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Nyogen Senzaki, Jimmy and Shubin Tanahashi

Dai Bosatsu Mandala

A remembrance of Shubin Kin Tanahashi

by EIDO T. SHIMANO

On August 31, 1993, an uncelebrated Japanese woman passed away in a nursing home in Los Angeles, California. Her name was Kin Tanahashi. She was ninety-six years old. Only a few people were at her death bed. The funeral service was not attended by hundreds of people. Her departure was quiet, some might say lonely. She is survived by only one of her four children, a son and his wife. Her family were not Zen Buddhists and were unaware that her life held great significance in the transmission of the Buddha Dharma from Japan to America.

As often happens, the quiet but dedicated roles of women are overlooked or forgotten when the history of important events is told. In this issue of the newsletter, I will tell the story of Mrs. Shubin Kin Tanahashi. She and her son, Jimmy Tanahashi, played a pivotal role in the manifestation of the Dai Bosatsu Mandala.



Shubin Tanahashi

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In this context, a mandala means that innumerable Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and ancestors, from both the East and West, played a role in the formation of a concrete Dharma phenomena in the land of liberty. There are at least four generations that I can name as part of this mandala. The first generation was Soyen Shaku and Gempo Roshi. The second includes Nyogen Senzaki, Soen Roshi, Shubin-san and Jimmy Tanahashi, Yasutani Roshi, Chester Carlson, and D.T. Suzuki. The third is my generation, and the fourth is today's Sangha. The full blossoming of this unique mandala flower will occur when the present Sangha's children are brought up in the Buddhist tradition. A sociologist has said that when a new tradition is introduced, two centuries are needed for it to be rooted in new soil.

Some people might call it just "karmic coincidence" that she met Nyogen Senzaki, however, their association led to Nyogen's encounter with a poem by Soen Nakagawa. These two Zen teachers' friendship, over many years and long distances, led me to America and the founding of New York Zendo Shobo-ji, New York City and Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the Catskill Mountains of New York. In memory of this inconceivable drama and to commemorate Nyogen Senzaki's anniversary on May seventh, I will tell Shubin Tanahashi's story, and how it affected Buddhism in the West. While parts of this history have appeared in the book, "Namu Dai Bosa," additional letters and photographs have come into my possession which I have used for this article.

Shubin, which means "Autumn Sky," is the Dharma name that was given to her by Nyogen Senzaki in 1932. Nyogen Senzaki loved Master Jakushitsu of Eigen-ji Temple, in Shiga prefecture, and all his students' Dharma names were chosen from the verses of Jakushitsu. The name "Shubin" came from the following verse:

White clouds drift across the mountain peaks
The banks of the river are green with pines
In an empty hut I sit until dawn
A dewdrop washes the autumn sky
As the moon rises
I see my elder Dharma brothers bowing, bowing.

From my perspective today, I see coincidences in the "autumn sky" and how that autumn sky has become a boundless connection between East and West. Years ago, on December 5, 1937, when the young monk Soen Nakagawa visited Ryutaku Ji for the first time to pay his respects to Master Hakuin, he composed a haiku:

Endless is my vow,
boundless the autumn sky
Blue heaped upon blue.

Kin Sago, who later became Shubin Tanahashi, was born in Gifu prefecture in Japan in 1897. Her sister, Mrs. Fujii, was married and lived in Pasadena in California. Around 1912, Mrs. Fujii met Mr. Tanahashi at a gathering of Japanese expatriates from Gifu prefecture who were living in the Los Angeles area. Evidently, Mr. Tanahashi liked what he heard about Mrs. Fujii's sister and returned to Japan to

meet her. Back in the homeland, they were married. This is how she came to America when she was only seventeen years old. Together they ran a hand laundry shop in an area in Los Angeles known as Little Tokyo. Her first son, Kiyoshi, was born the following year in 1915, and is her only surviving child. A daughter passed away at birth, and her second son, Kei, was killed fighting for the Allies during World War II. In 1923 the last child was born; he was named Sumio, but people called him "Jimmy."

In 1924, after living for ten years in Los Angeles, Shubin-san went back to Japan with her three boys. During their visit, she began to notice that something was wrong with her youngest son Jimmy. She changed her plans and came back to Los Angeles, running away because of many cruel questions about her child.

Jimmy was severely retarded, unable to speak or walk, and he required far more attention and care than a normal child. Shubin-san's difficulties with her children and family life caused her much sorrow. The extra care of a handicapped child combined with trying to run the laundry business kept her constantly at work. During this period of time, there was much prejudice and persecution of Japanese immigrants in America. Her burden became heavier and heavier. She did her best to try to manage it all. In her heart, she suffered and was seeking guidance. It was these difficulties and trials, however, that led to her friendship with Nyogen Senzaki.

Nyogen Senzaki was born in Aomori prefecture in 1876. His real parents were unknown, but he was adopted by a carpenter. Ordained as a Soto Zen monk, he later practiced in the Rinzai school at Engaku-ji in Kamakura, training under the guidance of Soyen Shaku, the first Zen master to come to America. At Engaku-ji he practiced with a lay student who became a world famous scholar, Dr. D.T. Suzuki. After six years of monastery training, he went back to Aomori prefecture and taught Buddhism for young pre-school children. He called it the Mentorgarden or Butsu Gyo (Buddha Seedling) and acted as president, teacher, treasurer and janitor. I have a photograph that was taken around that time and another one of the Mentorgarden alumni that was taken fifty years later. To my surprise, the number of people in both photographs is almost identical. He must have had an unforgettable impact on the students, but because of the Japanese Russian War in 1904-05, the operation of the Mentorgarden became difficult. He wrote a fundraising letter fund-raising to Soyen Shaku, but it was unsuccessful.

In the meantime, Soyen Shaku made his second visit to the United States at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Russell in San Francisco. His first visit was to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. D.T. Suzuki is often mentioned in Soyen Shaku's diary, "Journal of Unsui in Europe and America," as he worked closely as his translator and attendant. In that journal,

there are only a few words about Nyogen: "Senzaki Nyogen arrived from Seattle." I found another line which says, "Because the labor is too strenuous, Nyogen has left the Russell's house." This was the last meeting between teacher and student. Soyen Shaku's brevity regarding his student Senzaki seems very cool, but Nyogen Senzaki's feelings for his teacher remained quite passionate. Every year after Soyen Shaku's death in 1919, he wrote a poem and held a commemoration ceremony for his teacher until his own passing in 1958.

Nyogen Senzaki's zen life in America began when he left the Russells' house. Records of his everyday activities remain vague until he emerged from his self imposed solitude in the late 1920's. According to what I heard from different individuals, such as Senzaki's collaborator and poet, Paul Reps, Mrs. Ozaki in San Francisco or from a letter written to Japan, his life was eclectic. He worked as a dishwasher in a restaurant, a hotel manager, a social dancing instructor, and a contest judge for a canary show. Recently, I learned he had written to Soyen Shaku to ask permission to be married to a Mrs. Schroeder. All these events took place while he was still living in San Francisco.

In the late 1920s, he established a Zen group at a house on Bush Street, which he called Bushu (Buddha Seed Zendo). Around this time, his Dharma brother, Gyodo Furukawa, a Dharma heir of Soyen Shaku, came to stay at the Bushu Zendo, expressing his intention that "His ashes were to be buried in American soil." (He had needed to leave Japan for other reasons, however.) From Gyodo's point of view, Nyogen was not an authorized Zen teacher so he might need some authentic help. From Nyogen's point of view, Gyodo did not know anything about American culture and it was through his own efforts that the sangha had formed. Even though they had practiced together at Engaku-ji, their motivations were too different and many painful days followed. Finally, Nyogen wrote a most impressive letter to the sangha saying, "Please take care of my Dharma brother Gyodo but to have two heads in one temple does not work, so I will move south."

Thus he went to Los Angeles and moved into



Nyogen Senzaki and Jimmy Tanahashi

a tiny house at 411 Turner Street. In the spring of 1932, when Shubin-san was thirty-five years old, an exotic-looking Japanese man brought a dharma robe for dry cleaning to her laundry shop. He left his name and address but did not return to claim it. One day Shubin-san decided to deliver it herself to the address that he left at the shop. He was grateful and said to her, "Thank you. I am sorry I did not come to pick up my laundry, but I do not have any money." He told her that he was a Zen Buddhist monk had just moved from San Francisco to Los Angeles and had started a small Zen group called the Mentorgarten. Although Shubin-san was not familiar with Zen Buddhism, she knew she was in need of some spiritual support.

