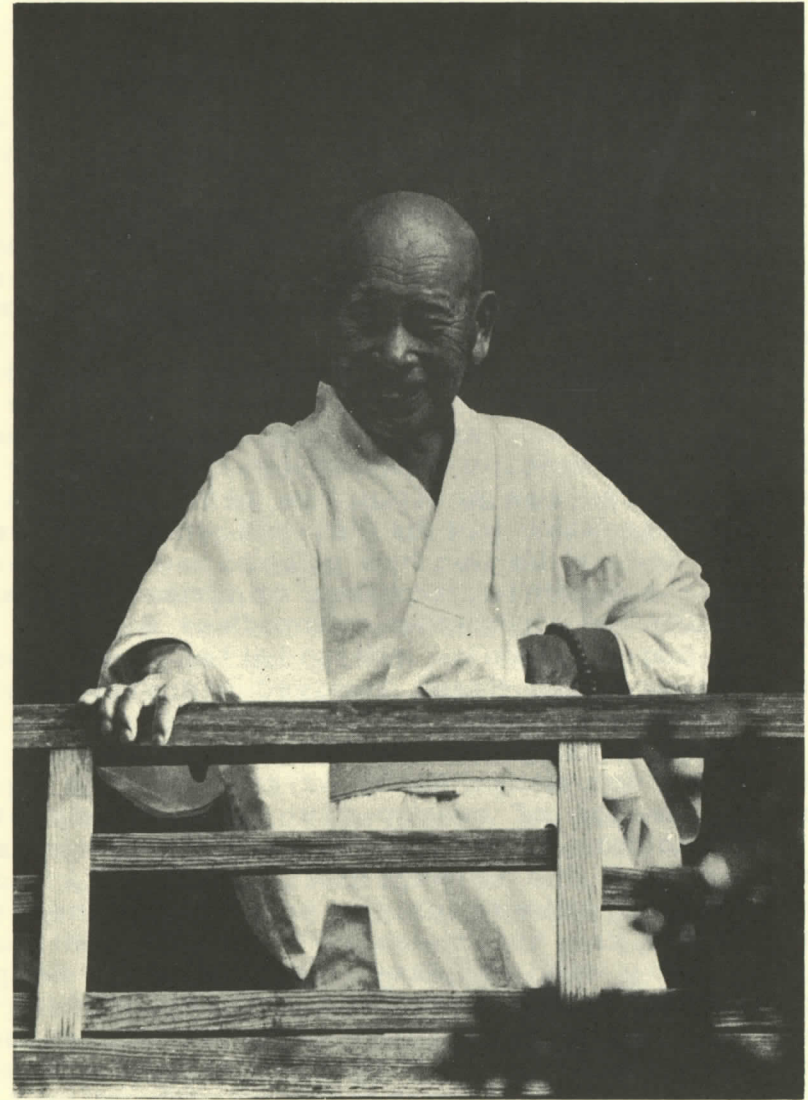


"Academic study is like a stage sword - sharp in appearance but no cut - hence, in the battle field of human life it is useless. Our practice, on the other hand, should be the continuous training of body and mind, and therefore our being becomes a real sword. Under any difficult circumstances in human life, because of our training, we have the confidence to overcome obstacles."

Cover: "Dream" by Yamamoto Gempo Roshi,
age 96.



Yamamoto Gempo Roshi
January 28, 1865 – June 3, 1961

Yamamoto Gempo Roshi

a biographical sketch

by Eido Tai Shimano

Yamamoto Gempo Roshi was born on January 28, 1865, in Wakayama Prefecture. As an infant he was placed in a bamboo basket and abandoned by the side of the road. He was adopted by a man named Okamoto and given the name Yoshikichi.

