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New York Zendo • Shobo-ji

Dai Bosatsu Zendo • Kongo-ji

With the Readiness of Time An Important Announcement

by Eido Shimano Roshi

During the Memorial Day sesshin, one day I delivered a teisho on the Blue Rock Collection, Case No. 11. The main subject goes as follows :

Master Obaku said to his disciples, "You are all sediment eaters. If you continue to be as you are now, how can you realize This Matter. Don't you know that in this great China there is no Zen teacher?"

A monk stood up and asked, "But how about all these Zen teachers who reside in various monasteries and temples? What are they?" Obaku said, "I did not say that there is no Zen, but that there is no Zen teacher."

Obaku's last statement is especially crucial. To state it briefly and directly, from the Zen perspective, from an insightful vista, there is not a thing in this world which is not Zen itself. All external phenomena and internal conditions are nothing but Zen. They go beyond good or bad, not even neutral.



They refuse such dualistic judgements. Each one of us is Zen itself. There is nothing to add, there is nothing to subtract.

If you don't understand this last sentence, I dare say that you don't understand what Zen is all about. What Obaku said was quite right. "I did not say that there is no Zen, but that there is no Zen teacher," and I would like to add that there is no Zen and no Zen student either, as there is nothing to teach, and there is nothing to learn.

Everything is to be regarded as "so-called", such as so-called Me, so-called You, so-called Chair, so-called Table. This is the correct way to point to the essence of being. They are all so-called. But because of the language system, we avoid the use of the adjective, "so-called". The more we repeat Me, You, Chair, and Table, the stronger these preconceived notions become and gradually we are well deceived and start to believe that there is a chair instead of a so-called chair. As the Diamond Sutra says:

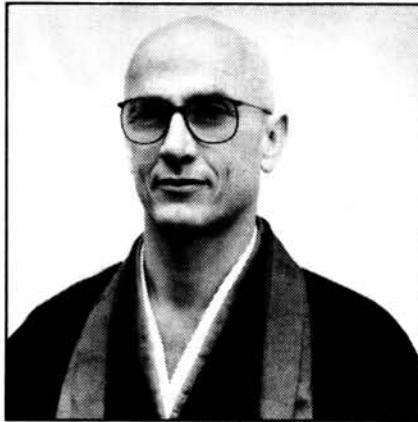
**All composite things are like a dream,
A phantasm, a bubble and a shadow -
Are like a dewdrop and a flash of lightning;
They are thus to be regarded.**

The same is true of a Zen teacher. They are all so-called Zen teachers or at least it should be stated in quotes, "Zen Teacher". If someone knows this much, he may deserve to be called a Zen Teacher. Please turn to the next page.

Announcement

With the readiness of time, I shall now make a public announcement: on the last day of the Kongo-Shobo 10 day sesshin, October 11th, a Dharma Transmission Ceremony will take place at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and Junpo Denis Kelly will become my Dharma heir. Needless to say, from a relative standpoint, nobody is perfect. We are all working on it, we are all "Not Yet". But at the same time, some of us are ready to "teach" and some of us are qualified to be so-called "teachers". Junpo has been my student for the past 13 years. I know him very well. He is ready.

Some of you may ask, What does it mean to be a Rinzai Zen Dharma heir? First, let me say that there is a big difference between the Rinzai Zen



tradition and the Soto Zen tradition. I can only speak of the Rinzai Zen tradition. In Rinzai Zen, a Dharma heir is one who has gained genuine insight,

who has completed the required koan studies, and who has certain knowledge of Buddhism, far more than average. A person who knows generosity and compassion and has attained a degree of maturity as a human being. And most importantly, enigmatically there is some element that cannot be expressed in language. Some people call it Karma, but it defies specification; it cannot be named.

It is not me, but through me, that Dharma decides. Somehow with the readiness of time, Junpo is to be my Dharma heir and is charged with the responsibility to carry this heavy Hakuin, Torei, Gempo, Soen lineage. I trust that it will flourish under his care.

On December 8, the last day of Rohatsu sesshin, I shall conduct an official acknowledgement ceremony for three Dharma Teachers, in their presence at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. They are :

Aiho Yasuko Shimano, the Director of New York Zendo Shobo-ji,

Roko Sherry Chyatt, the Head of the Syracuse Zen Center,

Agetsu Agatha Wydler Haduch, of the Rinzai Zen Society, Zurich, Switzerland.

They are all long time dedicated Zen students and more importantly they have achieved insight. They know that everything is to be regarded as "so-called" and they have demonstrated a willingness to give their lives to the Dharma. In addition, they have within their characters the gift of leadership. However, as it stands now, they are not yet my Dharma heirs. Maybe someday. Maybe not. Nobody knows; only Dharma knows.

But at least with the readiness of time, it is with great confidence that I make this public announcement that the above named students will be regarded as Zen Teachers starting on December 8, 1992, after the ceremony at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. They are Zen Teachers acknowledged by me, the Abbot of The Zen Studies Society, although their organizations, except for the Shobo-ji, remain completely independent.

In November, during the Harvest Sesshin, I will conduct a Jukai ceremony, which officially names those who are to become so-called Zen Buddhists. The future of Zen in the West will be very much aided by their dedication, and they too may become future Zen teachers.

It's been over 30 years since I came to the United States. I established New York Zendo Shobo-ji and Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji with the help of many people. And that itself was a miracle, but my mission does not end with just a physical establishment. I feel that my further responsibility is to build a solid foundation for the future of Zen in the West.

I have no immediate plans to retire as the Abbot of either Zendo. I will continue my current work until the readiness of time dictates otherwise. All ordained and senior students will remain as my students and I will be responsible for their training. I am aware that a few individuals are seriously considering to be ordained at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. As they are already practicing under me, their training and ordinations will go forward as originally expected.

After October 11th, however, all new students at Dai Bosatsu Zendo will be trained by Junpo. As my Dharma heir, he will be called Junpo - Shi. From October 11, Aiho, Roko, and Agetsu will be called Aiho-san, Roko-san and Agetsu-san.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the end of my important announcement.

Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Gassho,
Eido Tai Shimano, Abbot