At that first meeting, Nyogen Senzaki told Shubin-san that if she was interested in writing waka poetry, he would help her to polish her work. Nyogen was talented in composing Chinese poetry and Japanese waka, which is a thirty-one syllable form. He had written innumerable poems. It is my guess that, living isolated in the desert both geographically and spiritually, the composition of poetry must have been an oasis. The following waka poems written around this time show his ability:

My beloved patriarchs did not dwell
Anywhere that I can name.
They float like clouds
They run like water.

The unbearably hot days are gone.
I think deeply of Bodhidharma-
The golden wind is blowing.

Shubin-san became his waka student on that day. She visited him every day and gradually the two of them began to know each other. After some time had passed, she at last, spoke of her difficult situation with her child Jimmy. Nyogen immediately offered his help saying, "I will take care of Jimmy for you, and baby-sit for two or three hours a day." On the following day, she told me, he came to the shop and took Jimmy in the stroller. Although Jimmy was twelve years old, he could not walk unassisted.

With the readiness of time, Mrs. Tanahashi officially became his dharma student. Nyogen wrote an acknowledgment scroll quoting from an ancient Chinese poem (shown below):

In a thousand rivers
water flows
In a thousand rivers
the moon glitters

For ten thousand miles
Not a cloud in sight
For ten thousand miles
Vast heaven!

*For Shubin from Nyogen
1932*

Thus Shubin (Autumn Sky) was born. An unbreakable bond between student and teacher began. Her life thereafter was devoted to the Dharma. It was Jimmy who gave her trouble, but it was Jimmy who saved her. Nyogen Senszaki came everyday and spent two or three hours with Jimmy. While walking up and down the main street of Little Tokyo with the boy, with one intense thought (NEN), Nyogen Senszaki would chant over and over, "Shu jo mu hen sei gan do." (However innumerable all beings are, I vow to save them all.) Jimmy had never learned to speak. After seven years with Nyogen, however, he was able to utter only the last part "Sei gan do." This is a living example how NEN power works.

Then one day, Nyogen Senszaki said to Shubin-san, "Recently I have been thinking about doing future Dharma work in America with Jimmy." Although she did not understand his meaning at the time, she told me, "I have forgotten many things, but this short statement,

stuck in my head." When I heard this from Shubin-san, it was in the early 1960s. Nobody could have imagined the present-day Zen activity all over the United States. Who would have ever thought of the birth of Dai Bosatsu Zendo? Nonetheless, that enigmatic statement stuck in my mind also.

Nyogen Senszaki's and Shubin-san's shared love of poetry led to another friendship that played an important part in the actualization of the Dai Bosatsu mandala. It was in November of 1934 that Shubin-san read in a magazine, called The Fujin Koron, a diary and poems by a young monk living alone in a hermitage on Dai Bosatsu Mountain in Japan. She was so impressed that she shared the magazine with her teacher. The poems had such an affect on Nyogen Senszaki that he wrote to the young monk Nakagawa Soen.

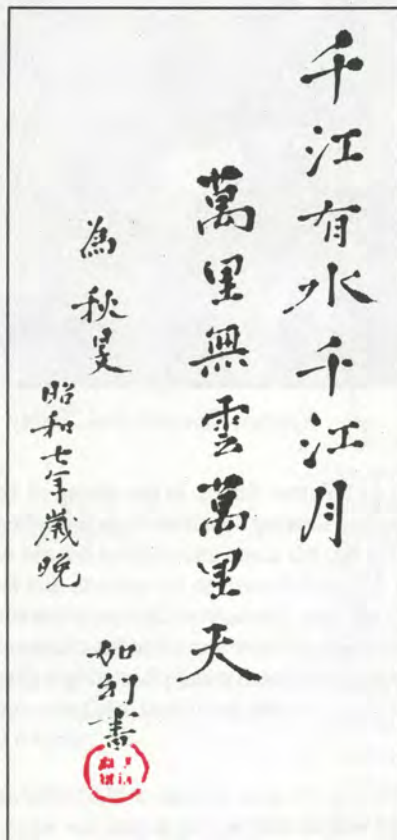
Soen had not yet met Gempo Roshi and was living in isolation from the Buddhist establishment in Japan. Having been inspired by the poetry and literary tradition of the wandering monk, he was practicing unconventionally by fasting, meditating and living in seclusion on a mountain near Mt. Fuji. It would seem that far across the Pacific ocean, there was a kindred spirit someone who understood the true Way and was actually living and transmitting these ideals. The correspondence that began at that time continued throughout their lives.

In a letter from Soen to Nyogen dated Christmas Day around the end of the 1930s, I found an interesting paragraph which goes:

"Every month, on the twenty-first day, at 8P.M. Japan time let all Dharma seekers on the planet join in spiritual communication. Will you be good enough to chant "Namu Kara Tan No"(The Great Compassionate Dharani) at that time? I will ask my shakuhachi friends to join me in my Namu Kara Tan No chanting." Thus the two individuals who had never met face-to-face began to greet each other. On Mount Dai Bosatsu in Japan, the twenty-first is the day on which the mountain's deity is celebrated at the shrine.

Soen planned to visit his friend for the first time in 1941 but the outbreak of the war made this impossible. Being unable to meet in person, they continued on the twenty-first day of each month to put their palms together at the designated time and bow deeply. This is the origin of Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day at our monastery in the Catskill Mountains of New York.

The War between America and Japan began December 1941. Nyogen Senszaki was interned during World War II at a refuge camp on Hart Mountain in Wyoming from 1942-1945. On his way to Hart Mountain, Nyogen Senszaki composed the following waka poems



It has been a long trip.
At midnight
About to enter Montana
Not feeling at all well
I break into a cold sweat!

I look out
At the light of Venus
As our train follows
The seven stars
of the Big Dipper—
Keep on track!

Venus is not
So far above the horizon
At dawn our train
Seems to be in a hurry.

The tracks
Slice right through the mountain.
At last our train arrives

At Butte Station
Now waiting ten more hours
For this endless journey to continue.

“No Japs Allowed”
The sign says at the station.
Sadness overwhelms me
But the milk from the refreshment
stand
Tastes delicious!

At the mountain station
With twilight approaching
The autumn wind brings a chill.
Pulling together some trash
I build a little fire.

Shubin-san, her husband, and Jimmy were also sent to the Hart Mountain camp. She wrote many copies of the Kanzeon Sutra with ink, a brush, and NEN for the safety of her son, Kei, who was in the United States Army. He was killed in Italy on July 4, 1944. This period of her life must have been a sorrowful memory, for she never mentioned any details from her time in Wyoming. Nyogen ironically expresses the frustration, disappointment and deep sadness that must have been in many Japanese immigrants' hearts:

Hundred of children—
Soldiers in the U.S. Army—
Have died in the war, or are missing.
Now at last their parents are allowed
To leave the internment camps.

The temple of the cross
Preaches love
But all our treasures stored there
Have been stolen, they say!

The war ended in August 1945. Real spiritual intimacy and mutual support between Nyogen Senszaki and Shubin-san developed when they returned to Los Angeles from Hart Mountain. Nyogen Senszaki had a Zendo in one of the rooms at a hotel in Little Tokyo (now the Sumitomo Bank Building). He resumed their regularly scheduled activities such as zazen, religious services, lectures and classes. Shubin-san supported the zendo with her effort and presence.

During the war, Soen intensified his formal Zen training under Yamamoto Gempo Roshi. Finally in 1949, Soen, Nyogen and Shubin-san were able to meet in America for the first time. Soen lived with Nyogen at the Miyako Hotel for about six months, and their friendship grew deeper as they lived and sat zazen together. Soen grew his hair long like Senszaki. Soen Roshi told me,

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” Later he changed this proverb to, “Wherever you may be, shaving your head will protect you.”

