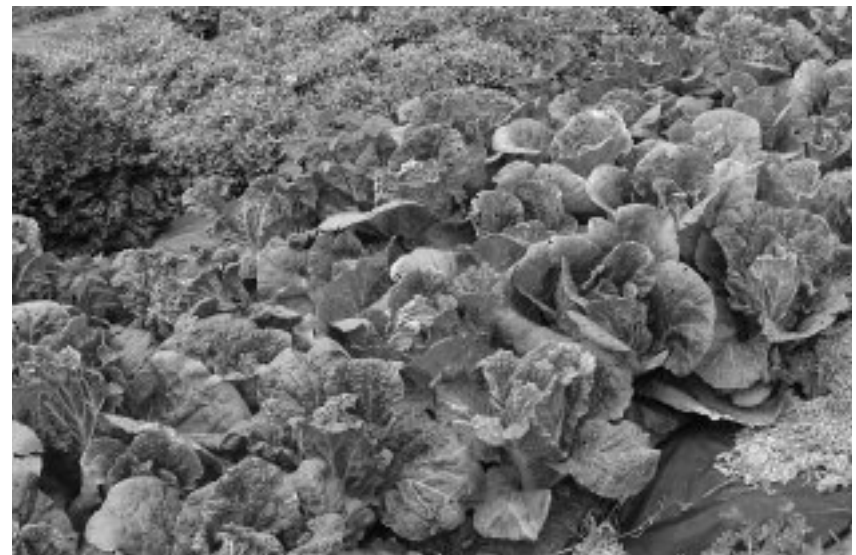
by Jodo

This past year, DBZ residents and guests experienced an abundance of produce from Kiyuu Yokoyama's garden. Kiyuu-san began in late winter and early spring sprouting thousands of seeds for transplanting, first into small containers, then into the garden. The amount and variety of vegetables and flowers he grew was astounding, especially considering this garden is strictly a one-man operation. This September 1, Kiyuu-san will be 80 years old.

He delighted in giving tours of the garden to our many guests, then supplying them with bags of fresh produce and flowers to take home. That he does this is amazing in and of itself, but that he does so from a place of equanimity, come rain, shine, or plant-damaging hail, is a Dharma teaching for us all.

Kiyuu-san has also donated hundreds of pounds of shiitake mushrooms to DBZ over the past two years. Some of the mushrooms were as large as a dinner plate. The shiitake he brought were grown in the garden at his home in New Jersey. This last summer Kiyuu-san inoculated numerous tree sections with shiitake spores, which will bear mushrooms in a couple of years.

In addition to the food Kiyuu-san grew for DBZ to use, for the third year in a row he made miso here as well. The first year, we used most of it as a fundraiser. It sold out very quickly, so the next year Kiyuu-san increased the quantity he made. This year he produced over 400 pounds of miso, which will be ready to use in late fall.



His experience as a businessman and manufacturer is evident in his focused, meticulous approach to gardening, producing miso, and making mochi. As a fundraiser we offer the 2011 miso here at the monastery. The Main Street Farm, a local small business in Livingston Manor offers it to their customers as well. They also sell Kiyuu-san's produce throughout the summer and fall.

As we come to know Kiyuu-san more, he shares with us his extensive knowledge of gardening, tofu, miso, and mochi-making as well as his vast experience in the produce business. Everyone who visits DBZ, especially during the summer months, should be sure to stop by the garden and say hello.

Misogi at DBZ

by Fujin

For the past year or so, we have been blessed by regular visits from Ryugan Sensei of Brooklyn Aikikai and Yuho Sensei of Long Island, both senior students of Aikido Master Chiba Sensei. Taking turn on a monthly basis, they have been coming to Dai Bosatsu Zendo to conduct Ichi Mando Barai. Ichi Man Do means: one thousand times. Harai or Barai, means misogi, or purification through chanting and breathing. The session usually consists of 45 minutes of misogi, followed by 30 minutes of zazen, and again 45 minutes of misogi.



Inspired by their monthly visit, we have been practicing misogi every week, as part of the evening schedule at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. To read about misogi, without having experienced it, is as hopeless as reading about zazen without ever coming close to a cushion. Misogi has had deep transformative effects on our practice. Yuho Sensei and Ryugan Sensei have been coming all the way from Brooklyn and Long Island for 3 or 4 hours of, what I call, "naka souji" (inside out cleaning). The residents would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the teachers for their continuing efforts and enthusiasm to spread this invigorating practice. You are welcome to join us anytime!