Until he was nineteen years old he worked in the mountains as a woodcutter and in the fields as a farmer, and in this way he obtained a practical education without ever attending school. At nineteen serious eye problems threatened to make him blind, and at the suggestion of a friend he began a pilgrimage to the eighty-eight Buddhist temples of Shikoku Island. It was believed that even a hopeless disease could be cured by doing the pilgrimage with bare feet, and so Gempo Roshi removed his shoes and set off. For a healthy, clear-sighted pilgrim the walk would require approximately three months, but for Gempo Roshi it took nearly a year. By the age of twenty-five he had completed six full rounds of Shikoku Island. In the midst of the seventh due to physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion, he collapsed, unable to continue, at the thirty-third temple - a Rinzai Zen monastery called Sekkei-ji. Its abbot helped Gempo Roshi and permitted him to stay, and at twenty-six Gempo Roshi decided to become a monk. He said to the abbot, "I wish to become a monk." The abbot replied, "You cannot be otherwise." Gempo Roshi said, "But as you know I am almost blind. I cannot read, and I cannot chant the sutras. Do you still say that I may become a monk?" "You cannot become an ordinary monk," answered the abbot, "but with perseverance you may become a true monk."

On the day of his ordination Gempo Roshi's

family name was changed to that of the abbot, Yamamoto, and he also received the Dharma name Gempo. After staying for some time at Sekkei-ji, he began a pilgrimage to various Zen monasteries. First he went to Eigen-ji where he was accepted not as a monk but as tera otoko, a kind of caretaker whose work and efforts give the temple monks more time for the practice of zazen. Later he went to Shofuku-ji, Hofuku-ji, and Kokei monastery and practiced Zen under several different masters. During this period he gradually regained his eyesight. In the monasteries if he were given a light task and another monk were given a job heavier and more difficult, he would trade assignments in exchange for instruction in reading and writing. In this way he received his formal education.

When Gempo Roshi was forty-three his ordination teacher died, and he returned to Sekkei-ji to become its abbot. However, his desire to continue Zen practice under the guidance of a teacher was strong, and after a few years as abbot he resigned and went to Empuku-ji where he trained under Sohan Roshi. At the age of forty-nine, he succeeded to Sohan's Dharma.

Although Ryutaku-ji had been founded by Master Hakuin and Master Torei, it had fallen into a state of decay and disrepair. It was Gempo Roshi's desire to become its abbot and to revive active practice there. He expressed this feeling to Sohan Roshi saying that he would like to spend the rest of his life at Ryutaku-ji and to take care of Hakuin and Torei's stupa. Sohan Roshi said, "You must not go to Ryutaku-ji. The humidity is very high, and it would be very bad for your health. Besides, Hakuin's spirit is not in the condition of the stupa. It does not matter whether the stupa stands or lies fallen on the ground." "That is true," replied Gempo Roshi, "therefore, I would like to go." "If you understand that much," replied Sohan Roshi, "then you may go." And so Gempo Roshi gradually re-established Ryutaku-ji.

At the age of sixty, with no knowledge of any European language, Gempo Roshi traveled all over the world by himself. During this journey,



Soen Roshi, Gempo Roshi, and Nyogen Senszaki (left to right) at Ryutakuji, 1956.

he met briefly with Nyogen Senszaki in San Francisco. After visiting the United States he went to London where he attended and addressed the World Religious Conference.

By 1936 Gempo Roshi and Soen Roshi had met, and the two of them traveled to Manchuria to establish a branch of Myoshin-ji. In 1949 Gempo Roshi installed Soen Roshi as abbot of Ryutaku-ji and acknowledged him as his Dharma heir. After his retirement Gempo Roshi energetically spoke, worked with Dharma students in prison, produced calligraphies, and twice more before he died completed pilgrimages of Shikoku Island by car.

In 1961 at the age of ninety-six Yamamoto Gempo Roshi passed away.

Introduction to the Translation

If someone were to ask me what I consider to be my good karma, without hesitation I would say one example is that I was able to hear Gempo Roshi's Teishos on The Gateless Gate and on Hakuin's "Rohatsu Exhortations" at Ryutaku-ji.