In the 1950s, Jimmy was still alive and living not too far away in an institution for the handicapped. Mr. Tanahashi was ready to retire from the laundry business. After forty-two years of living in California without returning to his native land, Mr. Tanahashi visited Gifu prefecture in Japan. Soen Roshi wrote a haiku on the occasion of his visit:

This is not a dream
The green leaf of a persimmon
After forty-two years.

(Yume narazu
42 nen no
Kaki Wakaba)

It was during this visit, on August 8, 1956, the first day of autumn in Japan, that Mr. Tanahashi died. Shubin-san became a widow and drew closer to Jimmy and Nyogen. Their dependency on each other increased, and they became more like a family. She moved Nyogen and the zendo from the hotel to a house across the street from her residence. There she was better able to care for him, as well as to manage the affairs of the zendo. The following are excerpts from letters written to Shubin by Nyogen while she visited Japan. His deep feeling for her is poignantly illustrated:

May 19, 1955

Dear Shubin,

I thank you for your letter regarding the visit to my teacher Soyen Shaku's grave. Soen-San (Nakagawa) also wrote to me about it. I can imagine the green shoots rising from my Dharma brother Zen-Chu's tombstone.

I appreciated hearing about your visit, and felt great nostalgia. I showed your letter to the Sangha and translated it for them. Now that I have heard from you, my only concern is for your well-being. . . .

September 5, 1957

Dear Shubin,

Although I am aware that you are away only temporarily, I can't help but feel deep loneliness. . . .

A waka from this letter:

Hearing that you have visited Mt. Koya
My heart is stirred by thoughts of Koba Daishi.
The stones must be covered with an ancient moss
One by one revealing the founder's face

October 27, 1957

Dear Shubin,

Your long-awaited letter came the day before yesterday. I have read it again, again, and again. That evening, I translated it for the Sangha and showed it to Kiyoshi and his wife.

This old monk is fine. . .

November 28, 1957

Dear Shubin,

After all this time, at last you are coming back. It's getting colder and colder. Please don't catch cold on your way home.

The following poem speaks of Nyogen's feeling:

April 15, 1955

Forgetting you have gone to Japan
Seeing the light in your window
I peer in.
Ah! It's the third night
Since your departure
(Wasurete wa mado no tomoshibi kaima minu
Kimi tabitachite mikkame no yube)

Shubin-san's feelings for him were lifelong devotion and gratitude. I do not have her letters to Nyogen, but in the corner of an album with a photograph of Nyogen and Jimmy, she wrote, "Oh Sensei, Sensei because of you, Jimmy and I are able to survive."

In 1957, Soen Roshi asked me if I was interested in going to America to be Nyogen Senszaki's attendant monk. Senszaki was eighty-one years old at that time. I wrote to him in order to make the arrangements. He told me that his student, Mrs. Shubin Tanahashi, would soon come to Japan, and I should meet with her. She arrived, and Soen Roshi, Shubin-san and myself sat together in the Roshi's room. Because I knew she was Senszaki-sensei's most trusted advisor and had a great influence on him, I was very nervous, as if she were going to test me. She was in her sixties and quite introverted by nature, however her years in America made her much more social than other Japanese ladies. Soen Roshi made ceremonial tea. We shared one bowl. Then we took each other's hand. It was our silent wish that we might be able to meet again this way someday in America.

Six months after this meeting over a bowl of tea, Nyogen Senszaki passed away on May 7, 1958, and my plans to come to America to

help with his zendo did not materialize. As Soen Roshi wrote from Los Angeles that summer:

"Regarding the future of Nyogen Senszaki's Zendo: there are various opinions and hopes, but everybody feels that this particular place is not appropriate for the Zendo. Mrs. Tanahashi lives across the street, and she took care of Nyogen Senszaki for many years. In a way it was convenient for her and for him. But now, Mrs. Tanahashi feels that she would prefer to have some relaxed time. The future of this Zendo is unknown."

In the spring of 1974, Shubin-san came to the East Coast for the first time to visit Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo. At the invitation of the Japanese ambassador, Soen Roshi and I took Shubin-san to Washington D.C. It was spring and the cherry blossoms were in full bloom. A soft rain fell. At the Japanese Embassy, there was a teahouse, surrounded by a stone garden. Cherry blossoms lay scattered among the pebbles. We spontaneously decided to make a bowl of tea on the verandah under the eaves of the roof. We collected rain drops and the powdered green tea was measured into the bowl for the three of us to share. The cherry-scented water was poured. No word was spoken, yet we all felt that the past seventeen years, since that first bowl together, had passed "like a dream and a phantasm." Soen Roshi whisked the tea and placed it at the edge of the garden with an offering gesture. We began to chant Namu Dai Bosa and we took each others' hands. I realized at that moment that our first circle of joined hands at Ryutaku-ji had been an intimation of the Dai Bosatsu Mandala, although none of us could have guessed what would later transpire.

I vividly recall my first meeting with Jimmy Tanahashi who was being cared for at the Pacific Colony, an institution for the handicapped. In 1961, when I was in Los Angeles with Shubin-san, she asked me if I would like to visit Jimmy. By that time, I knew all about Jimmy and the mysterious Dharma relationships that somehow clustered around him: Shubin-san's encounter with Nyogen Senszaki; Nyogen Senszaki's discovery of Nakagawa Soen; Soen Roshi's journeys to America; and then my coming

to America.

It was a hot California summer afternoon when we took a bus to the Pacific Colony. Shubin-san carried cookies and juice and looked very happy. The dark feelings of worry about Jimmy were no longer there. That day must have been the day that the families were allowed to visit. Everywhere on the great lawn, under the shade trees, people had gathered with their handicapped children. Frankly at first the strange people and unreal quality of the scene were quite unsettling. An order took us to a shady tree, and Shubin-san ran and hugged Jimmy for a long time, forgetting that I was there. Then Jimmy was introduced and in that moment, he saw a Buddhist monk. He struggled and struggled to put his palms together crookedly in gassho. He was trying to speak. At last, very slowly and almost incoherently came the syllables "Sei gan do." I was overwhelmed by the gentle power of NEN. Never had I heard Shujo Mu Hen Seigan Dharma chanted in such an affecting manner. I was moved by these three syllables, that although it has been more than thirty years since that day, I can clearly remember that moment. My six senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind were one hundred percent present. It was the NEN transmission from Jimmy to me. For the first time I understood Soen Roshi's haiku:

For Jimmy Tanahashi

Your slightest sorrow—
How dense the summer forest!—
My sorrow deepens.
(Kanashimi-no
Awaki ga kanashi
Natsu Kodachi)

It is inconceivable that without the living transmission of NEN that I could have continued going on and on for the past three decades. It is not my doing, but NEN energy which does. I do not know who started this NEN mandala. This story encompasses Soen Shaku, Nyogen Senszaki, Jimmy Tanahashi, Shubin Tanahashi, and Soen Roshi. So many individuals from different lineages and seemingly different paths have combined in this rich mandala. The NEN has intermingled and manifested, and now we begin to see its importance. What happens is a manifestation of NEN energy.

Continued on page

Dharma Song Zendo

By Kobutsu Shindo

The Zendo at Sing Sing Correctional Facility came into being out of a series of discussions shared with Donge and others regarding what is known as "engaged" zen practice.

During the year of 1989, I came home to Dai Bosatsu after a considerable absence. In the midst of a major depression, I spent six months there. My stay was rocky to say the least! In retrospect, however, the time was to mark a profound change within my life. Donge and I had many conversations during his last days. I remember walking along the path by the lake with him one day and his saying, "Do something to help people, Kobutsu." I intuitively knew that this is what needed to be done.

In April of '92, Liz Potter and I were asked if we could initiate a Zen training program at Sing Sing. Lizzy was instantly intrigued with Zen in the prison system. Then, even before we set foot into the prison, the paperwork arrived!

There was nobody to help us at first. We funded everything out of our own pockets. We were each working, dealing with kids, homemaking, writing letters to prison officials and spending two evenings a week sitting with the prison Sangha.