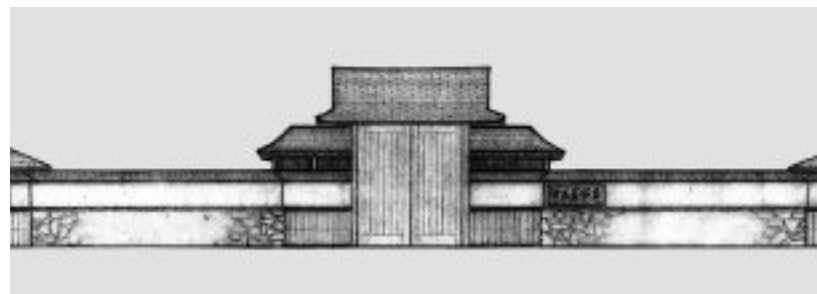
DBZ Sanmon Update

Construction of Sanmon, the mountain gate, is progressing ahead of schedule; the expected completion date for the gate is January 2012.

Last fall, the posts on the gatehouse and shop buildings were all replaced. During the winter months, the timbers for the gate were prepared, leaving enough time for them to properly season. The posts are now dry and stable and ready for use in building the main gate. The next step is connecting the walls of the gate, which were constructed last year, to the existing gatehouse and shop buildings.

Now that this step has been completed, the hole for the foundation is being dug out, and a temporary access road has been marked out for those wishing to drive up to the monastery.

Over the summer, the timber frame for the gate will be built.



News from Shogen-dojo, Switzerland

By Shokan

Looking back, the most important event for us of 2010 was undoubtedly the 5-Day Sesshin with Eido Roshi. It was held again at Felsentor, in the midst of the Swiss mountains, from August 21-26. This was the final time that Roshi guided us through sesshin. For over 20 years he has come every summer to conduct sesshin in Switzerland. Students from all over Europe and the world have attended. We will miss him and thank him from the bottom of our hearts.

2 0 1 1 E V E N T S

Jan	6		Spring Training Begins
	9	Sun	Year of the Rabbit All-Day Sit
Feb	13	Sun	Parinirvana All-Day Sit
Mar	20	Sun	Soen/Yasutani Roshi All-Day Sit
Apr	10	Sun	Buddha's Birthday All-Day Sit
May	15	Sun	Nyogen Senzaki All-Day Sit
Jun	5	Sun	Gempo Roshi All-Day Sit
Jul	17	Sun	Segaki All-Day Sit (Spring Training closing)
	18-Sep 8		Summer Interim, Zendo closed except Wed and Thu evening zazen
Aug			Summer Interim
Sep	1-7		Summer Interim
	8		Fall Training starts
	18	Sun	43rd Anniversary All-Day Sit
Oct	9	Sun	Bodhidharma All-Day Sit
Nov	20	Sun	Soyen Shaku All-Day Sit
Dec	15	Sun	Fall Training Closing Sit
	16-31		Winter Interim, Zendo closed

When Roshi informed us that he will not continue to lead sesshin in Switzerland, he expressed his wish that this tradition should nevertheless continue. So this year there will be a sesshin held at Felsentor from August 20-25, led by Shokan Osho.

In early February, we held our annual general meeting to discuss the events of the past year and the program for the year to come, as well as the finances and various matters that are relevant to our community. In addition to the August sesshin (the main event in our yearly schedule), there will be an Introduction to Zen Buddhism series.

Our community consists of 11 registered members and five friends of Shogen-dojō, as well as about six non-members who come and sit regularly.

More information about who we are and what we do can be found on our website: www.shogen-dojō.org.



D A I B O S A T S U Z E N D O K O N G O - J I

2 0 1 1 E V E N T S

Jan	31-Dec 1 12-17	Fri-Sat Wed-Mon	New Year's Eve Celebration Martin Luther King Jr. Sesshin
Feb	15	Sun	Parinirvana Day
Mar	10-13 28	Thu-Sun Mon	March-On Sesshin Spring Kessei Starts
Apr	1-9 15-17 22-24	Fri-Sat Fri-Sun Fri-Sun	Holy Days Sesshin Intro to Zen Earth Day Samu Weekend
May	7-15 20-22 26-29	Sat-Sun Fri-Sun Thu-Sun	Nyogen Senzaki Sesshin Samu Weekend Intro to Zen Weekend (extended)
Jun	10-12 17-19	Fri-Sun Fri-Sun	Intro to Zen Father's Day Samu Weekend
Jul	2-8 11	Sat-Fri Mon	Anniversary Sesshin Spring Kessei Ends
Aug	5-10 13-14	Fri-Wed Sat-Sun	Summer Samu Sesshin O-Bon
Sep	2-5 12 16-18 24-2 Oct	Fri-Mon Mon Fri-Sun Sat-Sun	Labor Day Samu Weekend Fall Kessei Starts Intro to Zen Weekend Golden Wind Sesshin
Oct	13-16 29-6 Nov	Thu-Sun Sat-Sun	Intro to Zen Weekend (extended) Harvest Sesshin
Nov	18-20 24 30-8 Dec	Fri-Sun Thu Wed-Thu	Intro to Zen Thanksgiving Rohatsu Sesshin
Dec	11 31-1 Jan	Sun Sat-Sun	Fall Kessei Ends New Year's Eve Celebration