Gempo Roshi was about ninety, already retired, but during sesshin Soen Roshi would ask him to give a teisho. His teishos were recorded, and some of them were transcribed, edited, and published. The book was entitled Teisho on the Gateless Gate, but nobody calls it by that name. Everyone calls it Gempo Roku. I read it from time to time, and wherever I turn I find great inspiration.

When I mentioned this work to my students, they naturally asked me to translate it. I tried and failed. Again I tried, and again I failed. The task to translate this work into English requires the logical connection of sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and this grammatical - superficial - logic often appears to be missing in Gempo Roshi's Japanese. The material that I have translated has been selected, arranged, and interpreted in a way that renders it sensible - logical.

I must mention that if Genro had not insisted again and again and had not helped me polish the translation, this treasure would not have come out.

What we see here is only a tiny part of his aspect. Innumerable episodes and profound teachings have yet to be revealed. It is my wish to find time to introduce more of Gempo Roshi in future issues of The Zen Studies Society's journal.

Eido Tai Shimano
Sept. 22, 1984
Dai Bosatsu Zendo

GEMPO ROSHI'S TEISHO

When Master Hakuin grew old he said to his students, "When you do zazen use a thick cushion..." Early in his career as a teacher, Hakuin had no zendo, but people gathered from all over Japan at his temple, Shoin-ji, and there on the beach or in a shed they would do zazen. It was not until he was nearly eighty that a zendo was built.

When we sit on a very cold day, the moisture and warmth of our bodies creates a foggy mist that penetrates our robes, and they become cold and stiff - frozen. It was very common for Master Hakuin's students to sit under extreme conditions. The master encouraged them and struck them with the keisaku, but when he was nearly eighty his tears would fall while watching the young students practice, and he would say, "As long as I cry I can no longer guide them."

"When you do zazen use a thick cushion, and sit in full lotus." But even half-lotus is all right. Full lotus is called the tathagata posture while the half-lotus is called bodhisattva posture. Therefore Amida Tathagata sits in full lotus while Kanzeon Bodhisattva or Jizo Bodhisattva sits in half-lotus.

"Loosen your belt, and make your spine erect." If I emphasize this 'make your spine erect and straighten your head,' many of you may say, "Oh, Roshi. Your sitting posture is not like that!" Very unfortunately since my childhood my spine and neck have not been straight, but I'm doing my best. However, as for my lower abdomen, though I'm ninety now - no one can compete!

"First, count your breath." When speaking to other people about important matters such

as business or complicated human problems, if you can't count your breath you will not be able to discuss the matter to its fullest. So, when having such a conversation, first sink your breath, and from the top of your head to the tip of your toes you become one. When you can do this with total concentration your heart speaks. That is, the words come out from your total universal being. Beware of the man who changes the tone of his voice according to the subject, because he is speaking only from his mind, and that changes every minute!

"Having adjusted your body and having counted your breath, work on the koan which has been given to you." To work means to sever the root of your greed, anger, and folly, to extinguish the 84,000 delusions. If this is done, original true nature appears. Delusions disappear. But the point is not to switch from delusion to enlightenment but rather to realize what you already have. Before the persimmon grows sweet it is astringent. Unless it is astringent it will not become sweet. But after all, astringent or sweet it is always persimmon.

"If you continue to practice zazen this way day and night, even if you should miss striking the ground you cannot miss experiencing self-realization." Master Hakuin's exhortations were made when he became old. People nowadays criticize him and say that he devitalized Zen through his efforts to organize and systematize. This is not Hakuin's fault. The teachers after Hakuin just imitated him. That imitation instead of creativity is the main problem. Master Hakuin was a man who, it is said, is born once in five hundred years. He was the one who truly revitalized Zen in Japan. But people see only his skillful means. Therefore, one modern Zen teacher said, "Zen is like an academic study." Mistake! Our practice is what Nada Daishi said: "Strip your flesh, and return to the Mother. Crush your bones and return to the Father. After that, with your own nen power, preach the Dharma." Yes. He is right. Otherwise our practice is utterly fruitless.. This practice is different from ordinary practice. Academic study

is like a stage sword - sharp in appearance but no cut - hence, in the battlefield of human life it is useless. Our practice, on the other hand, should be the continuous training of body and mind, and therefore our being become a real sword. Under any difficult circumstances in human life, because of our training, we have the confidence to overcome obstacles.