Sing Sing is a maximum security prison, the second oldest facility in the New York State prison system. The prison was quite an experience for us during our first few visits. For me, entering into a place one endeavors to avoid was at first un-nerving. Initially, establishing credibility

with the administration and security personnel was difficult. What decidedly odd characters we must have appeared to be: sporting strange Zen garb and requesting permission to bring in cushions, incense, and other Zendo implements. Explaining the keisaku was interesting.

There isn't a general word or phrase that can describe the men of Dharma Song Zendo. They are a varied lot: some have practiced before in other facilities; others are new to zen practice. There is a core group that serve as the heart of our Sangha. Two of these men (Yogen and Junfu), have taken jukai. Three others (Science, Righteous and Benjamin), have taken Refuge Vows and expressed a commitment to accept jukai in the future.

The Zendo was at first a shabby closet of a room situated at the end of a corridor on the administrative floor of the prison hospital. We started with ten worn out blankets as cushions and a stack of dog-eared volumes representing a haphazard mix of Hinduism, Occult, New Age and Buddhism. The floor... hard. Concrete, a patchwork of grey, peeling paint, its surface always dirty. Two blankets to a man, one on the floor and the other under the backside. One day two, small pieces of un-finished pine were found in our area. We ran everything in the Zendo with those clappers.

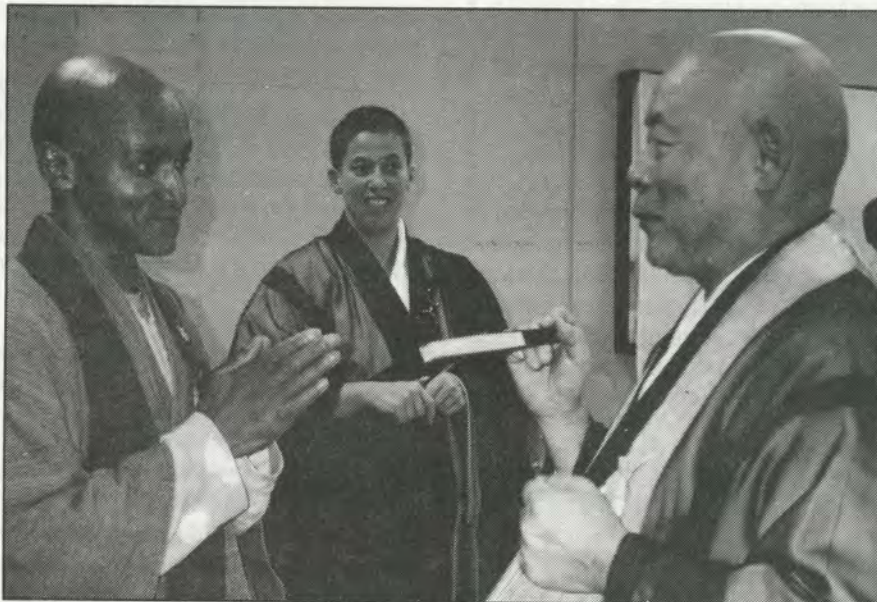
It seemed strange compared to how things are done at Shobo-Ji and Dai Bosatsu. We had just two blocks of wood. We were not allowed incense at first. We started out just sitting and walking, later adding the Han done on the clappers! When we had a half-dozen men registered with the prison administration officially as "Zen Buddhists," we were given permission, first to bring in an inkhin, then some benches and zafus. As time went on we were allowed more. Now, thanks to donations, we have a Han, Sutra books, hardwood clappers, a mokugyo, a plaster Buddha, a candlestick, a fine ceramic altar set from Muin Bernard Spitz and a beautiful scroll from Eido Roshi and Aiho-san for special occasions.

We were given a new room in the basement of the Chapel in April 1993. Over the next months many sangha members and friends came forward with donations for the new Zendo. As the instruments were brought in one-by-one, the richness of our service deepened. At the

present time, we conduct an abbreviated "Morning Service" every other Monday evening. There is a brief zazen period on Saturday morning. Buddhist Studies classes, taught by Rev. Saman Sodo, are held one Sunday a month.

Sing Sing is sobering; the surroundings are noisy and chaotic. Yet the sitting is remarkably intense, the Zendo atmosphere clear and crisp. Not far away is another room where, over the years, six hundred and fourteen human beings were put to

death by electrocution. The brutal aspects of reality are unavoidable here. Imperturbability is a magnificent treasure in prison.



Eido Shimano Roshi meets Yogen Donald Wise, Seiko in background. Sing Sing Correctional Facility. October 24, 1994 Photo by: Margaret Crawford

An Interview with Genchu Osamu Sekine

by Seigan Ed Glassing

Osamu Sekine was born in the year of the boar: January 17, 1960. He grew up with his family and younger sister in Sanwa town, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan.

After working ten years in the family's transportation business, he decided to do a pilgrimage. Upon his return, he attended Shogen-ji Junior college and it was here that he met Eido Roshi, who was teaching a course in Western philosophy.

After much thought he decided that upon graduation he would like to come to America and study under Eido Roshi. Plans were made and on March 27, 1992, Sekine arrived at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

He took Jukai during Harvest Sesshin in 1992, receiving the Dharma name "Genchu" meaning "boundless/profound universe." He became a monk on Thanksgiving of 1992 receiving "Ichido" as his ordination name, meaning "One Way." He was a winter resident at NYZ Shobo-ji in 1993.

He's a shy person with a quiet demeanor but underneath is a great sense of humor. Genchu has been an inspiration for us all.

This interview was given on April 12, 1994, after the completion of his two-year training in America and just prior to his return to Japan. We talked for about an hour and a half, Genchu being a little uncomfortable with his English usage. He asked me to put his words into coherent English for the sangha, and to "keep it simple."

Seigan: *Can you tell us how you started practicing zen and what led you to it?*

Genchu: Well, this is a long story and not an easy question to answer. The circumstances are very complex, but let me say that I lived a very ordinary life in Japan. My family is middle class, my father is an assemblyman in the local government and my mother is a housewife. I worked in my family's transportation company for about ten years as a general manager. I had many friends, money in the bank and was in a relationship. But somehow, it just wasn't right; there was something missing.

Then one day, my fiancée took her own life. This is difficult for me; I still don't know why she did it. But it really changed everything for me; I started thinking about traveling.

I decided to go on a pilgrimage. I needed to just travel and keep moving. I had saved some money from work and took a leave of absence.

Seigan: *Did you travel inside Japan?*

Genchu: Hai, I stayed in Japan. I went on a pilgrimage of 88

temples on Shikoku Island, a very special place. I needed time to myself, time to purify my heart, time to strengthen my soul. At that time I didn't know anything about zazen, nothing about zen practice at all. But I was searching for something.

Seigan: *It was at this time that you heard about Eido Roshi?*

Genchu: Hai, strangely enough, while I was on pilgrimage I happened to hear Eido Roshi on the radio. I don't really remember now what he said, but at the time I thought Wow, this is such a great monk. He made a deep impression on me.

Seigan: *You became a student at Shogen-ji Junior college, which happens to be a part of a Zen Buddhist monastery. Did you go there to begin zen study?*

Genchu: Well, at first yes, but after seeing the monks' life, I wasn't too enthused about zen practice. One day while traveling I happened to see three monks on a train platform. I went up to them and asked where they were from and they said Shogen-ji temple. This is funny, but I looked down at their feet and seeing their condition, cracked and very rough, I thought, Not my feet, no way! But I came back from the pilgrimage and I began thinking about practicing somewhere. Also years before, while I was visiting Gifu on a business trip, I remember a man telling me about Shogen-ji and that I might find my life-teacher there.

So, I visited Shogen-ji to pay my respects. I later applied for academic study and was accepted. I began sitting short periods of zazen and listening to teishos. Zen practice is part of the academic curriculum. I practiced with all the other students.

But the monks' life at Shogen-ji is very hard; seeing them work as hard as they did and their feet as they returned from Takuhatsu (alms begging), gave me a terrifying impression. I didn't want to go through any of that - - - I'm a lazy person you know!

Seigan: *Then for the second time you encountered Roshi.*

Genchu: Hai! I took a class in comparative Eastern/Western thought and philosophy which was taught by Eido Roshi. I had completely forgotten about the man who had spoken on the radio, and not until I was in the class did I realize that this was the same person. I was really shocked and surprised. Roshi made such an impression on me that I couldn't help but feel a connection with him. I consider him my life-teacher/teacher of life. I waited a year and asked him whether it would be possible to study under him, and he agreed. So the arrangements were made and after I graduated from Shogen-ji college I came to America. But I think even if he was a businessman or a butcher, I would still have followed him.

