

# JUKAI 1996

at the  
Harvest Jukai Sesshin  
October 26 - November 2.

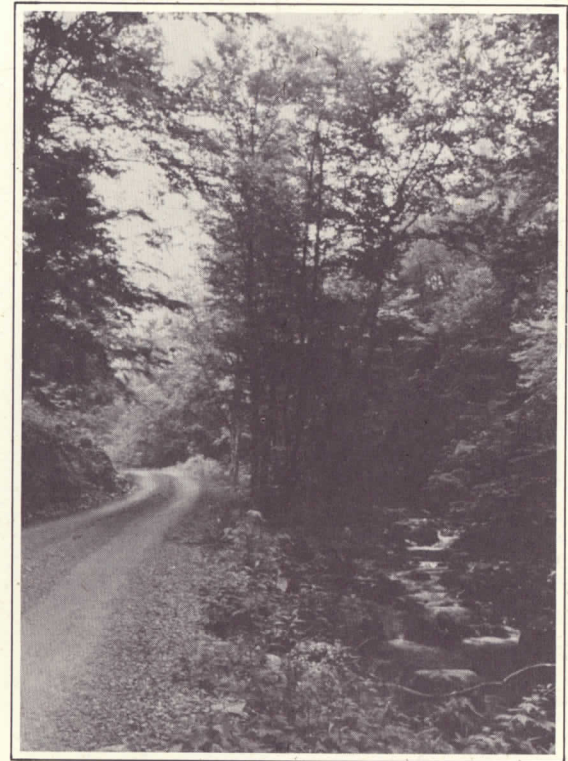


*"Jukai is the turning point in your life, where as a lay-student you unconditionally commit yourself to the practice of Buddha-Dharma. We take the precepts in the knowledge that we are committing to an endless path of transformation, a path that requires our constant and vigilant awareness. In a larger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

—Venerable Eido Roshi

In the Jukai ceremony, one formally receives the precepts and a Dharma name as an acknowledgment of this commitment. The next opportunity to participate in Jukai will be during the Harvest Jukai Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Prerequisite for taking Jukai is completion of two 7-day sesshins with Eido Roshi at DBZ or regular membership at NYZ. It is also mandatory for all applicants to attend the Harvest Jukai Sesshin. Those wishing to participate should write a formal request addressed to Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, HCR 1 Box 171, Livingston Manor, NY 12758 by August 1, 1996. Responses with further details will be sent by mail.



## DAI BOSATSU AND THE WAY

Special 20th Anniversary Issue

Spring 1996

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY:

*Dai Bosatsu and the Way*  
*Special 20th Anniversary Issue*

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Gathering of venerable teachers at the entrance of Dai Bosatsu Zendo on Opening Day, July 4, 1976. Reprinted below are the words from the original invitation to the Dedication Ceremony.



It was in the Spring of 1971 with one intense thought, "Let True Dharma Continue," that the ground was first broken for the establishment of International Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji by Beecher Lake in the Catskill Mountains in the State of New York.

Through the support of all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, as well as the Sangha and innumerable Dharma friends throughout the world, it is now at last completed.

The Dharma, incomparably profound and minutely subtle,  
is hardly met with, even in hundreds of thousands of millions of eons,  
We now can see it, listen to it, accept and hold it;  
May we completely understand the Tathagata's true meaning.

Let me express my profound gratitude to those whose concern has made this opening possible, and humbly request your participation in the Dedication Ceremony of International Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji at One O'clock in the Afternoon, Sunday, the Fourth of July, Nineteen Hundred and Seventy-Six.

NA MU DAI BO SA

Spring, 1976

Eido Tai Shimano, Abbot

## LET TRUE DHARMA CONTINUE: THERE IS NO OTHER WAY

*An Interview With the Venerable Eido Roshi*

Eido Roshi discusses the past, present and future of Dai Bosatsu Zendo. The interview took place among the winter interim residents of DBZ on the morning of



January 15, 1996. Shortly afterwards, Eido Roshi left for his annual teaching engagement at Shogen-ji Junior College in Gifu Prefecture, Japan.

**Student:** Roshi, you said in the book, *Namu Dai Bosa*, "The Way to Dai Bosatsu has no end. I am walking on this Way toward an endless end and I cannot but continue." On July 4, 1976, Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji was formally dedicated. How did you feel upon its opening?

**Roshi:** The Zen Studies Society purchased the land, including the guest house, in 1971 and for about five to six years I was very much involved with the monastery building project. Every single day I was saying to myself, "July 4th, 1976... July 4th, 1976..." almost like a mantra. When finally that day came, so many guests came too. I had to think of how to take care of this group and that group. So, instead of thinking, "Now it's finished!" I had the strong feeling that, "Today is the beginning," and in fact it was the beginning.

**Student:** When Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo were established, I am sure it was an almost frightening project to envision running a monastery and a city zendo. Have there been a lot of surprises in the development of this Dharma movement?

**Roshi:** To go into this matter, I have to mention at least five individuals: Soen Roshi for the spiritual aspect, Mr. and Mrs. Carlson for the financial aspect, Bill Johnstone for the practical aspect and Aiho for the day-to-day bookkeeping aspect. Shobo-ji opened on September 15, 1968 and Chester Carlson died four days after, as if he was born to look at the birth of Shobo-ji.

Until his death, I had never thought of having a country zendo. Even Shobo-ji itself was a great gift compared to my small apartment. I thought, "That's more than enough." DBZ happened because of his death and Mrs. Carlson's strong wish to establish a country zendo where everyone regardless of race, nationality, or sex could train in a neat, clean, well disciplined traditional setting. I had no idea how to start. I still remember very clearly what Bill Johnstone said (in



Bill Johnstone and Eido Roshi at DBZ fire drill—May, 1976

those days, he still called me Tai-san), "Tai-san, I'll help you; I just retired. But if you want to have an easy life, forget it! If you want to have a meaningful life, do it! I am more than happy to help you." So, with Soen Roshi's vision, the Carlsons' fund, Bill's help and Aiho's back-up, I thought, "Well, it's not my decision. It's meant to be." So, Chester Carlson's death was a surprise. Bill's retirement, perfectly timed, was a surprise. The discovery of this magnetic place was a surprise—so many surprises, one after another! So, without exaggeration, for the past twenty years, there have been not only a few surprises but many, many, many—even now, amazing surprises!

**Student:** *As far as the property is concerned, we have 1,400 acres of land, we have the guest house which needs repair, the roof of this building needs to be replaced—as far as the physical plan is concerned, what do you see in the next twenty years or so?*

**Roshi:** At the time this land was purchased twenty-five years ago, there was a huge movement in which many people wanted to move away from Manhattan and find a country place. Bill Johnstone was quite an idealistic person. He said, "The monastery should be in a deep remote place, no noise, no car, no smell, no nothing. Even in those days it was quite difficult to find such a place. So we searched, searched, searched—altogether six places. This is the seventh. Anyway, when we found this place, the actual sale was 400 acres including this lake. The other 1,000 acres, we had to buy from four different people, so altogether 1,400 acres. Many people asked me, "How come you need so much space, even 400 acres are more than enough!" But suppose we had only 400 acres, we would not be able to get our own firewood. Bill had a great idea; I really admire him. The whole heating system was his idea too. At that time there was an oil shortage and fuel prices became very unstable, and electricity is very expensive. "If the monks have nothing to do, they may get into trouble, so they have to work," Bill said. So wood is the best thing—chop, chop, chop... carry, carry, carry.... Then we can produce our own heat. But in order to do so, we need 1,400 acres of land; that is the only reason. Bill said, "In Zen training there is something called *samu*. *Samu* means work practice." In truth, we are now doing this *samu*. He predicted, "Eventually, Tai-san, we will have about 15 residents or slightly more." That was twenty years ago, and that is exactly what is happening! "And we'll keep doing sesshin and also some kind of group activity," Bill said. He really had an eye to see the

future—William H. Johnstone. He is the one who really taught me how to run these meetings, like we did this morning: Do! Bang!— Call! Bang!—Decide! Bang!—Get it done! Bang! Bang! Of course, without Soen Roshi, it was not possible. Without Chester Carlson, it was not possible and perhaps without me—someone else could have done it. But, I must say, Bill Johnstone really has to be remembered!

So, about the future of the 1,400 acres, in the early days, there was excitement. People wanted to buy part of the property to build cottages. Bill said, "It would not be a bad idea. There is only one thing we have to make clear: They should build the cottage at their expense, take care of the road and electricity at their expense, and when they die, they should donate it to Dai Bosatsu Zendo." And this is exactly what happened with O-An Cottage. I still have this as a basic attitude.

But, first let's work on replacing the monastery roof next year and in a few years, let's rebuild the guest house by the lake.

**Student:** *You once said that when Soen Roshi started the "Namu Dai Bosa" chanting, the Japanese monks did not chant it, that they had some hesitation, even yourself. Why was this?*

**Roshi:** During the 13th century in Japan, there was a priest called Nichiren who thought that the "Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra," which is the "Lotus Sutra," was the best sutra. He felt that to chant all 28 chapters was too long. So after deep meditation he came to the conclusion that to chant, "Namyō Hō Renge Kyō," was a condensation of the Lotus Sutra. Later, people regarded him as the founder of Nichiren school. The same is true with Honen and Shinran with the chanting of "Namu Amida Butsu." So we Japanese people thought, "Oh Soen Roshi is going to start a new school, the Namu Dai Bosa school." At first, Soen Roshi said that we didn't have to do anything—just zazen with "MU." Then he said, "Namu Dai Bosa, Namu Dai Bosa...." So naturally there were people with resistance, very strong resistance, amazingly strong resistance! I was one of them and I carried that resistance until November, 1995. Now, I am amazed to recognize how human attachment or resistance is so strong! At last, it's gone and I feel so easy.