I have said many things, and to do even what I have just said so far will not be easy. Have the bodhisattva's spirit, and sit so steadfastly that not even a hurricane or a blizzard could disturb you. Though it is cold, do not shrink. I have had no formal education, but when doing this practice, I used to become naked first, then I'd put on underwear and then a robe. Then you learn you do not feel cold at all. Although Shakyamuni was great, and Bodhidharma was great - after all, they too were men just like you. So do your best. And if you think you cannot do it, then it would be best to leave the monastery today.

Master Hakuin said, "A sutra says, 'When one attains true realization he is not only united with the ten directions of the world, but he is also united with the whole Sangha of the Enlightened Mind.'" True means the quintessence of the essence which is unchangeable, immovable. Uniting with the ten directions means to swallow, so to speak, the ten directions. After all, our practice and our realization is not to separate universe and self. Even a worm, even the beard of an ant must be regarded as part of you, and hence even a mosquito must not be killed. Not only must we unite with the Tao but embrace and practice it - because of this the protecting deity supports us. It is the protecting deity who gives us food to eat and to whom we must be grateful.

When I came to Ryutaku-ji for the first time, there were no blankets or mattresses for sleeping. There were no tea cups with which to offer tea to the Buddha. There were no cooking utensils. There was literally nothing. But because of the support of protecting deities we now have many so things! In my early days at

Ryutaku-ji I did not lie down at night because without a blanket and mattress I would have caught cold on the floor - I would lean against the wall and do sitting sleep, covering my head with flannel. The rain leaked through the old roof, but now there is no leak, and we have everything we need. This is due to the support of Dharma protecting deities. But because we have everything - a luxurious, extravagant life - the disturbing, distracting deity comes. When we have many things we tend to treat things and people carelessly and negligently. A big mistake! You must know the preciousness of poverty and the danger of riches.

In this world, among many important things, the most important of all is the human being. You speak about treasure, but it is only people who consider treasure to be treasure. If there were no people - no treasure. So I ask you - if someone comes to you hungry, please offer them food with warmth. During the war when we had so little to eat, some days eight or ten people would come here to beg for food. So I would ask the tenzo to stretch the amount by adding more water and the leaves of vegetables to the rice, and in that way all had something to eat.

When I first got here I told the mice, "You have been here generation after generation. I have just arrived. You are senior, I am junior. Please take care of me." And I bowed to the mice. Nowadays I give a small amount of rice to them every night, and we have a wonderful relationship. Therefore, they don't bite the furniture and dig holes in the wall. They are protecting Dharma deities. Mouse, cat, dog, monkey, sparrow, crow - they all save us. It is all up to our mind, our attitude.

The saying goes, "The lower the wisteria hangs, the more people will look up." This implies that when the head is low, like the wisteria, then people will take notice: Humility invites respect. However, even if you lower your head physically, it is worthless if your spiritual head is high up in the air. Thus, "When a student's motivation and Great Vows for All are intense and his commitment is firm, the

deity of protection becomes strong and supports his practice." Everything depends upon the force of the vow. We must all have at least one vow. All the buddhas and bodhisattvas practiced with a vow. Zazen is a vow. "It is just like the practice of archery," Hakuin says, "In the beginning you won't be able to hit the bulls-eye. But if you patiently continue to just practice, your body will master the action." So be humble. Place your heart under all sentient beings, and take a vow to liberate them all.