Seigan: *Was practicing in America an important factor? And how did your parents feel about all this?*

Genchu: I always felt somehow I would live in America. I do not know why; this is a mystery. My parents were not too happy. They had anticipated that I would take over the business, so they were really disappointed. When I started questioning my life and where it was leading, I think they thought that I was crazy! But after a while they began to understand and finally left it to me to choose my own life and direction. Before leaving on pilgrimage while saying goodbye to my parents, my mother faced me and in a very soft voice said "Do this for yourself." Those simple words that she said hit straight into my heart. And to this day it has been my private koan, "Do this for you."

Seigan: *It is rather uncommon that a Japanese lay-person becomes a monk. You were ordained a monk under Eido Roshi on Thanksgiving day, in a strange land; can you tell us about this?*

Genchu: This is difficult. In one sense, I really do not know why I became a monk, this is a mysterious part, I do not know. On the other hand, I feel that studying under Roshi is a very serious and important matter. The only thing to do was to do my best.

Seigan: *In these two years, what are some of the things that you have learned?*

Genchu: I think that I have learned a little about the western mind. Of course I still don't understand many things about America or the West, but I know that there is another point of view, another way of looking at things.

Another thing would be expressing my ideas and communicating in general. My English is not very good; I've made many mistakes, and had lots of problems in talking to people. Being clear and avoiding misunderstandings took lots of effort and frustration. After endless misunderstandings, I can see that there is a real language barrier.

Maybe the most important were the kindness and support that I received; my friends in the sangha helped me a lot, and without them, I would have felt very lonely and sad.

Seigan: *Do you have any advice for the sangha?*

Genchu: Although there are clear differences between East and West, and it is a good thing to appreciate and acknowledge them, it is better to see and be aware of the thing that binds us all together. This One Mind or same mind is very important; it goes beyond East and West.

Seigan: *What is next for you?*

Genchu: I will return home to my family, and continue to do zazen. I will keep practicing and doing sesshin every now and

then, and studying with Eido Roshi.

Seigan: *In closing is there anything you'd like to say?*

Genchu: Hai, I have composed a Haiku. It is simple, so I will close with it:

Seasons come and go
Gently shining wind and rain
This fleeting springtime.

O - B O N

at DAI BOSATSU ZENDO

Please join us for our annual Dai Bosatsu Zendo O-Bon lantern ceremony. This year's O-Bon festival will take place on Saturday evening, August 13, and will conclude with a brunch on Sunday morning, August 14.

O-Bon is a traditional Japanese celebration which commemorates our ancestors, our parents, friends and loved ones who have passed away. It is a day of remembrance and gratitude to those with whom we have shared this life. O-Bon is one of the highlights of the year at Dai Bosatsu and promises to be an unforgettable weekend.

Schedule

Saturday, August 13

- 6:00 P.M. Informal Dinner
- 7:30 Bonsho (evening gong)
- 7:45 O-Bon Ceremony (Chanting Service)
Talk by Eido Shimano Roshi
Processional to Beecher Lake with lanterns
- 9:00 Floating of lanterns on the Lake
Bonfire and refreshments

Sunday, August 14

- 6:00 A.M. Optional zazen/morning service
- 9:00 Brunch
- 11:00 Departure

The fee for O-Bon is \$100 per adult (12 and up), \$50 for each child (ages 6 to 11). Included in this price is room/board for one night, O-Bon ceremony, and brunch the next morning. For an additional fee, roundtrip transportation from NYZ to DBZ will be available. Reservations are necessary. Please call Dai Bosatsu for more information or to register: 914-439-4566.

NEW YORK ZENDO news

1994 Spring Training News

On December 31, over ninety Sangha members' strong energy and sincere Enmei Juku Kannon Gyo Chanting greeted the New Year at New York Zendo Shobo-ji. We began the 1994 Spring Training Period on January 5. Eido Roshi gave a teisho on "The Rinza Roku." With many new members joining Shobo-ji, we look forward to a harmonious practice period.

Eido Roshi spent the month of February in Japan and returned to New York Zendo on February 25. We celebrated his return and Aiho-san's birthday on Saturday, March 5, after zazen.

On Buddha's birthday, April 8, Aiho-san made a beautiful flower garden for the statue of the baby Buddha from Lumbini. With our chanting and pouring of pure water, the World Honored One was born.



Baby Buddha Altar

Many school students have participated in special introductory zazen meetings for their classes: On January 19, thirty students visited from Grace Church School; on March 4, twenty students from the Union Theological Seminary; on March 7, twenty six students from The Center School. Professor Joan Stambaugh from Hunter College also visited with her students. On May 10, 11, 17 and 18,

about 150 students visited from Medill Bair High School. When Roshi was in New York, he talked with the students, and we received many nice letters from them.

Saturday, April 30, after Morning Service and Zazen, Jacques Van Engel led us on a zen hike thru Central Park to enjoy the spring.

This year in June, Rev. Saman Sodo, Eido Roshi's student, has been invited to conduct a weekend zazen retreat at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

This winter we were very moved by "behind-the-scenes" work. Jobs were done without asking, such as snow shovelling, office and graphic work, sesshin preparation, garden cleaning, and donations of flowers, cookies and fruit. Special thanks to Katsuro, Saman, Shinju, Alice, Fran, Eddie, Patrick, Paul, Tim, Frances C. and Joun.

Spring Sesshins

Forty-nine students attended Nirvana Week-end Sesshin, which was held Jan. 21-23. It is the first sesshin of the year and commemorates Shakyamuni's Parinirvana. In his teisho, Roshi emphasized Shakyamuni Buddha's last words to his Sangha: "Things are changing. Keep doing what needs to be done."

Soen Roshi and Yasutani Roshi Memorial Sesshin was held the weekend of March 18-20. Both of these teachers of Eido Roshi passed away in the month of March.

All beings are flowers
Blooming in a blooming universe.
(Hana no yo no Hana no yoh
naru hito bakari)

Soen Roshi's haiku expresses how the Dharma is indeed blossoming. The Zendo was completely full. Soen and Yasutani

Roshis' intensive Ki energy is now with us. As Roshi mentioned in his teisho on "Rinza Planting the Pines," their NEN is a landmark for generations to come. Let True Dharma (SHO BO) continue.

During this sesshin, Rev. Daiho Hosan Hirose and Rev. Yuko Hamada, two Obaku monks from Japan, arrived to sit with us. Then they went up to Dai Bosatsu Zendo to join the Kessei/Ango.

Nyogen Senzaki and Gempo Roshi Memorial Sesshin was held the weekend of May 6-8. Many people attended and the zendo was full.

Deep in grief
the last tear falls
Ah, Mount Fuji in May
(Dokoku no Hatete Aikeri Satsuki Fuji)

This haiku was written by Soen Roshi for his friend, Nyogen Senzaki, who passed away on May 7, 1958. Soen received Dharma transmission from Gempo Roshi who passed away June 4, 1961. He wrote,

Since you are gone
The cries of the summer's birds
circle the monastery all night long.
(Nakimekuru natus no tori ari sono yo yori)

Upcoming Spring Activities

An "All Day Sitting" will be held on June 18 with a Dharma talk by Yoshiaki Amakawa. The cost is \$10. Reservations requested.

Rev. Saman Sodo will speak on the "Vimalakirti Sutra" for two Friday Buddhist Study Classes to be held on May 20 and June 24. Arrive at the zendo by 7P.M.

Thursday Dharma Talks

May 19 Eshin Dr. Brenda Lukeman, "Zen and Psychology"
Jun 2 Eshin Dr. Brenda Lukeman, "Zen and Psychology"
Jul 7 Eido Shimano Roshi

Summer Schedule

Please note the following schedule change: Japanese Dharma Class will be held Saturday, June 18, not June 11.

The Zendo will be closed for Independence Day Holiday July 1-5, and will reopen Wednesday, July 6.