**Student:** *After more than twenty years of your intense efforts here and Soen Roshi's continuing Nen, the Dai Bosatsu Mandala seems to be manifesting itself quite strongly. Do you see Soen Roshi's ritual of "Spiritual Inter-relationship Day" with its roots on Dai Bosatsu Mountain in Japan and which we celebrate here as Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day on the 21st of each month, continuing or growing here in America?*

**Roshi:** Undoubtedly it will continue and undoubtedly it will grow. Not only here in America but also in Europe, and even from America to Japan. It will go back to Japan and become a global mandala.

**Student:** *We are going to dedicate a new commemorative monument in Sangha Meadow on July 4, for the twentieth anniversary. Could you say a few words about that?*

**Roshi:** When we first came to this place, what is now Sangha Meadow, for some reason, had no trees from the beginning. So it was as if it was meant to be a cemetery. It was Aiho who suggested, "Let's make a cemetery." Since then, quite a few people have been buried there. It is there where we celebrate Dai Bosatsu Day, Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day, and this is very, very important! Jimmy Tanahashi, for example, has never been here and his ashes are not buried here, but we regard him as *Innen Kaiki* (karmic benefactor). Because of his "Shujo Muhen Seigando," part of this movement began. So, we express our Nen. In the spiritual realm there is, "Thank you," even though he never says, "You are welcome!" As long as we keep doing Dai Bosatsu Day and Dai Bosatsu Mandala Day, I trust that Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji and Zen Buddhism in America will continue. If we stop, it will stop.

Many of us know some part of the history of DBZ, and you created part of this history. Once in a while, it is important for us to have a more global view and to remember how important, significant and marvelous this place is. It is not a mere Zen meditation center. It is far more than that! It all started from Gyoki Bosatsu (d. 749AD), and continued with Bassui, Kanzan, Hakuin, Gempo, Soen, Nyogen—all these geniuses. Even now it's hard to believe what Chester and Dorris Carlson did for us! It's simply unbelievable! Their deed of generosity is still going on. Therefore every September 19th, we do a memorial service for Chester Carlson, as well as for all the Patriarchs like Soen Roshi, Nyogen Senzaki and Yasutani Roshi. Without these memorials—in fact they are more than memorials—we would not be here today. Zazen is important, unquestionably! Sesshin is undoubtedly important! To look back in gratitude is as essential as planning for the future. It provides a foundation. Then there is good balance.

**Student:** *Only one hundred years ago, Soyen Shaku introduced Zen Buddhism to America. So, Rinzai Zen temples in the U.S. are very recent. How long do you feel it will take for Buddhist practice to become established?*

**Roshi:** You know, history is the greatest teacher. Zen Buddhism came from India to China with Bodhidharma in the 6th century. Real Zen Buddhism, the golden age, started from the 6th patriarch in China. It took six generations from Bodhidharma to Eno Daikan. That is one fact. Another fact is that Japanese patriarchs like Dogen and Eisai went to China. At the same time, many Chinese monks came to Japan in the 13th century. In Dogen's case, it took only one or two generations at the most, to transplant Chinese Zen to the new land. However, there is a big difference between the Indian mentality and Chinese mentality, as well as between Indian language and Chinese language. But from China to Japan, the mentality, language and culture are quite similar. That may be the reason why the establishment of Buddhism took a relatively shorter time than in previous lands. Now, getting back to your question. Sociologists say that whenever a new tradition or teaching comes to a new place, a minimum of two hundred years are needed to transplant it. So, we may have to count a few more years to have American Zen. "America has Zen all the time," the way Nyogen Senzaki expressed it, yes. But we are talking about rooted American Zen in an active sense. It may take at least one more century, or perhaps

two more centuries. We have the habit in this Judeo-Christian culture to view things far too often as "black and white." Therefore, I believe the tendency towards quick Americanization of Zen Buddhism will not accurately transmit the essence of Buddhadharma. I say, "All of us are still pioneers."

**Student:** *Over these twenty years, do you believe that Dai Bosatsu Zendo has developed and sustained a strong Rinzai Zen monastic practice comparable to that of monasteries in Japan?*

**Roshi:** Not comparable, but unique, since there is no such Rinzai Zen monastery in Japan. They are very formal, perhaps too formal. In this formality, undoubtedly, the tradition has been carried and the monks are trained in that form. Here in America, a certain formality is of course important, but individuality and individual style is also very important. I was trying to compromise—to bring Eastern tradition to the West. There was lots of struggle and resistance from your side, but I think that after twenty years, DBZ has found its unique, stable, monastic style. In a way, I believe this is the greatest accomplishment in the past twenty years.

**Student:** *Many people say that the strength of Buddhism in America will be with the lay practice. Dai Bosatsu Zendo, I believe, was originally envisioned as a lay Buddhist monastery. How do you see its role specifically in the next several decades?*

**Roshi:** I think it will continue as it is now. We don't define it as a lay monastery or a monks' monastery. We define it only as a place to practice Dharma. If someone's karma is ready to be ordained, fine. If not, fine. Let's practice together. This is the most ideal way of carrying Mahayana Buddhism.

**Student:** *Because of the kind of training you had and the kind of teacher you are, there is a strong emphasis on tradition at DBZ. There is a certain historical depth to Zen that exists in Japan that we can't appreciate here in America because we are coming to it late in life. People come here to DBZ and it's a very beautiful place with modern bathrooms, computers and the Internet. One danger I can see is an idealized idea of tradition—coming here and looking for a tradition.*

**Roshi:** Tradition is not something to grab. To my understanding, tradition is an atmosphere to live in and become saturated by. The computer or Internet is like a telephone, in that it's necessary to communicate. This has nothing to do with tradition. However, even in a traditional monastery there is no harm in having modern equipment. There is no monastery



*Chester and Dorris Carlson—Summer, 1967*

in Japan which does not have a telephone. At Ryutaku-ji when the telephone was being introduced, Soen Roshi was the most adamant opponent to it. But after it was installed he used it more than anyone else! These things are compatible with the something which we call tradition.

**Student:** *Nowadays, many people have some idea about Zen through reading books. What is the main difference between the students who came thirty-five years ago and those who come now?*

**Roshi:** I came to this country in the beginning of the Golden 60's. That's not only thirty-five years ago, but really a unique, specific period in the history of the U.S.—the 60's—really glorious 60's! There was confusion, as well as an interest for Eastern things. People who came to Zen in those days were perhaps over excited about Eastern mysticism. And people who come to Zen nowadays, especially at Shobo-ji, are those who are really tired of working on Wall Street, for example. They are not necessarily over-excited about Eastern mysticism, but rather over-exhausted from Western capitalism! That's the difference.

**Student:** *What is your vision for the future of DBZ and the practice, generally?*

**Roshi:** You know, in the past twenty years, I had a certain vision, but more than a vision I thought about the continuity—kessei after kessei, sesshin after sesshin, sitting after sitting—and then that, somehow, Dharma will take care of it. It is the same now. My vision is more an internal vision. Dai Bosatsu Zendo is a place to deepen our practice and understanding. There are no short cuts. *We just keep doing. There is no other Way.*



Calligraphy: "Dream" (Yume) by Venerable Eido Roshi

## *Congratulatory Message from Sogen Yamakawa Roshi*



Right to left: Eido Roshi, Itsugai Roshi, Kogetsu Roshi at DBZ—October 5, 1976

A little over twenty years ago Itsugai Kajiura Roshi, the chief abbot of Myoshin-ji, was involved in arranging to send a few hundred tatami (mats) to the United States. I was attendant monk at the time, but did not know where in the U.S. they would be used and why so many were needed. It was a kind of mystery to me.

It was not until about fifteen years later that I realized the tatami had been sent to Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji. That was when I first visited DBZ with my teacher, Kogetsu Tani Roshi. Starting the following year, I attended sesshin there. And even now, once a year, I go with the monks of Shogen-ji to do sesshin with Dharma friends in the West.

Kogetsu Tani Roshi and Eido Shimano Roshi first went to the States at almost the same time. They both were in their mid-thirties. Somehow they were drawn to each other. They shaved each other's head and encouraged each other. They began their teaching from nothing. I understand Reverend Nanshin Okamoto in Los Angeles was responsible for their intimate friendship.

My teacher came back to Japan after two years in the U.S. and became abbot of Shogen-ji. Eido Shimano Roshi became an American citizen and established Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the Bicentennial year.

About seventeen or eighteen years ago Itsugai Roshi asked Soen Nakagawa Roshi of Ryutaku-ji to come to Shogen-ji and give a public talk during the annual summer session. Everything was arranged but just before the session something happened and Soen Roshi couldn't make it. So it happened that Eido Roshi, who was in Japan, was asked to be the pinch-hitter.

After the lecture was over I was asked to attend Eido Roshi as I was inji of Itsugai Roshi. Thus, I learned that Eido Roshi had been at Heirin-ji before Ryutaku-ji. The abbot of Heirin-ji at that time was Keizan Roshi. Interestingly enough, he was my ordination teacher.