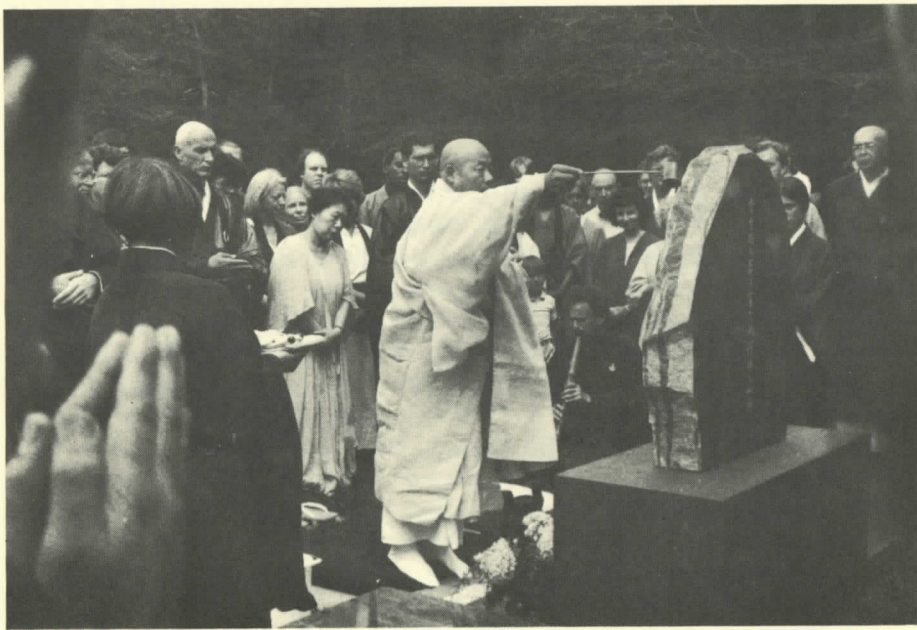
Returned To The Earth

by Eido Roshi

On July 4th, 1976, Dai Bosatsu Zendo was officially dedicated to celebrate the bicentennial of this nation. On that day one half of the ashes of Nyogen Senzaki, one of the first pioneers of Zen Buddhism in America, were temporarily enshrined on the Dharma Hall altar. On July 4th, 1982, when Soen Roshi was at Dai Bosatsu to celebrate its birth, I told him that even though Nyogen Senzaki had said that his ashes should just be spread in the field and that no tombstone should be erected, I felt that we should properly bury him as his students did in Los Angeles. Soen Roshi said, "Wait a little longer. The appropriate time will soon come."

When I heard of the death of Soen Roshi on March 11th of this year, not only was I shocked, but I understood what he had meant by "the appropriate time will soon come." On that day I decided to erect a stupa for both of them. While Soen Roshi was still alive, he and I talked many times about Dai Bosatsu, and I once told him that this place is just like Ryutakuji; it was founded by the combined effort of Hakuin and Torei - teacher and student. I said that I would like to consider him the founder of Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Without the efforts of Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senzaki this place would never have happened.

After Soen Roshi's funeral in Japan, I talked to Sochu Roshi, and of course he was agreeable to split his ashes into two parts. I asked the head monk at Dai Bosatsu and a student of architecture living there to design a stupa. All knew of the long association and correspondence between Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senzaki. I told the students how on the 21st of each month they bowed to each other across the Pacific Ocean. So it was decided that the stupa would have two wings - the right hand side (Westward) would be Nyogen Senzaki and the left



Eido Roshi purifying the stupa of Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senszaki, July 4, 1984.

(Eastward) would be Soen Roshi. The stupa, Namu Dai Bosa, represents the Pacific Ocean and the Universal Ocean as well.

With the very dedicated and impressive work of Dai Bosatsu students, all the work was completed by the 4th of July.