Summer Interim with no scheduled zazen meetings: July 10-August 16. Zendo will reopen on Wednesday, August 17 (no Teisho).

Shobo-ji Building Fund

Beautification and safety projects this spring have included:

On the second floor, all the old shades have been replaced with new ones. A new altar was created by moving the large Dharma Hall Buddha in front of the windows and adding a new light. A painting of Beecher Lake at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, painted in 1971 by Harry McCormick, faces the Buddha thus uniting both Zendos.

A new control system in the boiler room will automatically adjust the heat from the new furnace which was installed last August. We appreciate Rev. Kobutsu Kevin Malone for his skill and work on this project.

We continue to express our gratitude to those people who contributed to the Shobo-ji Building Fund. Because of your help, it was possible for us to renovate. We want to thank those who continue to send contributions to Shobo-ji.

In the summer interim, we plan to fix and repair many things in the building. We will paint the main zendo, garden zendo, and repair the bathrooms. Monthly membership dues make this work possible so your continued support during the summer is deeply appreciated.

Store Sale Items N.Y.Z.

We have *incense* for daily use: \$1.50-6.00 or boxed: \$5.00-\$12.

Cushions, and T-shirts

Rinzai Roku Teisho *Tapes* by Eido Roshi \$10.

Books: Namu Dai Bosa, Golden Wind, Points of Departure, Sutra Books and more.

Call or write for a price list (mailing expense \$3.00), or stop by after zazen, at 9 P.M.

Building Fund Contributors list

October 30, 1993 - April 1, 1994

Barbara A. Festa	Tamiko Satso
Deborah Tanzer	Jikishi Yukiko Irwin
Mark Faurer	Joan Morse Ault
Sheila Curtis	Miyano Hiraki
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Roy Lichtenstein	Mr. and Mrs. Junzo
Marion M. Minewski	Ikegaki
Fredrick T. Conroy	Brent Shigeoka

Fall Weekend Sesshins

We suggest you make reservations for all upcoming sesshins as this spring saw our retreats "sold out." Please call Shobo-ji for additional information on the September 16-18 Anniversary Sesshin and October 21-23 Soyen Shaku/Kaigen Sesshin.

On December 10, there will be a Year End One Day Sitting.

Date changes

Please note the following date changes for the fall schedule:

All Day Sittings: Nov. 12 changed to Nov. 19, Dec. 10 changed to Dec. 17.

Soyen Shaku Kaigen Weekend Sesshin changed from October 14-16 to 21-23.



Segaki Evening

NYZ will host Segaki Evening on Saturday, July 9, from 5:00-9:30 P.M. Segaki is held to remember all our ancestors, known and unknown, deceased Dharma brothers and sisters, family and friends. The schedule will include zazen, a talk by Eido Roshi on the meaning of Segaki, then the commemoration ceremony with flute by Rev. Fujin Attale Formhals. Afterwards, we will share a meal.

Schedule:

5:00 P.M.	Doors open, arrive
5:30-5:45	Writing of the names of deceased for ceremony, change to robes.
6:00-7:45	Zazen (2 periods)
7:45-8:15	Eido Roshi's Dharma Talk
8:15	Segaki ceremony in Main Zendo
9:30	Segaki meal in Dharma Hall

Reservations are necessary. An offering of food for the Segaki dinner is traditional and would be appreciated.

Contribution: Members \$15 Non-members \$25.

DAI BOSATSU ZENDO news

Founders' Hall Altar

Recently, many of Nyogen Senzaki's altar objects, scrolls, letters, and historical photographs were sent to Eido Roshi from Shubinsan Tanahashi's family. The time is ready to build a Founders' Hall Altar at Dai Bosatsu Monastery that would commemorate Soen Nakagawa Roshi, Nyogen Senzaki, Soyen Shaku, Chester Carlson and Jimmy Tanahashi. The creation of this space would allow these important historical documents and spiritual objects to be placed together, venerated and preserved for future generations of Western Buddhists.

There are many streams of Zen that flow from the Rinzai line into Beecher Lake. Eido Roshi's transmission, and thus Dai Bosatsu Zendo's rich heritage, comes from the Hakuin/Yamamoto Gempo/Soen Nakagawa lineage. For many years, he also studied in the Soto tradition with Yasutani Roshi, one of the first generation of Zen teachers in America. In addition, The Zen Studies Society has a karmic association with its first director, Dr. D.T. Suzuki, and thus with Soyen Shaku, Nyogen Senzaki's teacher. So it is not surprising that these objects are congregating in the Catskill Mountains.

We are fortunate to have a photograph of Nyogen Senzaki's original altar from his zendo in California that will provide the basis for the design. A dedication will take place on July 4, 1994, during Anniversary Sesshin. Construction will begin this spring, and we will be seeking contributions in order to best preserve this historical collection.

The Many Faces of Generosity

We are very grateful for financial contributions that arrived during the winter months as a result of our Thanksgiving Fund Raising Request. Without the care of the sangha, Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji would not be the impeccable place of Zen practice that it is today.

Recently, the monastery has received a number of contributions with the request that they be used toward specific programs. The Syracuse Zen Center, under Roko-san Sherry Chayat's direction, has generously provided a scholarship fund for SZC sangha members who require financial assistance to be able to participate in sesshins at DBZ. Another anonymous gift allowed us to continue to provide Yoga during Holy Days Sesshin. Kevin Gardiner, a highly qualified Iyengar Yoga instructor from New York City, taught postures for zazen and restorative yoga. Many sesshin participants said that because of his adjustments, they could sit without pain for the first time in their practice. Another gift is earmarked for the tenzo, so that the sangha can partake of a traditional rice breakfast with condiments. We also want to thank Kobutsu and Mr. Clifford Broderick of Creative Design & Machine in Newburgh for welding repairs to the meal gong and dokusan bell.

If you would like to sponsor a student for sesshin, kessei or such programs as Yoga or Buddhist Study Classes, we would like to hear from you.

Dai Bosatsu Chanting CD

Through the generosity and effort of Ahimsa Cyrille Adams, who is a spiritual teacher, artist, and musician from France, we now have a superlative CD recording of Morning Service. During last year's Memorial Day Sesshin, Ahimsa recorded our sangha's chanting with the Shogen-ji monks from Japan, and has since published copies at his own expense. The CD is one hour long, and includes the bonsho bell, hokku drumming, and complete Morning Service. Copies may be purchased for \$20.00.

DBZ Dreams

Two years from now, the Monastery will be twenty years old. We are looking forward to our anniversary and to the future

of Rinzai Zen in the twenty-first century. We are making plans for the growth of the community and how best to provide an income and financial base. There are two long-term projects currently in the planning stages.

Dai Bosatsu Zendo is situated on fourteen hundred acres of pristine forests in the midst of the Catskill Mountain Wilderness Preserve. The closest town is forty-five minutes away. It is such a peaceful, clear place to practice, we feel the time is right to make it more accessible to outside sangha and families. With this in mind, we are looking into building some residential cabins. Like O-an cottage, they would be fully winterized, with kitchens and baths, and could be rented out for individual private retreats or for families to share our practice. They could also provide additional housing for staff members.

Another project we have in mind is building facilities to provide workspace for a pottery ceramic art center. Like the cabins, it would be built away from the monastery and run independently. Although it would necessitate acquiring or building electric, gas or wood kilns, it would provide income through workshops and the sale of "Dai Bosatsuware" pottery. We have scheduled a clay and pottery workshop with Anju Anne Burnham for June 17-19 to explore possibilities.

If you are interested in these projects, please contact Jiro Andy Affable at 914-439-4566.

1994 Jukai Ceremony

"Jukai is the turning point in your life where as a lay-student you unconditionally commit yourself to the practice of Buddha-dharma. We take the precepts in the knowledge that we are committing to an endless path of transformation, a path that requires our constant and vigilant awareness. In a larger sense, you are committing your life to the realization of your True Nature."

--Eido Roshi

Harvest Sesshin 1994, October 29-November 6, will mark the third Jukai Ceremony to be held at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Jukai is the ceremony where one formally receives the precepts and is given a Dharma name as an acknowledgment of this commitment.