I am pleased to know Dai Bosatsu Zendo has become twenty years old. Now I succeed Kogetsu Roshi in keeping a good Dharma relationship with DBZ. Why is this so? I don't really know except that all the Dharma nets from our teachers' generation make this possible.

Dai Bosatsu Zendo has become like a twenty-year-old tree. It is my dream and my duty to see the tree prosper more and more. I pay my full respects to Eido Shimano Roshi and all my Dharma friends who practice at DBZ. It is my sincere wish that Dai Bosatsu Zendo become more fulfilled to give a great Dharma offering to the people of the world.

Gassho,

*Sogen Yamakawa*

## “NEN NEN FU RI SHIN”

by Aiho-san Yasuko Shimano



I say this as if to say to my son:

*“Happy birthday Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji  
on your twentieth birthday.  
You have filled my heart with love and gladness  
forever, ever, ever....”*

Dai Bosatsu Zendo was born at one o'clock in the afternoon, Sunday, the Fourth of July, 1976, from *SOMETHING*. Roshi's unshakable resolution and passion for the Dharma, East to West, and many people's great effort and joy contributed toward this movement.

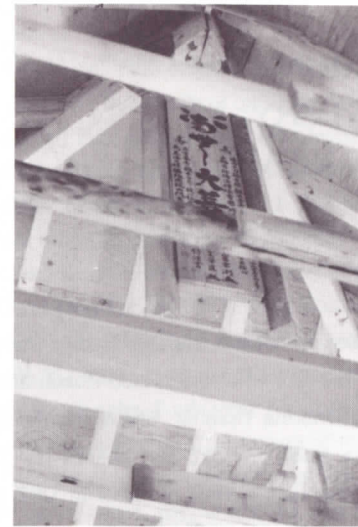
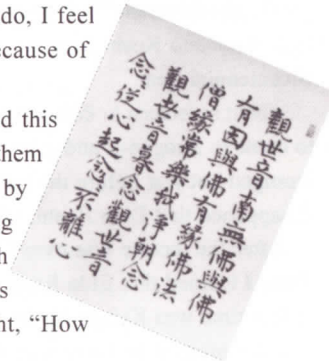
I am very happy and grateful that I was able to participate, and though it is little, I was able to give my life to work and walk with Roshi on this stupendous path.

When I look back at the opening day of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, I feel strongly, “Oh, yes—because of this, I came to America—because of this *SOMETHING*.”

Over 500 people gathered from all over the world to attend this opening day with sincere and joyous feelings. Roshi greeted them and said, “The real mission will begin Now.” In the evening, by Beecher Lake, there was happy singing, joyous talk, drinking and dancing. As I looked at the newly born monastery through the bonfire, it appeared to be far, far away from me. There is still a long way to go. Yes, indeed, what Roshi said was right, “How ever endless the Buddha's Way is, I vow to follow it.”

In 1968 when we got the Shobo-ji property at 223 East 67th Street, on the third day of the third month at three o'clock in the afternoon, we held a purification ceremony—offering incense and chanting “Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo” thirty-three times with intense *NEN*—Let True Dharma Continue.

In 1974 on Easter Sunday, the frame of the monastery building was more or less completed; Roshi asked all Sangha and friends to write “Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo” in either Chinese characters or Romanized letters on a standard size sheet of paper with pen or brush. Everyone wrote with strong positive *NEN*. There were over 600 sheets with “Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo” written on them. I also joined in and wrote 33 sheets by brush. They were then concealed in a



Plaque and box holding sheets of “Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo” writing set in the zendo roof rafters

wooden box and installed in the ceiling above the altar in the main zendo of Kongo-ji.

When a monastery or temple is established, there are many many things to be concerned with which require inconspicuous *NEN*. We think rationally: that funds come, property is found, construction begins, and is then completed. We may think this way in regard to a house for living, but in the case of a monastery or temple, it is not at all the proper way of thinking. I can surely say this through experience.

First of all, there is the selfless vow. This is the foundation.

*Shu Jo Mu Hen Sei Gan Do  
Bo No Mu Jin Sei Gan Dan  
Ho Mon Mu Ryo Sei Gan Gaku  
Butsu Do Mu Jo Sei Gan Jo*

Because of the selfless vow to the Dharma, many unexpected helpers appeared. Things went well. In the atmosphere of the building

we felt *SOMETHING* which supported us. “If you offer yourself to the Dharma, Dharma will offer itself to you.”

Secondly, *NEN* is indispensable.

*Kan Ze On Na Mu Butsu  
Yo Butsu U In Yo Butsu U En  
Bu Po So En Jo Raku Ga Jo Cho Nen  
Kan Ze On Bo Nen Kan Ze On Nen Nen  
Ju Shin Ki Nen Nen Fu Ri Shin*

Let True Dharma Continue. *NEN* arises from mind and is not separate from mind.

Shobo-ji has been practicing and chanting for nearly thirty years. Kongo-ji has been practicing and chanting for nearly twenty years. No matter what happens (or how difficult things are), day after day we practice, chant, and work with *NEN*. We do not expect any result at all. *Just—Just—Nen Nen Fu Ri Shin*.

The Dai Bosatsu Mandala is the actualization of many teachers' endless vow of “Shu Jo Mu Hen Sei Gan Do”—endlessly trying to reach the “unreachable star,” kessei after kessei, sesshin after sesshin, teisho after teisho. Now after twenty years, it has become a *quiet* Dharma parade. This *NEN* is the strongest and will continue endlessly wherever we go, whatever we do.

*Endless is my vow  
Boundless autumn sky  
Blue heaped upon blue*

—Soen Roshi

Congratulations on your Twentieth Anniversary! “Let True Dharma Continue.”

Gassho,

Aiho Yasuko Shimano

## FROM ZEN COMMUNITY TO ZEN MONASTERY: THE TRANSITION YEARS

by Roko-san Sherry Chayat



Roko-san Sherry Chayat began Zen practice at the Zen Studies Society in 1967. In 1991, she received full ordination from Eido Roshi, and in 1992 he acknowledged her as a Dharma Teacher. She is the Director of the Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji. Roko-san shares her rich experiences from a time when she was a staff member at DBZ and editor of the Zen Studies Society publication, *Dharma Seasons*.



*Sangha members walking to the "Mountain Opening Ceremony"--1972*

One night early in 1974, following zazen at the New York Zendo, Eido Roshi called Lou Nordstrom (my first husband) and me into the meeting room and asked if we would be interested in leading the first Summer Zen Community at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Would we! With hearts filled with gratitude and enthusiasm we immediately agreed, knowing that somehow the details of our lives—our jobs, the house we were renting in Rockland County—would fall into place around this decision.

We had been deeply involved with the development of Dai Bosatsu Zendo ever since the purchase of the property in 1971. I had worked with Peter Matthiessen, Margot Wilkie, and several others to produce a 12-page informational booklet, and Lou and I had both been attending work weekends, sesshins, and special events there and in New York City.

On September 13, 1972, Soen Roshi, Eido Roshi, shakuhachi master Watazumi Doso, architect Davis Hamerstrom, and many Sangha members gathered in a fine misty rain for the Kai San Shiki—the “Mountain Opening Ceremony.” In his dedication, Eido Roshi said, “On behalf of all the Sangha, I ask your forgiveness for our destruction and pollution of all rocks, trees, grasses and mosses and the nature of the Catskill Mountains, particularly by the Beecher Lake.

“We ask your permission to establish a Zen monastery on this very site and ask your protection from earth, water, fire, and wind, and any other possible damage....”

In front of an altar bearing the fruits of the summer’s harvest at Dai Bosatsu, Soen Roshi, the Honorary Founder of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, led the ceremony for the purification of earth:

*In this bottomless lake  
let us put sun, moon, and all stars;  
On this boundless field  
countless Bodhisattvas are being born—  
Niii!*



*"Mountain Opening Ceremony"*

Two days later, at the New York Zendo Shobo-ji on its fourth anniversary, Mittakutsu (“The Cave of the Paramitas”) Soen Nakagawa Roshi transmitted the Dharma to Muishitsu (“True Man of No Rank”) Eido Shimano Roshi in a ceremony attended by Zen friends from all over the world (including Taizan Maezumi Roshi, the late abbot of Zen Center of Los Angeles).

By the fall of 1972, the gatehouse complex had been finished at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. The architectural design and construction of the monastery would combine “the experience and traditions of the East with the natural materials and skills of the local Catskill region,” according to the statement by the building committee, chaired by William Johnstone.

A January Rohatsu sesshin was held in the lodge (guest) house at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, where our first American monk and nun of the Zen Studies Society, Daiko Chuck Carpenter and Myoko Carol Snyder, were living. On January 26, we marked the one-year anniversary of the passing of Hoko Deborah Matthiessen, the first of us to be buried in the Sangha Meadow.

In March 1973 Eido Roshi received a letter from Soen Roshi that read in part:



"I secluded myself for 53 days in Gempo Roshi's room and did not take even one step out. I took a pilgrimage to the spiritual world, and on February 11, I again came back to the human world. Day and night, moonlight and the fragrance of the plum blossom were always with me.... During the seclusion I decided the following matters: that on June 3, when we commemorate Gempo Roshi's 13-year memorial service, I will install Sochu Roshi as abbot of Ryutaku-ji; thus, I will be able to become a 'free man without rank,' and would like very much to be an assistant to the birth of Dai Bosatsu Zendo...."