During sesshin the ashes of these two pioneers were enshrined in the Dharma Hall. On the 4th, seventy additional students came and joined the seventy-five sesshin participants. We all walked silently beside Beecher Lake until we came to the burial ground. Water, incense, salt, and white cotton cloth were brought for the purification. I carried Soen Roshi's ashes, and one of the monks carried Nyogen Senszaki's. The quiet of Dai Bosatsu Mountain become more deeply so with the resounding sound of the bamboo flute. The grave was purified with incense, salt, and water. The white cloth was spread, All

looked on intensely - some with tears, some with deep feelings of sorrow and gratitude. On the spread cloth - again purified with incense, salt, and water - the ashes of both men were united. My hands trembled, my eyes were wet. Everyone stood in gassho. At this moment, one half century after their first acquaintance, the two men were united and will be united forever and ever in Sangha Meadow at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. The cloth was folded, placed in the ground, and covered with soil. The chanting began, and all offered incense. The burial ceremony was over; Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senszaki became the karmic founders of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji as well as its protecting deities.

Sky was blue, wind was gentle - Inexpressible serenity in everyones' heart. It was 4pm, July 4th, 1984.

DAI BOSATSU ZENDO SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1984/85

Nov. 30-Dec. 8.....	Rohatsu Sesshin
Dec. 10.....	Fall Kessei Ends
Apr. 1.....	Kessei Begins
Apr. 5-7.....	Buddha's Birthday Weekend Workshop
Apr. 20-27.....	Holy Days Sesshin
May 25- June 1.....	Memorial Day Sesshin
June 7-9.....	Spring Workshop
June 27- July 4.....	July 4th Sesshin
July 5.....	Kessei Ends, Guest House Opens

SCHEDULE OF FEES

Zazen Workshop.....	\$75.00
Kessei.....	First, \$1,000 Second, \$700 Third, \$500
Sesshin.....	Sangha, \$180 Others, \$210
Room and Board.....	Sangha, \$18/day Others, \$20/day
Guest House.....	Single, \$50/day Double, \$90/day Weekly Rate/6 days

DAI BOSATSU ZENDO NOTES

On July 4th, Junpo Dennis Kelly was ordained at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. He was given the ordination name Kando.

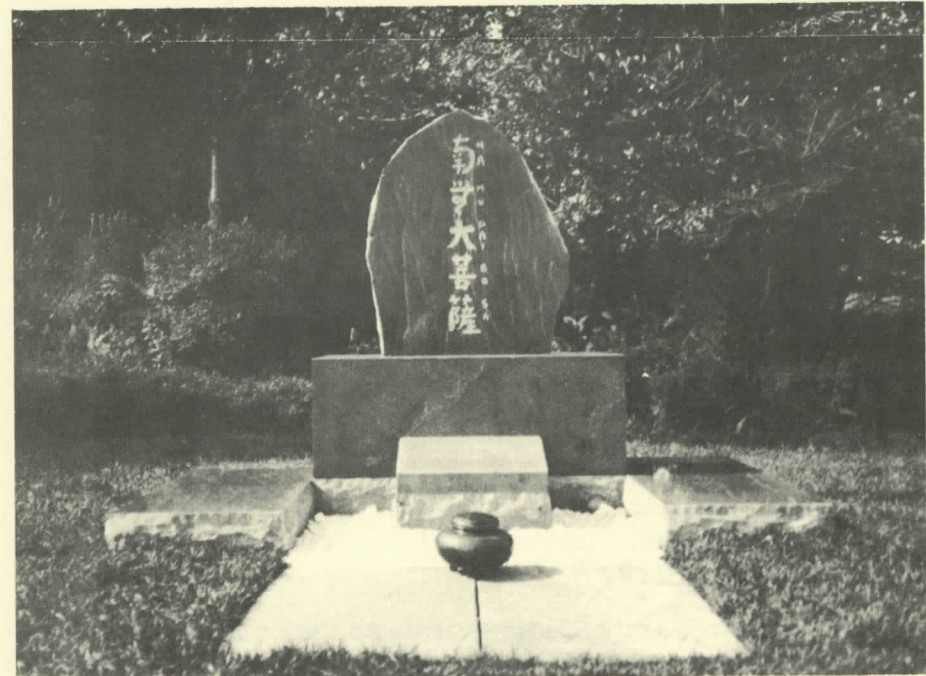
On August 18th, Eido Roshi performed the wedding ceremony for Bugyo David Schnyer and Reimyo Rosa Nacach.