Those who have done sesshin with Eido

Roshi and wish to participate in Jukai should write a formal request to Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo by August 1, 1994. All those accepted for Jukai should plan to attend Harvest Sesshin. Further details will be sent after acceptance.

World War II Memorial O-Bon

This year marks the forty-ninth anniversary of the end of World War II. Forty-nine has a special significance in Buddhist tradition, therefore, this O-bon we will commemorate the deceased soldiers, allies and former enemies from WWII. As the saying goes, "Friendship and hatred should be regarded as equal, especially for those who lost their lives in war."

O-Bon is the traditional Japanese Buddhist ceremony that commemorates those who have passed away. We make offerings of food and drink to all spiritual beings, that they may be satisfied and awaken their desire for enlightenment. It is also the time of the summer harvest and so we express our gratitude. Friday evening after Zazen, Roshi and the residents light a welcoming fire to guide those from other realms to O-bon. On Saturday, guests arrive and prepare lanterns with the names of deceased family and friends. A bountiful harvest feast is followed by the O-bon ceremony and a Dharma Talk by Eido Roshi. That evening after dark, the lanterns are floated on the lake, accompanied by chanting and a bonfire. The small lights floating on the dark lake are an unforgettable sight. On Sunday morning, people depart after an informal breakfast.

DBZ Upcoming Workshops

Samu Work Weekend

This weekend will focus on landscaping, garden and building projects at the Monastery. Work practice is an important aspect of Zen training where we have the opportunity to extend our zazen into everyday activities. Because of the heavy snow and cold temperatures this winter, there are many restoration projects and the grounds need work. The vegetable garden's fence needs to be replaced; there are painting projects throughout the building, and landscaping to be done at Sun Moon cottage. Monastery vehicles could use a tuneup, and there are cushions to sew and

repair. If you have time, skills and equipment, please plan to spend the weekend at your monastery. Spring is a great time to visit, get to know the residents and practice here. Call the office for information and reservations.

Samu Weekend: June 3-5. Contribution to cover meals: \$50.

Schedule: Arrive Friday afternoon, informal dinner, orientation, zazen.

Saturday: Morning Service, zazen, breakfast, work meeting and work, lunch, afternoon work, dinner, zazen, Dharma talk. The Sunday schedule will be the same, with departure after 2 P.M. Sangha participants are welcome to stay for the afternoon, to rest and enjoy the grounds, lake and clean air.

Zen and the Art of Clay

This weekend with artist Anju Anne Burnham, a professional potter and long-time Zen student. The workshop will focus on hand-building forms, such as small tea bowls. Schedule: Arrive Friday evening. Saturday and Sunday will follow the monastery schedule. Anju will give a talk and slide show on Saturday night entitled, "Art and being awake to your environment." Cost: \$150 for the Workshop Weekend held Jun 17 to 19.

Fundraising Sangha Day

Please keep in mind that on Labor Day weekend, September 3-4, we are inviting the family and friends of both New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo to join us here at DBZ. Saturday, come and challenge the infamous DBZ Blue Cliff Hangers Baseball team, or relax boating and swimming on the lake. We plan to have a Zen Hike and activities for children. For those who have not yet been to the monastery, there will be a tour of the Zendo, zazen instruction and sitting. Saturday evening will feature our famous vegetarian barbecue and No(h) Talent Show. On Sunday, we will have Morning Service at the lake and a pancake breakfast at the guest house. This weekend will be a fundraising event and we hope as many sangha members can attend. \$100 per person/children free.

Introduction to Zen Weekends

For Zen beginners, as well as those who have been sitting for a while and want to experience monastery practice, these special introductory workshops provide practical meditation instruction and an overview of Zen Monastic training, guided by the monks and nuns of DBZ. For more information please call DBZ at 914-439-4566.

Jul 29-31

Sep 16-18

Nov 11-13

Buddhist Studies Saturday Nights

Throughout the remainder of the year, we will be offering a variety of speakers and topics for our Buddhist Studies evenings. Rev. Shoro Lou Nordstrom, for example, who joined us this spring for classes and discussions on the Heart Sutra, will return this fall.

These talks are open to all. A \$10 contribution is requested, please call 914-439-4566 for information, or to register.

Schedule:

5:30 P.M.	Zazen instruction
6:30	Zazen
7:30	Dharma Talk
8:30	Tea

Dates:

Jun 4	Jiro-san Andy Afable
Jun 11	Eido Shimano Roshi
Jun 18	Anju Anne Burnham
Jul 16	Roko-san Sherry Chayat
Jul 30	T.B.A.
Aug 27	T.B.A.
Sep 10	Eido Roshi Dharma Talk
Sep 17	Lou Nordstrom
Oct 8	Eido Roshi Dharma Talk
Oct 22	Lou Nordstrom
Nov 12	Lou Nordstrom
Nov 19	Eido Roshi

Continued on page 15

Winter Interim

by Jiro-san Andy Afable

It is the week after our first sesshin of the year, held on March 11 and 12. This Wednesday, the snow falls once again, though just two days ago, right after sesshin, we had a good thaw, warm enough so that some of the rocks in the hillside were exposed, sunny enough to make us imagine spring. In groups the deer venture once more to the roads. The high snow had locked them in the woods for many weeks. Of the familiar four or five deer who came for scraps, only one young doe returns these days. She sleeps by the grate from the furnace room. She digs under the snow in the courtyard to forage for grass.

While many people come to DBZ for silence, to seek a place far from the maddening crowd, they come here in the busy time of summer and fall. The truly quiet time here is winter. There were times when the winter residents talked about extending the winter interim to, say, July or September—better to keep the winter quiet to ourselves. Snow has a stealthy character; no lightning or thunder precedes it. I could look up from my desk at the mountain, on a day that had started with bright sunlight, and see, once again, more snow quietly falling. I had imagined, when I arrived here in November, that Beecher Lake would freeze, and I would be looking at the smooth opaque surface of ice. But the lake filled up with snow and on windy days the snow whipped out from the lake and piled up on the road. Everyday we woke to the snow. The Eskimos, I've heard, have forty words for snow.

We had a few weekend guests. In early February, a television crew from Nippon Television came to film DBZ for a TV documentary on "Japanese Culture in the United States". The film crew was most impressed with DBZ's setting. To drive from Livingston Manor and up our road under a starlit sky and then to wake and look out upon our curved roofline and the evergreens that line the road - here was a view that was timeless. They filmed some

footage of the Zendo, with some obligatory shots of the Bonsho bell tower and the two resident monks polishing the Zendo floors. The one morning they were here, they went out to the woodshed to film our wood crew splitting firewood. The crew uses a gas-powered log-splitter. As they started to film how our wood crew and machine turned logs into monastery firewood, a hydraulic line broke, and a geyser of hydraulic fluid burst into the winter air. Did they ever use that scene, I wonder.

It was Fujin and Genchu, our two ordained winter residents, who made a ritual of clearing the snow around Jizo, who stands by the road near Sangha Meadow. Even when the snow was waist high, they cleared the ground around him, and left some spruce boughs and burning incense at his feet. When did Fujin know of Jizo? Probably when she came to DBZ two years ago. The Jizo statue itself was recent, about ten or twelve years old. A granite block was purchased from Manhattan, and a Japanese carver, Mr. Yoshida, chiseled out Jizo's form.

Remembering this makes me recall a scene from V.S. Naipaul's novel, *A Bend in the River*. The novel ends with the Indian protagonist forced to leave an unnamed African country. The government had evicted all Indians; in a few days he had to leave. Packing the things most valuable to him, he unwraps some clay figures, the Hindu deities his grandparents had brought to Africa from India, three generations ago. He realizes that he no longer knows what they mean; their meaning to his family had diminished with his parents and with him that meaning was virtually lost.

Who is Jizo? Who is Kongo? And the Buddha? Our situation is the reverse of the Indian in the novel. These names are recent in our lives; certainly our parents did not know them. Often we don't want to have to explain who they are to our parents! We are

assiduous in our study of Buddhism; no one reads Buddhist books as intently as the American Buddhist. But perhaps too many of us confuse our intellectual interests with the felt passion of belief. After one of our Saturday Zen talks here, a student said (of the speaker), "He was okay on the cosmic stuff." Our jargon can trivialize the very thing that we want to understand.