A construction contract with local workmen was signed on May 21, 1973, and work on the main building began. Many students helped clear the land, removing rocks and trees, and by the fall, the excavation and basement were completed. A Buddha for the new zendo miraculously appeared: an ancient one that Eido Roshi had found in Nara many years before at the request of a couple living in Hawaii, John and Grace Key. Now Mr. Key, hearing about the founding of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, offered it to the new monastery.

Several fundraising events took place in New York City. In December 1973, at the Greer Gallery, we mounted an exhibition and sale called "Zen Art from the Four Quarters," with calligraphy scrolls and shikishi by Yasutani Roshi, Soen Roshi, and Eido Roshi, tea bowls by Sangha ceramists, and other art objects.

"A Dai Bosatsu Evening" was held at Japan House on April 3, 1974. I will quote from the Spring 1974 issue of *Dharma Seasons*, of which I was editor for several years:

"The curtain opened at 8 o'clock on a great semicircular assembly of Sangha members, many of whom had been sitting since 6:30. Those of us who had performed *Togan Koji* (a Noh play) for Soen Roshi's birthday party now performed it again....

"Eido Roshi spoke about the meaning of Namu Dai Bosa, and about Zen itself. Pointing to those sitting on stage, he said that ordinarily 'we don't show zazen,' and that it was 'truly unprecedented' to do zazen on stage, but that this evening we wanted to join with the audience to 'extend this Mind over all beings...'

"Two poles were carried on stage between which extended a long line of haiku scrolls. When these were stretched across the stage, Soen Roshi came forward and, in his inimitable way, read and told about each haiku.... Pointing to the calligraphy 'Great Laughter,' he led everyone in the auditorium—some 300 people—in great laughter. At another point, quoting a poem by Fuke, he asked that the lights be extinguished and, like Fuke, rang his handbell in the darkness, faster and faster, until the entire auditorium was filled with the sound of the little bell....

"The results of the Dai Bosatsu Evening were quick and startling. Many who had been in the audience expressed their gratitude for being able to join with the Sangha in such an evening; some said the zazen on stage was like a powerful current carrying everyone else along. Friends whose prior interest in Zen had been purely intellectual expressed a strong desire to begin sitting. And generous donations for Dai Bosatsu Zendo began appearing in the mail... but as the roshis have said many times, more important than the financial support of Dai Bosatsu Zendo is the extension and strengthening of Dai Bosatsu spirit, and this occurred very tangibly on April 3."

That May, after classes ended at Marymount College where Lou was teaching; after completing my writing assignments for various art publications; and after subletting our house, we moved in to the beautiful old lodge house, built as a summer residence, on the banks of Beecher Lake. Over the next few months we were joined by many Zen students. Some stayed for a few days, others for a month or for the entire summer; some were from the New York Zendo, and others came from places as far away as Minnesota, Florida, and California.

One of the major undertakings was the development of the present vegetable garden; there seemed to be more rocks on that one acre than all the sands of the Ganges, and every time one was removed, myriad new rocks appeared to take its place.

After some contention about what to grow—Eido Roshi assured me the season was too short for corn, but I had visions of freshly picked ears gracing our table by the end of August—we planted and planted and planted, and managed to finish putting a tall fence into the ground before the vegetables were ready to eat—a fence against which a big black bear leaned one sunny day. I had brought my camera down, and he or she posed agreeably before lumbering off. The garden was wonderfully prolific, all except for the corn. Of course, Roshi was right: by the time the first ear was about the size of my thumb, a killing frost had arrived.

Work on the new building progressed rapidly and noisily all summer; community life was spirited and practice in the zendo under the eaves, accompanied by the flutterings of birds and rustlings of bats, was strong. At the summer's end, it seemed perfectly natural that we would stay on, even though it meant that Lou would give up a tenure-track job as professor of religion, and I would bow out of the New York art world.

We were in the midst of such an exciting adventure! Looking back, one can say that we were all Dharma pioneers, led by our visionary roshis; but at the time, we were just chopping wood and carrying sap buckets.

Five intrepid students decided to continue living with us in the lodge, which was only partially heated. That winter tested us all in many ways, the least of which was the cold. The water in the Buddha's offering bowl was often frozen; we had to keep faucets trickling; it was decidedly warmer inside the refrigerator than in most of the rooms.

Each morning before zazen a few of us took turns going out in the truck to sand and plow the road so that the construction crew could get up to work. That job, although miserably cold for those standing in the back of the truck shoveling out the sand, was actually quite marvelous—seeing the light gradually coming up through the white forest, breathing through the tiny icicles in one's nostrils, riding back past the frozen lake to the comparative warmth of the zendo. We were serious about our winter garments, which we ordered *en masse* from L.L. Bean. Eventually our



Building the garden fence

best efforts were no match for the severity of the weather, and construction halted until April.

To convey something of what life at Dai Bosatsu Zendo was like during the transitional year of 1975, I will share some of my journal entries of that eventful spring and summer.

April 22: "A beautiful day, warmer finally, though last night frost was bad enough to kill some of the tomato seedlings in the cold frame. Worked cleaning sap equipment in laundry room of new monastery. Spike (the construction foreman) and one other man were working on doors; they just returned yesterday after two months' absence...."

May 4: "Hard rain and strong winds. We were hoping to turn over the soil in the gardens, but now it's much too wet. Beautiful Canadian goose standing all alone at edge of lake in front of the house this morning." The following day: "Finally the rain stopped. After lunch Lou and I went for a walk in the Sangha Meadow. Lovely little white and purple flowers growing all around Hoko's grave. On our way back we saw two bluebirds. The first daffodil was just about open when we reached the house. We picked it for the altar to celebrate Nyogen Senzaki's memorial day tomorrow. Senzaki's poem:

*When I bow before the altar  
Offering the Buddha a bunch of daffodils  
The fragrance of the flowers  
Fills the sleeves of my robe*

May 8: "Yesterday, rest day, took first row of the year. The wind was too strong to stay out long, but later in the evening it grew warmer and the lake more placid and just at the hour when swallows merge into bats we rowed down to the lake's source and there saw the great blue

heron and two mallard ducks among the carnage created by the beavers....went to bed to the sounds of the han and the peepers. Today saw the rubythroated hummingbird in the bush by the Dharma Hall (of the lodge)... John Loori came for evening zazen again. He has found a house only an hour from here."

May 19: "Working intensively on *Namu Dai Bosa* with Roshi at Sun-Moon Cottage. It's been a rare and wonderful time—constant progress, but slow; revisions; numerous deer coming to watch us through the picture windows; wrestling with problem of having no water. Today Bowman (Owen, the caretaker) found problem: wet, corroded electrical switch for pump. So now water is back on...half moon, clear sky, new leaves like lace when we walked out the door after working all evening."

From *Dharma Seasons*, Summer 1975: "The first of two summer sesshins at Dai Bosatsu was held from June 28 to July 5. On the fifth day after lunch all the participants went to the new buildings and cleaned thoroughly. That evening, the first zazen in the new zendo began. Roshi said, 'This floor has finally been laid. Now we must sit with all our might—we must be the nails and screws.' On July 4, 1975, when he 'took the high seat' for the first time in the new zendo, he began, 'At last a baby is born...' but he could not continue. Tears started, and soon many around him were silently weeping. After several moments, he said, 'I am going to ask my friend Suigan Eddie Daniels to play this teisho.' Suigan went to the altar with his flute and played 'A Child Is Born.'"

July 20: "Lou and I have been working steadily on the glossary for *Namu Dai Bosa*; finished it yesterday.... Eido Roshi and Aiho

moved into their apartment in the monastery on the 18th and had us all over that evening for chanting and tea with delicious sushi. We brought cake, flowers. They stressed the importance of Sangha togetherness, harmonious relations. It's certainly the most difficult task we have here.... Roshi talked about moving out of that state in which we constantly discriminate between right and wrong. When I look around there is so much I see that is 'wrong' I begin to feel like a lunatic. Having done the various jobs around here that are now being done by others... it takes all my strength to 'let it be.' Just when I feel I have transcended the judgmental, something happens, and POW—right back into the battleground."

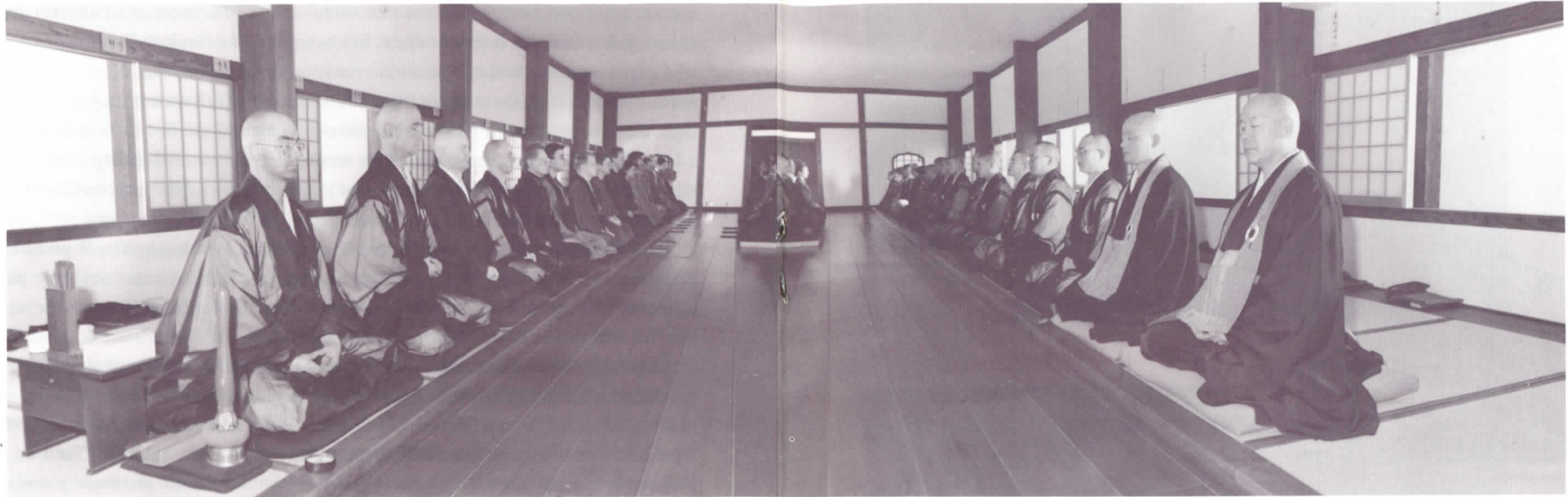
July 27: "Back in the garden yesterday, everything growing lushly. Worked for first time in brand-new kitchen today freezing mustard greens... in afternoon, blueberry picking. Idyllic: sound of rushing spillway, profusion of wild flowers, berries, birds, intense sunlight but dry air... blueberry samadhi. Many berries picked, too!"

