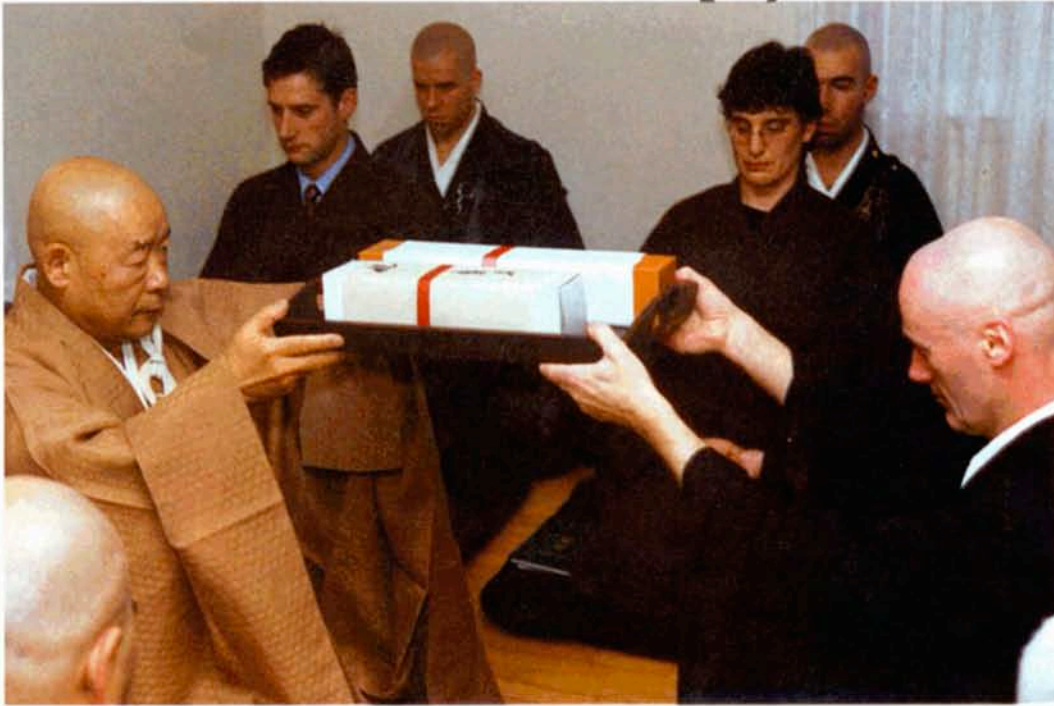


MahaSangha News SPRING 2003



Eido Shimano Roshi and Denko Mokudo John Mortensen performing the inka ceremony at Pine Hill Zendo.

THIRD WESTERNER TO BECOME RINZAI ZEN MASTER

Last November, Denko John Mortensen, abbot of Pine Hill Zendo in Katonah, New York, became the third Westerner to receive *inka* in the Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition. Denko joins Roko Sherry Chayat, abbot of Syracuse Zen Center, and Jiro Osho Fernando Afable, vice abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo in Livingston, New York, as teaching heirs in the lineage of Eido T. Shimano Roshi. Denko Mortensen was installed as abbot of Pine Hill Zendo when it opened in 2000. The *inka*, or "seal of approval," ceremony signifies that the teacher is satisfied with the authenticity of the student's insight. "With this approval, the student becomes a master and is thus prepared to teach the next generation," explained Mortensen. Eido Roshi, abbot of Dai Bosatsu Monastery, officiated at the ceremony with senior members of Pine Hill Zendo and monks and nuns from Dai Bosatsu.

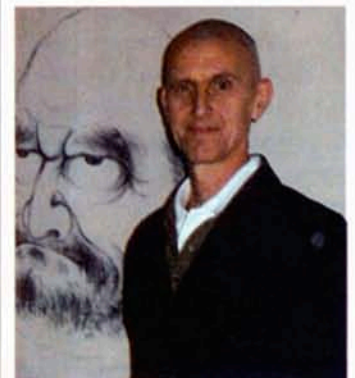
■ The first phase of Rochester Zen Center's rural **CHAPIN MILL RETREAT CENTER** was completed just in time for its first sesshin in September, after five years in the making. The 135-acre country property, located near Batavia, New York, was donated to RZC by Ralph Chapin, one of its founding members. Construction began in 2000 on the residential facility, which includes a large commercial kitchen, dining hall, multi-

purpose room, and an open space designed for yoga that is currently serving as the zendo until the building's next stage is completed. ■ In April, Soto Zen priest **SHOHAKU OKUMURA** will say goodbye to the West Coast and head to Bloomington, Indiana, to help establish a permanent home for the Sanshin Zen Community. Rev. Okumura spent three years as head teacher for the Minneapolis Zen Meditation Center and five as

the director of education for the Soto Zen Education Center (now the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center). Sanshin Zen Community's new practice facility, Shobo-zan Sanshin-ji (True Dharma Mountain Sanshin temple) will be completed in June. ■ Now more than halfway toward the initial fundraising target of \$250,000, construction on the **VAJRA VIDYA RETREAT CENTER** in Crestone, Colorado, will begin in April. Built on land

donated to Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, the facility will fulfill his wish to offer American students a place to practice: "Over the years many of my students have expressed a wish to do extended practice. Up until now I have only been able to say, 'That is very good. Please go and do that at home.' Now things are about to change." Designed for long-term practice of varying lengths, Vajra Vidya will also accommodate lay students who will complete the traditional Tibetan three-year retreat. The \$750,000 building will eventually have twenty-two rooms for retreatants and retreat masters.

■ If you're planning to visit New York this fall, you might want to schedule your trip to coincide with that of **HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA**, who will give a talk in Central Park on September 21. His next North American visit will be to Toronto in April-May 2004, when he will give the Kalachakra initiation. ■ **RYUSHIN PAUL HALLER** succeeds **ZENKEI BLANCHE HARTMAN** this spring as co-abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center. Zenkei Blanche Hartman stepped down in February after seven years as co-abess. ●



Ryushin Paul Haller