The Buddha's face changed in his long passage from India to Tibet, to South Asia, to China and Japan. We haven't known that face for long; we continue to argue over what he really looks like.

In mid January, the days felt appreciably longer. I was going home to the gatehouse in the late afternoon, or early evening, on one of those days when the moon was bright in the sky, though the sun had barely set. Something about the clear sky, the moon waxing in daylight, and all that snow on the ground, had changed the color of the mountains around DBZ. The winter skyline, the trees leafless there against the horizon, had taken on a bluish cast.

It was a different place, in a different season, when the poet of the Blue Cliff Record wrote—

Mountains, no end to them
Ridge after ridge—
Blue, blue, blue.

Seeing the blue Catskill peaks, I paused by the bridge over the Beecher Lake spillway. The blue colors turned dark as the moon rose and I made my way home. ●

The Newsletter of the Zen Studies Society

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unnecessary things are blown away by NEN wind. Unnecessary beings depart "all by itself" and a needed thing comes "all by itself." Therefore I do not worry. As prince Shotoku, a well-known Japanese Buddhist from the sixth century, said, "When the heads are in accord and the rest of the sangha are harmonious, it will be done all by itself."

This mandala of many Bodhisattvas carried NEN, sustained NEN, and now that NEN flower is blooming. Shubin-san's karmic mission was to come to America, to give birth to Jimmy, to meet Nyogen Senzaki, to read Soen Roshi's poems and bring them together. With her support, the last part of Nyogen Senzaki's life were the most stable and contented.

Her husband's death in 1956 and Nyogen Senzaki's death in 1958 left her very much alone. On August 8, 1966, Jimmy Tanahashi passed away at the age of forty-six. It was ten years exactly after his own father had died. She was bereft of those who meant so much to her, but as she would always say to me, "I was lucky." She meant:

"This Dharma incomparably profound and minutely subtle is hardly met with even in hundreds of thousands of millions of eons."

A few years ago her son, Kiyoshi, and his wife Alice moved her to a nursing home. Once I visited her there, and she immediately recognized me. When I asked her, "Shubin-san, how old are you now?" she said, "Wasureta!" which means, "I have forgotten." That was my last conversation with her. Agelessly, namelessly and quietly, she has left.

A substantial part of Nyogen Senzaki's belongings were moved to Dai Bosatsu Zendo from California. This year we plan to build a founders' altar where Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senzaki, Jimmy Tanahashi and Chester Carlson will be enshrined.

All the water of the river comes into one ocean.

The moon sets but never leaves the universe.

Sesshins and Ango Anniversary Sesshin

June 25-July 3 commemorates the founding of Dai Bosatsu Zendo on July 4, 1976. This year we are celebrating our eighteenth birthday.

Five-Day Summer Sesshin

Please note, this sesshin will begin a day earlier than advertised, starting the evening of Aug 1 and continuing to Aug 6. It is the only Zen retreat scheduled during the summer months. This year Kokokuji Roshi and the monks from Shogen Ji Monastery in Gifu, Japan will join our sangha. The fee for this special sesshin will be \$250, (\$225 for NYZ members).

Fall Kessei/Ango 1994

Opening ceremony will take place on Thursday, September 8, with a teisho by Eido Roshi. Kessei/Ango is a time for students of Zen, whether newcomers or seniors, to come together to follow the Buddha's Way in a monastic training center. At Dai Bosatsu Zendo, we welcome all those who have a sincere desire to realize their true nature through dedicated zazen, work and study in the Rinzai Training tradition. There will be three seven-day sesshins, including a Jukai Ceremony/Sesshin.

Golden Wind: Sep 24-Oct 2

Harvest Jukai Sesshin Oct 29-Nov 6

Rohatsu Sesshin Nov 30- Dec 8

Daily dokusan with Eido Roshi is held outside of sesshin times when he is in

residence. Rinzai training uses koan study. Weekly Buddhist study classes or Dharma Talks by Roshi are scheduled.

Spring Kessei

1994 Spring training period began on March 30th with a teisho by Eido Roshi and a special Jukai ceremony for Lynndal Daniels. He received the name Uteki which means, "the sound of raindrops." Uteki completed his one-year commitment and will stay as head tenzo at DBZ until August.

Full-time Kessei students include the monks and nuns: Seigan Ed Glassing, Banzan Iurek Szczepkowski, Jiun Ewa Tarasewicz, Seiko Susan Morningstar, and Fujin Attale Formhals. Genchu Osamu Sekine stayed for Holy Days Sesshin and departed in April for his home in Japan. Hossan Daiho Hirose, from Japan, a frequent resident and Obaku monk, joined spring Kessei for two months. He brought his friend and Obaku monk Yuko Hamada who will train at DBZ until Rohatsu 1994. Returning Kessei students and residents are: Chisho Fusaye Maas, Subaru Salvadore Chirvai, JG Powers, Andrew Gregory, Yugen Koen van Wijngaarden, Daijo Brian Cobb, Ejo Chris Cotsonis, and Jeff Latini. New Students are: Chikuzen Jerry Orzoff from San Jose, who sat with Nyogen Senzaki and studied with Dr. Platov, and Brian DeHaan, a high school student from Ohio. Jared Schreck, from Pennsylvania, joined us for one month. Akihiro Tanaka from Japan arrives in May and will stay through Rohatsu.

New Fall Sesshin Rates

Due to increasing costs of maintaining the monastery and its grounds, a new fee schedule for full seven day sesshins will go into effect this fall. It will begin this Golden Wind. Prices for weekend sesshin will remain at \$175 (\$150 NYZ members)

\$350 for seven day sesshin

\$325 for NYZ members

A limited number of private rooms are available for additional \$50.00.

All seven-day sesshins, except Rohatsu, begin on Saturday evening with formal silent dinner, and closing ceremony takes place at 9 P.M. the following Saturday. Sesshin participants are asked to stay until Sunday morning and plan their departure after Sunday brunch around 11A.M.

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New York Zendo

Dai Bosatsu Zendo

New York Zendo		MAY	Dai Bosatsu Zendo	
20	Buddhist Study Class		21 - 29	Memorial Day Sesshin
2	Thursday Dharma Talk			
4	Japanese Dharma Class		4, 11, 18,	Saturday Zen Talk
8	Teisho	JUN	3 - 5	Samu Work Weekend
10, 24	Buddhist Study Class		25 - Jul 3	Anniversary Sesshin
18	All-Day Sit			
1-5	Closed for Independence Day		4	Spring Kessei/Ango Ends
7	Eido Roshi Dharma Talk	JUL	8-10	Healing and Wellness Retreat
9	Segaki Evening		16, 30	Saturday ZenTalk
10 - 8/16	Closed for Summer Interim		29-31	Introductory Zen Workshop
17	Re-opens		1 - 6	Summer Five-Day Sesshin
25	Thursday Dharma Talk	AUG	13 - 14	O-Bon
26	Buddhist Study Class		27	SaturdayZenTalk
			19 - 22	Healing and Wellness Retreat
3	Japanese Dharma Class		4 - 5	Sangha Weekend
14	Teisho	SEP	8	Fall Kessei/Ango Begins
15, 29	Thursday Dharma Talk		16-18	Introductory Zen Workshop
16 - 18	Anniversary Weekend Sesshin		24 - Oct 2	Golden Wind Sesshin
30	Buddhist Study Class			
5	Teisho		8, 22	SaturdayZenTalk
8	Japanese Dharma Class	OCT	29 - Nov 6	Harvest Jukai Sesshin
13, 27	Thursday Dharma Talk			
21 - 23	Soyen Shaku/Kaigen Sesshin			
9	Teisho		12, 19	SaturdayZenTalk
10, 17	Thursday Dharma Talk	NOV	11-13	Introductory Zen Workshop
12	Japanese Dharma Class		24 - 25	Thanksgiving Benefit Dinner
18	Buddhist Study Class		Nov 30	Rohatsu Sesshin Eve
19	All-Day Sit			
2	Buddhist Study Class	DEC	Dec 1-8	Rohatsu Sesshin
8	Dharma Talk Talk		9	Fall Ango Ends
10	All Day Sit			

The Zen Studies Society

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