August 6: "Moving into the monastery was preceded by a flurry of work all day and evening of August 2: The morning of the third we had morning service and zazen as usual; after breakfast, zazen, during which one by one we left to enter the new monastery formally: kneeling before Roshi at front entryway in traditional posture of niwazume, intoning 'Tano mi masha.' After presenting our application and reading aloud our declaration of sincerity and dedication we were told which room we would have; then went to our rooms for zazen until formal lunch, then moving our things and at 4 p.m. a sumo match, swimming in lovely clear lake, and afterward out to Rudi's Big Indian for dinner, some 28 of us. Home near midnight.... Next day at big meeting, Roshi told us many details regarding new organization and monastic procedures."

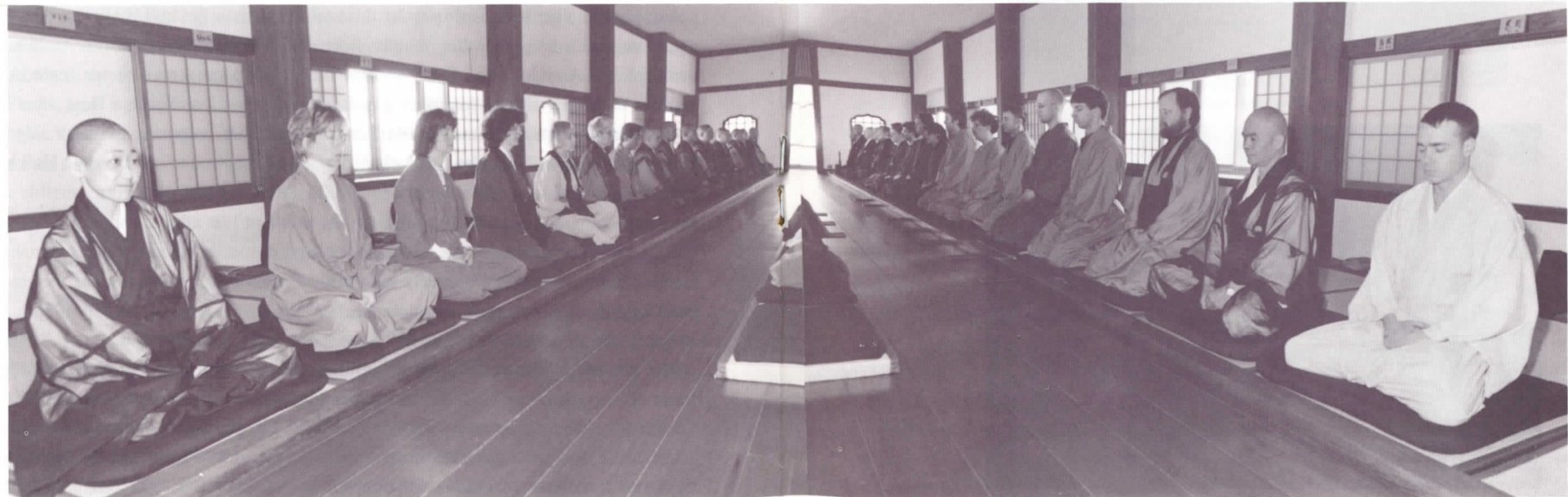
August 22: "Things change so rapidly here; moods shift up and down almost schizophrenically. It doesn't pay to think about causes beyond realizing one's own constant faults and their corresponding results. Soen Roshi is here now. That in itself has changed the atmosphere. And it seems Eido Roshi's illness is not as grave as we feared. There may be nothing to worry about. Soen Roshi arrived yesterday, Dai Bosatsu Day, after lunch. We had spent a manic two days under Eido Roshi's leadership preparing things inside and out. After evening zazen and Diamond Sutra chanting, we all repaired to old Dharma Hall in the lodge for welcoming sarei. As merriment began, Eido Roshi told us shocking, terrible news: Zenshin Richard Rudin has been badly hurt in a car accident just after arriving in Cleveland...."

August 25: "This morning we heard the first encouraging news about Zenshin.... Although he was badly mutilated, it seems his brain is functioning perfectly and he understands very well what is said. Our daily chanting for him has been so strong, so full of Nen... Eido Roshi's voice, as he stood before the altar: 'I don't want to lose him!'"

August 30: "First sesshin in new building. Soen Roshi spoke of Eido Roshi's and Sangha's great effort, about the 53 Bodhisattvas coming together for this event which he said spreads its spiritual waves more strongly than any radio or TV, penetrating throughout the universe. Eido Roshi said that although both he and Soen Roshi have Rinzaï Zen background, in this new zendo on this new continent we will establish neither Rinzaï nor Soto Zen, but Dai Bosatsu Zen."◆



MARCH • ON SESSHIN 1996 ♦ DAI BOSATSU ZENDO





*Raising of the bonsho gong—June, 1976*



*Monastery's front entrance during construction—1976*



*Japanese carpenters at work in the Dharma Hall—May, 1976*



*Opening moment, Eido Roshi carries flame of light brought to DBZ by Yakushi-ji monks—July 4, 1976*



*His Holiness the Dalai Lama visits DBZ—1981*



*Sixty monks led by Mumon Yamada Roshi walk the road to DBZ—October 13, 1976*



*Sogen Yamakawa Roshi and Eido Roshi—March 10, 1996*

## THE ROAD TO DAI BOSATSU

By Shogetsu Harry McCormick



*Shogetsu Harry McCormick has been a long-time member and student of Zen at the Zen Studies Society. He is also an artist and his paintings hang in the homes and business establishments of many collectors and show in art galleries in New York City. His paintings of Soen Roshi and Eido Roshi can be seen in the Dharma halls of both Shobo-ji and Dai Bosatsu Zendo.*

I remember many things about the beginning of Dai Bosatsu Zendo. When I began sitting at the zendo, DBZ existed only in the minds and imaginations of our teacher Tai-san, who is now Eido Roshi, Yasuko Shimano, whom we now call Aiho-san, Soen Roshi, Bill Johnstone, and a small group of people.

The air was always buzzing about finding the property we now enjoy. There were many false alarms, but finally it was announced that the perfect property

had been discovered. There was only the lodge (guest) house and the spot for the new building had not been decided yet. A small zendo was set up in the attic of the house. The general

atmosphere that first summer was somewhat like a summer camp with a small group of very, very unusual people! The scene was usually dominated by the presence of Soen



*Painting of Soen Roshi in the guest house zendo*

Roshi and everything was an event in his playground. Bill Johnstone and his wife Milly were there a lot. Bill was the financial mastermind who gave his help and advice to Tai-san in the very complex job of setting up the new zendo foundation. Jack Clareman was also doing the legal work, which I'm sure was very complicated. Neither of these two men practiced zazen, but I don't know how it could have been done without their help. Bill was always quietly present and he looked like a sort of wise

old country doctor. No one would guess that he was the former Chairman of Bethlehem Steel. Soen Roshi's good friend, Father Maxima, was spending the summer there and his paintings are ever present in the entrance to the zendo as well as in the lodge house. He was a Greek Orthodox Catholic priest and an artist who was painting Buddhist scenes. Soen Roshi was always having tea ceremonies in Father Maxima's room which was turned into a painting studio. In the evening, we would sit in the attic zendo and listen to the sound of the bats waking up in the walls and going out for the night. It sounded as if there were thousands of them in there.

The first summer at Dai Bosatsu was like a vacation and getting acclimated. There was a lot of work going on that I was not involved with, but that was the general outside impression. I remember the first time it was announced by Soen Roshi and Tai-san that the new zendo would be called "International Dai Bosatsu Zendo." There was a discussion about whether

using the word "International" could be a little pretentious or maybe corny. At the time I thought so too. But Tai-san and Soen Roshi felt that it was correct. And now, after going to one sesshin in almost every kessei, I have seen how right they really were. I have seen

people from all over the world attend sesshins there. It seems as if it is the UN of Zen sometimes. If sometime in the future, we of the planet Earth were to make contact with alien creatures from another planet, I would not be surprised to see them attending a sesshin at DBZ. It certainly would be an interesting job for the tenzo. *Intergalactic Dai Bosatsu Zendo.*

That fall, there were discussions about the winter and the first residents of the country zendo. Now we take a lot of things for granted, but keep in mind that this was never done before. They had to decide what the rules were going to be. Chuck Carpenter (Daiko) was Tai-san's right hand man and the first head of the residents. Chuck was a very private kind of guy and very diligent about everything. Working in a community full of different kinds of personalities was very hard for him and somewhat against his nature. But he did it very well in spite of this.