After five years of dedicated work, Zenrin Bob Lewis has published his English translations of phrases for Zen practice in a volume entitled The Book of The Zen Grove. Says Eido Roshi in his introduction: "Each phrase in this book is

the expression of enlightenment itself - beyond space, time, culture, language. I hope that readers will not only read this collection again and again but will also be inspired by these sayings to do more and stronger zazen practice - to realize their own true nature."

This book may be purchased by sending a check for \$8.50 (includes postage) to Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

On September 29th, the final day of Golden Wind Sesshin, Caroline Gugliotta was ordained and given the names Tenbu Myodo.



Stupa for Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senzaki, designed by Chris Finnigan and erected by the combined effort of DBZ students.

NEW YORK ZENDO SHOBO-JI

The New York Zendo Shobo-ji is the city center of the Zen Studies Society. Its schedule is designed to meet the needs of those who wish to practice Buddha Dharma with others in a clear and intensive atmosphere but whose daily lives are devoted to work, family, or school.

New York Zendo offers two five-month training periods annually, and during this time it provides a very full schedule of zazen activity. Those who are just beginning and those who have never attended New York Zendo before are asked to attend thursday evening public meetings for zazen instruction and zendo orientation. Also on thursday night a talk will be given by Eido Roshi, a senior student, or a guest speaker. Students who have attended at least three of these meetings are invited to attend the meetings listed below.

DAILY ZAZEN SCHEDULE*

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	6-7:45		7-9
Tuesday	6-7:45	2-4	
Wednesday	6-7:45		7-9**
Thursday	6-7:45		7-9
Friday	6-7:45		7-9
Saturday	-----		
Sunday	9-12:00		

*Doors open forty-five minutes before scheduled sittings. Be seated at least five minutes before sitting begins. A three dollar donation is asked of all non-members.

**Wednesday evening zazen meetings are for members and provisional students only.

NEW YORK ZENDO SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

In addition to the daily zazen schedule, New York Zendo will conduct 9am-5pm zazen meetings and weekend sesshins. Weekend sesshin is highly recommended for all but especially for those who wish to experience something of the intensity of the longer sesshins at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Weekend sesshins are conducted by Eido Roshi. They begin at 6pm on Friday and end at 6pm on Sunday. A resident should be notified of your intention to attend at least three days before sesshin begins.

1984/85

Dec. 15-16.....	Zen Arts Sale
Dec. 31.....	New Year's Eve Celebration
Jan. 7.....	First Training Period
Jan. 13.....	Shobo-ji Day Sitting*
Jan. 20.....	Workshop**
Feb. 15-17.....	Nirvana Weekend Sesshin
Mar. 22-24.....	Soen Roshi/Yasutani Roshi Memorial Weekend Sesshin
Apr. 7.....	Buddha's Birthday Sitting
May 10-12.....	Nyogen Senzaki Weekend Sesshin
July 12.....	Training Period Ends; Zendo Closes
Aug. 5.....	Second Training Period of 1985 Begins

Weekend Sesshin Fee Schedule

	Members	Non-Members
Full-Time	\$35	\$45
Part-Time	\$25	\$30

*Shobo-ji Day will be celebrated with 9-5 sittings every month on the Sunday nearest the 15th. Lunch will be served. Members \$3; Non-Members \$5.