A little before this country zendo period began, Tai-san got me going on the idea that I should do a painting of Soen Roshi. This was when we were still doing sesshin in Litchfield, Connecticut, with the Catholic nuns. I asked Soen Roshi to pose for me; he thought about it and then agreed. Thus began a somewhat epic time over the next few years, where by doing paintings of Soen Roshi



*Painting of Eido Roshi in the main zendo*

I got to know him in my own special way. The thing about Soen Roshi was that everyone who knew him felt they knew him in their own very special way. He had that way with people. He once asked me how I wanted him to look in the painting. I said, "Look at me as you do in dokusan." As I was painting him in the attic zendo, he got up and changed places with me. He looked at the painting and then looked where he had just been sitting. He looked back and forth a few times, just as I do when I paint something. Then he said, "For the first time, I understand this kind of painting: become the object!" That particular painting was a failure and I eventually discarded it.



Zazen in the guest house zendo—1975

Going back to the first Dai Bosatsu winter residency, there was just a very small group of maybe four or five people. They were very austere, so much so that they had little heat in the winter—only enough to prevent the pipes from freezing. They did turn it on for Tai-san's visit from the City. I thought it was crazy and too much at that time, but now after all these years, I'm not so sure anymore. The other view would be: if they planted more comfortable lackadaisical seeds back then, what kind of tree would grow today. I have

to offer them my gratitude now for their sincere efforts.

Then we began having sesshins in the attic zendo rather than at Litchfield. The attic zendo had no heating facilities at all. It was cold but not so bad. The sitting is better in the cold. It was much harder to sit on hot summer afternoons.

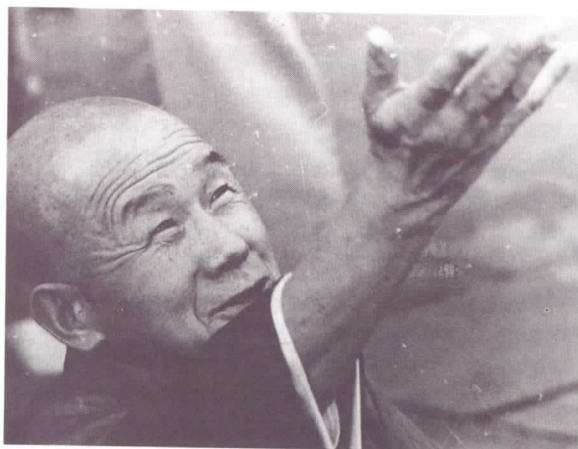
I remember one summer there was a fellow named Kanzan Bruce Rickenbacker doing sesshin, and we both were staying at the Sun Moon Cottage. He would never rest during the rest periods. He was always studying a manuscript of some kind. I thought to myself, "How crazy of him. Sesshin is tough enough; why doesn't he take it easy when he has an opportunity?" At the end of the sesshin, it was announced that he had memorized the entire Diamond Sutra and would chant it at the site for the new building in the forest. It was an amazing feat to accomplish, and everyone who wanted to come was invited to witness this. I was lazy and immature and took a swim in the lake instead. I have always been a little sorry that I did not attend his chanting. We started chanting the Diamond Sutra in the sesshins at that time, and it has remained a tradition. Before that we would start the sitting without the chanting. The first time we sat after the Diamond Sutra chanting, the sitting was dramatically different. It was then that it was decided to call the zendo "Kongo-ji" (Diamond Zendo). That was the seed that Kanzan planted. Thank you, Kanzan.

Meanwhile, I had started a painting of Soen Roshi that I thought was a perfect portrait of him, and this painting would be a saga in itself. I began painting it from a very poor photograph of Soen Roshi. It was taken from a long distance and was out of focus, but I think it had his feeling. The thing was, I would need better photos. I needed him to pose again, but he was in

Japan and I would have to wait until the next summer. When summer came and he returned, I put the partially finished painting on the top of my very small Volkswagen, along with a couple of easels, and drove to DBZ. Now, keep in mind that this painting was very large, 50"x72". When I got to the lodge house in the late afternoon and got out of the car, the painting, along with the roof rack and easels, was gone. I raced down the hill in my car and down the dirt road toward Lew Beach. There it was, in the middle of the road, completely undamaged. There would be many such problems over many years with this painting. Looking back, I think that Soen Roshi was like that too. He was great to be with, but it was never easy. Once he walked out to the end of the dock by the lake, looked out, turned and asked, "Shall I pass into the other world?" He dove in and didn't come up. We waited and waited until it almost seemed serious. Then his head popped up in what seemed to be almost the middle of the lake. I did not know that Soen Roshi was a very skillful underwater swimmer.

In those days, all the focus and energy was directed on completing the monastery building by July 4, 1976, the bicentennial of the United States. We had enough money when we started building, but the cost of material and labor increased while the building was going on, so that there was a great need for fund raising. While building it we did not have quite enough for completion. I remember Eido Roshi called me up and asked me to do a drawing of the inside of the new zendo. We had a meeting on the top floor of Shobo-ji and he described it in complete detail to me and I took notes. He needed the drawing practically overnight (so what else is new?). The zendo today is exactly as Eido Roshi described it to me, except for one small detail. Originally he wanted cabinets in the back of every seat to keep jihatsu bowls, extra cushions, and sutra books. But now that I think about it, can you imagine the extra noise of 50 or so people opening and closing the sliding doors during a sesshin? When I look at the zendo, I sometimes think about that drawing and wonder what things really are. All this was first an idea in Eido Roshi's and Soen Roshi's minds. When I was doing the painting of Soen Roshi in the attic zendo, he said to me, "Where is the center of this painting?" I thought, "Oh shit, another tricky Zen question! What's the right answer?" The statue of the Buddha was physically more towards the middle but Soen Roshi was the central focus of the painting. I said, "The Buddha." Soen Roshi said, "No. I am the center—not because it's me but because it's life. Life is more important than the statue. Without life, none of this would exist."

So, I finally got him to pose for me in the attic zendo after I had been working on the painting without him for some time. He would come up to the zendo in the afternoons and I would paint him. At first, I thought that this would be great, an artist's dream—a subject that can remain absolutely still for long periods of time. But the first day he came up to pose, he sat down on the cushion in the zazen posture and after only a few moments he began to close his eyes and fell asleep. His body would start to lean more and more forward until I thought that his nose might soon touch the floor. Then he would bounce up again and it would begin again. Up and down, up and down.... After a while he would get up and say, "I am sorry, I am no good today. Tomorrow I shall be better." But the next day, he would be exactly the same, up and



*Soen Roshi at Shogetsu's studio in New York City*

down. Soen Roshi was like that. If you thought you had him figured out, forget it. He would do some other things that would surprise you. My inspiration for the painting of him where he faces the wall (now hanging in the DBZ Dharma Hall) came from an experience in a sesshin in the attic zendo. After the morning chanting, he remained sitting through two sittings facing the wall. He continued to sit this way through the breakfast, through the morning cleaning, through the entire morning

sittings, through the lunch meal, through the rest period after lunch, through the entire afternoon, through the evening meal, through the after-meal period, and continued sitting with his back absolutely straight through the first sitting of the evening and into the second sitting. Now, during the second sitting, he always got up and went into the dokusan room. As for myself, I was thinking, "I wonder if he is going to get up for dokusan. I wonder if he can get up at all. I wonder if his legs are killing him." Then, he quietly got up, the same as he always did, and I could hear his quiet and even walk as he left the room.

I was at Dai Bosatsu when they had chosen the spot to break the ground and build the monastery. Just before we were about to leave the house to go into the forest for the ceremony, there appeared a family of wild ducks in the lake. Soen Roshi looked and said, "Where did they come from?" Eido Roshi faced him and said, "Yes, where did they come from?" Soen Roshi turned and shouted, "Ha! Ha! A Dharma battle! A Dharma battle!" Then we proceeded into the forest to a place where there was a huge boulder which they used as an altar. Soen Roshi had a big staff, a branch of a tree. Watazumi Doso, bamboo flute master and friend of Soen Roshi, played his dramatic and powerful bamboo flute. Soen Roshi described a circle with the staff and forcefully drove it into the ground.

During that summer sesshin in the attic zendo, Watazumi Sensei played his giant bamboo flutes in the morning and in the evening. He played in front of the altar, and Soen Roshi faced him. It was quite dramatic, I thought. So I painted a picture of them together in this scene. Watazumi Sensei's flutes ranged in size from a small one, 3 or 4 inches long, to a giant one 3 feet long and 4 inches in diameter. The last was so large that he had to hold it on the bottom with his feet.

It was my job to drive Watazumi Sensei and his wife up and down the hill from the Sun-Moon Cottage to the lodge house. He told me that he would play his flute in order to wake me up every morning. When Soen Roshi heard about this, he was really mad. He said, "Shogetsu! He is the teacher and you are the student. You are supposed to be up before him." I said, "But

Roshi, he wakes up at three o'clock in the morning." He said, "It doesn't matter. You should get up first." After that, Soen Roshi ran me ragged. I think he decided that I was too attached to sleep, and every time I would lie down in my tent or anywhere, I would hear his deep voice calling me to help him. One minute it would be to teach them to make whiskeyless whiskey sours. He had some whiskey sour mix. Then it would be to have some tea and a little party. I did find that I did not need to rest as much as I thought I did and these events were always fun.

Soen Roshi's teishos that sesshin were about a famous pair of Zen friends: a guy by the name of Fuke, who just happened to be a flute player, and Master Rinzai. One afternoon, it was awfully sticky and hot in the zendo; we were in sesshin. Soen Roshi got up and was walking around the zendo. A student thought he was junkei and made a gassho to be struck. Soen Roshi only had his fan. So he opened it and fanned the student with it. He used to say, "How much money can buy a cool breeze? Not even one million dollars!"

One day in New York City, after posing for me in my studio, he invited me up to his room. I had given his friend, the flute master, a small etching of mine. It was a picture of a man walking up a road. We had the picture with us and he wanted to know all about the man in it. He said we must have a little ceremony for that man. He opened an antique cabinet which is now in the first room of the second floor of DBZ. In it was a Buddha statue and other things. He took the water dish from in front of the Buddha and dumped the water in the sink. He told me to wash it and he would prepare for the ceremony. He reached far underneath the lower shelf to a place just under the Buddha and pulled out a bottle of very fine cognac. It was done somewhat like a formal tea ceremony, only with Courvoisier cognac. I popped the cork, and he said, "You must appreciate that sound. Wonderful sound." I have to say that I always think of Soen Roshi when I hear this sound, even today.

Anyway, I finally finished that big painting of Soen Roshi, and I invited Eido Roshi and Aiho-san up to my studio to see it. Eido Roshi liked it, but said that the head was a little big. In retrospect, I think it was my own head that was larger in those days. Eido Roshi asked me if I would keep it for the Zendo, in my studio for a while, as construction was still under way and there was no place to hang it. I said OK. Sometime later, just before I was having an exhibition at ACA Galleries, a man named Bob Clark came to my studio to buy some paintings. Bob was a very good patron of mine. He is the nephew of Ramsey Clark, the former attorney general of the United States. Bob saw the painting of Soen Roshi and wanted to buy it. I told him that I was sorry, but I couldn't sell it because I had promised it to the Zendo. When I went to the opening of my show, my art dealer called me into his office and in the typical cultured and elegant style of a Madison Avenue art dealer he said to me, "Bob Clark tells me you don't wanna sell him a picture. Since when can you afford to turn down a \$4,000 sale? What's the madder with you? Ya fallin in love wit yer own work? Ya not an odist? Ya can't paint anoda one?" Well, he had me by the you know what. He had been advancing me money while I was painting the show, and I was into him for several thousands of dollars. He told Bob Clark that we would be happy to sell him the painting, but he felt a little guilty about it. I felt badly



Eido Roshi and Aiho-san on DBZ's Opening Day

because I did not paint it for Bob, I painted it for the Zendo, and it slipped through my fingers. But I always had the feeling that it would return someday. And so it did. Ramsey Clark called me one day and told me that Bob had to give up the New York apartment and wanted to give the painting back to me for its original purpose. Since then, I couldn't help trying to correct the proportions of Soen Roshi's head, reworking him a little bit.

The great day of July 4, 1976, finally arrived. The building was complete and many people interested and involved in Zen were invited for the opening dedication.

The big worry was the weather. We did not have the space indoors to accommodate so many people for the ceremony. Indeed there were busloads of them. The chairs were all assembled outside. There was a prediction for rain. A heavy rain could have ruined it all. There were many Buddhist people from many places far and wide and all dressed in their finery. There was Philip Kapleau, Trungpa Rinpoche, the Tibetan teacher (he and his followers arrived in dark business suits instead of robes—they looked like the CIA), and many others. They all sat in front of the building as the sky darkened. The only one who was conspicuously absent was Soen Roshi. People speculated with different reasons for his not coming. I have my own theory.

Just as the ceremony began, it began to rain lightly, and then a bit more heavily. The crowd of roshis, monks, and lay people sat bravely in it and nobody moved to get up. Just as it began, the sun came out and the sky cleared up. The Tibetans were blowing their long horns and all sorts of speeches and things were happening. They say that a little rain is good luck. Later I asked Eido Roshi if he was praying that it wouldn't rain. He said with absolute conviction that he knew it would not rain. That's the power of faith for you. There was a huge party inside, which took place all over the building. It lasted all day long. The event could not have been a bigger success. Soen Roshi arrived a few years later—inconspicuously. I think he stayed away because in truth, Dai Bosatsu Zendo is really the child of Eido Roshi and Aiho-san. Many people helped, but they are the ones who did it. The last time Soen Roshi posed for me was the day that I invited him and Eido Roshi to the Sign of the Dove Restaurant. Later that afternoon, Soen Roshi was very tired and when he came down to my studio, he just took a nap. When he awakened, I drove him home to Shobo-ji. Just before we arrived at the zendo, I said to him that he could not have sent a teacher better suited to understanding the particular character of the American people than Eido Roshi. Then he put his hands together in gassho, bowed deeply and said, "Thank you." He never returned, and I never saw him again. ♦

## PLANTING PINE TREES

by Eshin Brenda Lukeman, Ph.D



Eshin Brenda Lukeman began her Zen practice and membership with the Zen Studies Society in its early days. A psychotherapist, Eshin is the author of *Embarkations: (A Guide to Dealing with Death and Parting)* and *Journey Through Illness and Beyond*. She has taught psychology and philosophy at Adelphi University and the New Seminary. Eshin teaches the "Zen and Psychology" classes at New York Zendo Shobo-ji.

*I wish to dedicate these words to the great founders and teachers of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, Eido Roshi and Soen Roshi, without whose vision, practice, endurance and love, none of us would be sitting here together today.*

I cannot think of the twentieth anniversary of Dai Bosatsu Zendo without remembering the incomparable Sangha members who have passed through these doors. Each one's spirit has been crucial in creating this marvelous place of practice and strength.

Like Rinzai's pine trees planted to make shade for the future generations, the Sangha members who came and practiced, planted a root here that nourishes us all as we walk on the way.

Eido Roshi often says Dai Bosatsu Zendo is wherever you are, when you are practicing. So, each of us now sitting in different physical locations, are in a sense, still together, united in our common effort. Some days, up here, you can taste this directly. Particularly during sesshin, the presence of old friends is palpable. It is clear that no one comes or goes.

And yet, in order to honor these twenty years properly, I feel called upon to mention and acknowledge some of the early Sangha who particularly touched and guided me, without whom my practice and the practice at Dai Bosatsu Zendo would never be the same.

To begin, I offer great thanks to the one who left his native country, to work tirelessly and one pointedly to bring zazen to all of us; our endlessly giving teacher, Eido Roshi.

Aiho-san, too, transplanted from Japan, has worked continuously at Roshi's side throughout all the years, supporting the Sangha and zendos in every way she possibly could. Her attention to the thousands of details, her insightful comments and masterful cooking, sesshin after sesshin, have inspired and nourished us in so many ways.

Next let me remember our first three lay monks to be ordained at Dai Bosatsu Zendo: Dogo Don Scanlon, Kanzan Bruce Rickenbacker, and Shoro Lou Nordstrom. The early days of practice were wild, sometimes wacky, filled with bumbling, laughter, excitement, mistakes and many



unexpected, joyous discoveries. Nothing seemed impossible. Dogo's wonderful Thursday night streetwise talks given at New York Zendo were directly responsible for helping many students, including myself, to make this practice their own.

I also remember dearly and thank Jonen Shiela Curtis, who bathed us in her gentle warmth; Kushu Min Pai, who persistently encouraged and left wonderful surprises under my cushion on the fourth day of sesshin; Daishin Peter Gamby who refused to let me run away when the pain of zazen got too bad.

"Once you get through the pain, you're really into something," he snuck up and whispered, as I limped along in kinhin.

"Into what?"

"Don't ask me. Find out for yourself!"

I did.

In many ways the growth of Dai Bosatsu was built upon the joy and dedication of these early Dharma friends: Koshu Marsha Feinhandler, Roko Sherry (Nordstrom) Chayat, Chigetsu Ruth Lilienthal, Korin Sylvan Busch, Wado Vicky Gerdy, Shogetsu Harry McCormick, Seisen Norah Messina and Tetsugu Ray Messina, Reichu James Gordon, Jikei Jean Bankier, Soshin Janis Levine, Rodo Harold Weisberg, and Daijo Vincent Piazza, who kept his pocket full of M&M's for all of us to take during sesshin when sleepiness came. I also honor Kuju Sara Birnbaum who recently passed away. She was my dearest and first Dharma sister I met when I came to the practice. Many Dharma friends helped me to enter the Way. Some of them passed away and others are no longer with us. To all of them I am very grateful.

The birth of a monastery takes a long time. Birth pangs are inevitable, as we all grope to discover our practice, discover ourselves, and find ways to make this ancient path a reality in our turbulent world. Inevitably we stumble. Inevitably, we also discover there is room to stumble and get up again. That, in fact, is what practice is.

As we proceed through the long years we all taste joy, pain, sorrow, discovery, loss, wisdom, confusion and peace. As during each zazen sitting, these disparate ingredients cook together to make us a hearty soup, to fashion a life where we can digest everything that comes our way. If we stay on the fire long enough, and continue to practice, despite difficulties, no matter what comes, it brings nourishment. This is a great lesson I have learned here over the years.