**Workshops are mandatory for provisional students. Members \$5; Non-Members \$10

BECOMING A MEMBER OF NEW YORK ZENDO

To become a member of New York Zendo students must fulfill the requirements of provisional membership. To be accepted into this program students must attend at least ten Thursday public meetings. At the end of each training period, those who wish to join the provisional student class may apply. Provisional students are required to attend all Friday evening zazen meetings for one training period. The first Friday of each month will be devoted to practical training (zazen, sutra memorization, general orientation). Other Friday classes will be devoted to Buddhist studies, and the general public is invited to attend these. It is mandatory that provisional students attend the training period workshop (see schedule), and they are strongly encouraged to attend at least one weekend sesshin. A formal acknowledgement of the completion of requirements will occur at the end of the training period.

NEW YORK ZENDO NOTES

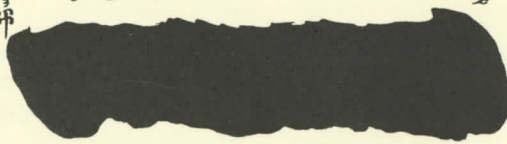
In order to erect the stupa for the founders of Dai Bosatsu as well as to prepare for the publication of the Soen Roku, we asked our friends to contribute to the Founders' Fund. As of October 1st, we have collected \$9,751.79. The stupa has been erected at the site designed by Chris Finnigan and students of DBZ at a cost of \$5,981.42. The remaining funds will be applied toward the publication of the Soen Roku; the Sayings and Doings of Master Soen. Work has already begun on this project, so please submit your articles and memories regarding personal encounters with Soen Roshi. Please send them and contributions to the Founders' Fund to the attention of Eido Roshi at the New York Zendo.

THE ZEN ARTS SALE

The Zen Arts Sale will be held at New York Zendo Shobo-ji on Dec. 15th and 16th (Sat &

Sun). Each day the doors will open at 10am and will close at 6pm. Included in the sale will be antique scrolls from Japan and China, thangkas from Tibet, designer fashions by Risma, the pottery of Ragnar Naess and Michell Rhoades and others, not to mention other fine arts and crafts. Freshly baked foods, maple syrup produced at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, meditation cushions, incense and temple objects - These things and many others will be available.

One of the most beautiful items for sale will be the Zen Studies Society's 1985 calendar. It is entitled the Soen Roshi Calligraphy calendar, and it features some of his finest and most powerful work. If you cannot come to the sale, you may purchase the calendars by mail. Please fill out the order blank below, and mail it to the New York Zendo.

Soen Roshi calligraphy 1985 calendar		
SOEN ROSHI	あ 法 行 起	
		
Celebrate every day and month of 1985 with zen master Soen Roshi's most memorable calligraphy. Exquisitely designed and printed on the highest quality linen/vellum papers. An ideal holiday gift for yourself or a friend.		
\$10.00 plus \$2.75 postage and handling (\$12.75 each) Send check or money order to: The Zen Studies Society 223 east 67 street, new york, ny 10021 attn. calendar dept.		
cut	cut	
Please send me _____ calendars. I have enclosed a total of \$ _____. \$10.00 plus \$2.75 postage and handling for each calendar. Please make checks payable to The Zen Studies Society. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.		
name _____		
address _____		
city _____	state _____	zip _____

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for your contributions to the Zen Studies Society's journal. So far we have received over \$500, but, of course, the cost of publication is ongoing, and so we must continue to ask for your support.

As Eido Roshi indicated in his notes on the translation, more attention will be devoted to Gempo Roshi in some future issues. It is also our hope that we may introduce Gempo Roshi's teacher, Sohan Gempo Roshi, in the not too distant future.

We would like to thank Shori Christine McKenna for all of her editorial assistance and Yayoi Karen Matsumoto for her help in the preparation of this issue for the printer.

Again, thank you for your contributions to the journal. Any future support you would like to give please send to the New York Zendo.

Sincerely yours,
Genro Lee Milton
Editor

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