I have learned from the passage of time, from my own sitting, and from watching the practice of others. How I love to look at the faces of Sangha as time passes, and they inevitably ripen under my eyes.

Above all I wish to honor Eido Roshi for his remarkable ability to persist and persist in the face of what sometimes seemed like incomparable difficulties. Over these many years, he too, has had the strength and necessity to grapple with all kinds of dragons—and win. I have watched him grow, and never give up.

Eido Roshi's devotion to practice, no matter what is happening, is beyond description. This itself is a tremendous teaching. His ability to give each of us the right to take this practice and

make it our own, find our own rhythms, commitment, and expression is the essence of practice here. Like the row of pine trees planted at our entrance, this way clears and refreshes the heart.

Eido Roshi's determination to create a place where we can experience traditional Japanese Rinzaï Zen practice, his keen awareness of the crucial link between past and future generations, and between past and future expressions of Zen, is a gift we have been granted. Let us recognize the value of this, and care for this gift tenderly.

I look forward, with fascination, to watching the next twenty years of Dai Bosatsu's growth. I look forward to seeing this profound practice taken by students directly into their communities, so that all together, we can learn to live in harmony, wholeness, and delight. ♦



Teachers and early Dharma friends—September, 1972

## LETTERS FROM SEIKO: AN AMERICAN UNSUI IN JAPAN

*On September, 1995, Eido Roshi acknowledged Seiko Kido Susan Morningstar's completion of the traditional 1000 days training as a Rinzai Zen Buddhist nun at DBZ. In October she flew to Japan to continue practice at Shogen-ji Monastery where Seigan is also training. Now, she is simply known as Sen-san and recently attended March-On Sesshin here, along with Sogen Roshi and his monks. The following is condensed from a series of three letters sent to Eido Roshi and Aiho-san.*

[Undated]

Dear Roshi,

Just yesterday I was admitted to the *Shinto* [freshman monk group] in a rather long signing-in with the *Shikassan* [monastery director] as he wrote in *kanji* [Chinese characters] and I copied it into the big book....

They call me "Sen-san." That saying, "there are no calendars in the monastery" is quite true. At first in my *tangaryo* [solitary period] I was counting the minutes, hours, days; but I was shocked when it ended. No calendars, but that giant man-sized clock at the entrance where I did, "*Tanomimasho!*," is quite something. It is an unforgettable experience to sit... in that way with head bowed on a box of your belongings... was impossible to be comfortable physically, mentally, emotionally. It was really painful, but everyone from the Roshi to the most-shinto has done it. So I just stuck with it until I felt I almost couldn't do it, and the *densuryo* [sutra leader] came to take me to the *menpeki* room. I was so grateful to be able to do *zazen*—Even didn't notice it was a storeroom with a bare mattress. It was a palace to me. By the end of the second day at the entrance, I couldn't wait to start my *tangaryo*... to lift my head off the floor and see real pine and magnolia and bamboo shimmering in the Golden Days of October was a dream and a rare privilege. Because of this, I discovered a new motto, "*Do what seems hateful; then you'll be so grateful.*"

During the *tangaryo* week, I went on *takuhatsu* [mendicant outings]. My *tangaryo* and experience so far has been quite joyful. Seigan has been a big help as translator and I know because of his good behavior, I am made more welcome. I am really a beginner even tho' well prepared from DBZ. The emphasis here is on work *samu* [work practice]. Very simple, weeding weedless places. There are no tools really. I weeded a moss garden with a small stone to dig with—all the time thinking, in my American way, of how to do it faster, better, with machines, improve etc.—but laugh and tell myself to take it easy, "*As it is, is OK.*" It makes me more contented. I am glad I am here and appreciate now more than ever you and Aiho-san and what you have done for us with the Dharma. I appreciate more and more what good training I've had

under your guidance, and feel really lucky. Fortunate to encounter the Dharma in my own land and language—and now to be here....

Nov. 20, '95

Dear Aiho-san,

... Here the leaves have just turned red and gold on the maples and it seems timeless. Everyday sweep the same leaves from the same place, every leaf—a new leaf—all falling in new places. Same work. Every day for hundreds of years the han has been struck at 3 p.m. and someone chants the Diamond Sutra everyday but new faces do it. Just continues, I like that feeling—just continue. No matter what, I love to do *takuhatsu*, dress and chant at dawn, 4 a.m., while the stars and moon are so clear; then walk and walk through rice fields and abundant gardens full of lotus root, daikon, cabbage, pumpkin, *kaki* [persimmon] and kiwi trees, chestnuts. The little farm ladies who are so tiny and bent over from years of hard, hard work would hurry into their houses to give a bowl of rice. My life has been so easy compared to theirs. *Do I deserve it?* A monk's life is éasy—so I must work harder. Zen-san, the *jikijitsu*, explained to me that we do not say thank you because the people are giving directly to Buddha. So it's not an individual giving to an individual. Still they are so generous. *Takuhatsu* is the best thing about the practice here, I think so far and I am aware. I have a lot to learn, and re-learn and unlearn...

Dec. 13, '95

Dear Roshi,

... Under very cold conditions, a really freezing night with the wind blowing on my back, all I could do was to really concentrate on breathing deep. I was quite desperate. Anytime I would slip into fantasy or daydream, I would uncontrollably start to shiver. So just had to stay with each breath, stay fully present. The sitting turned out to be about 2 hours. When tea was served I could barely move my hands because the back and wrists were ice-cold numb. Yet it was some of the most intense *zazen* I've ever experienced. The cold can kill you. Let it. In seemingly intolerable conditions it is better to let go of everything. I noticed that if I labeled "cold" or "pain," things became more difficult. However when I let go, I felt transparent—the cool wind just blew—just the breath joining it. Being fully present and desperate made me draw on the knowledge in my cells, not from outside sources. Truly felt plugged in under a so-called intolerable and impossible situation. In those conditions there can be no self-centeredness, it seems to me, and we are forced into something outside our brain and ego. Agony & Ecstasy. *Rohatsu* with snow, more chills, longer sitting, no sleep approaches. I may be one of the few terrified *unsui* looking forward to the challenge. When I think back a couple of months ago, how my worst fear was being cold—all that wasted worry.

... Only a few years remain in this century. Dai Bosatsu turns twenty. What an amazing time to be alive and in the Dharma. I am just grateful and happy....

Truly, Seiko

## THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

by *Jiro-san Andy Afable*

The site of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, beside a high lake, in the middle of the Catskill forest, has a long history of human activity. Walking in the woods, seeing wild animals and the occasional eagle, it is easy to forget this. The Beecher House by the lake is more than a hundred years old. In addition to the Beechers, the house was occupied by a few families before it was acquired by the Zen Studies society. 60 years ago, hunters lodged there during the game season. Before the house was built, native Americans, kin to the Esopus and the Neversink, walked these woods. They too were refreshed by the pure water of the lake.

Our history here, just 20 years since the dedication of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, adds a dimension to the stewardship of this forest. The monastery building is such a visible feature of Dai Bosatsu that the community—fluid and ever-changing—who takes care of Dai Bosatsu tends to recede. We owe much to them, the Shikaryos, the Tenzos, the Jishas, the residents—all indeed who gifted their efforts to establish Dai Bosatsu.

Today, our Dharma activity is inseparable from the spirit of this place. That this lake and mountain have a 'spirit of place' cannot be denied. The Dai Bosatsu Sangha and the residents here are part of that spirit and sustain it. This year, next year, come to Dai Bosatsu again. We look forward to renewing our bond.



*Jiro-san Andy Afable with wife Kit and daughter Cecile—Thanksgiving, 1996*

*Spring Kessei Opening Day—April 2, 1996*



*In honor of  
Our 20th Anniversary*

*Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji  
Welcomes Your Participation  
in the*

*20th Anniversary Sesshin  
June 26 - July 3*

*and a*

*Special Celebration  
Thursday, July 4, 1996*

*NA MU DAI BO SA*

*For registration call 914-439-4566 or fax 914-439-3119.*



*Shoshanna Susanna Triner on Beecher Lake—Fall 1995*



*Sangen Hiro Tanaka and Seiko Susan Morningstar—March-On Sesshin, 1996*



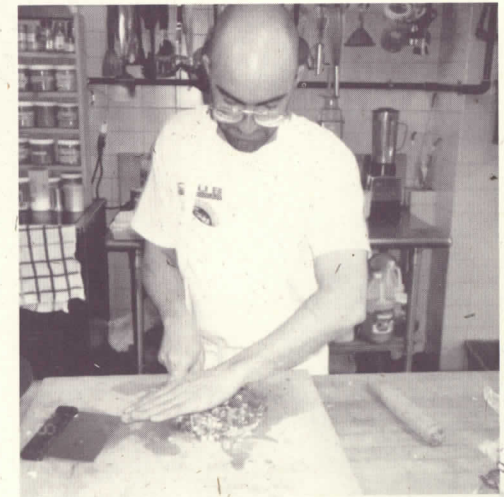
*Jun-san Masazumi Ogasawara and Ed Farrey in the Tenzo—April, 1996*



*Yugen, Hokai, and Tendo—Kessei Closing Sarei, December 1995*



*Fujin Attale Formhals sweeping the furnace room floor—Winter Interim, 1995*



*Doshin David Schubert in the Tenzo—Winter Interim, 1995-96*