

Eido Shimano

March 2, 2013

To Genki Zenji Dai Osho

Only a few days ago, I came back from Japan.

The first news I got at JFK was your departure. As the news was so shocking, I could not find any appropriate words to express my inner feelings. It was totally impossible to share my sadness, neither in Japanese nor in English. It was simply sad.

As you recall, 58 years ago, in 1955, there was a big ceremony at Shogen-Ji and a huge sesshin was held to express Dharma gratitude to Kanzan Egen Zenji, the founder of Shogen-Ji. Many unsui monks came from all Rinzai monasteries of Japan.

Unlike nowadays, each monastery had at least 20-30 unsuies. Therefore, only 2 from each monastery was sent to Shogen-Ji. You were chosen to be one of the representatives from Daitoku-Ji. I was chosen from Ryutaku-Ji. This selection was the beginning of our Karmic encounter. If the Roshi or Shikaryo chose someone else, not you or me, we never would have known each other. Not only were we chosen, but also the Dharma arranged to have us sit next to each other on the tanto line of Shogen-ji Zendo. This was the beginning of second step of our Karmic relationship. At that time, who would have ever thought that both of us would come to the United States to teach? You settled in the West Coast and I settled in the East Coast. Not only that, many of your students came to DBZ to study and practice. Whenever I think of you, I cannot help but to think about that sesshin at Shogen-Ji 58 years ago. This must be really deep, strong, inseparable Karmic relationship far beyond our rational comprehension.

You came to DaiBosatsu a few times and gave me many tea bowls of which you made. Even though we didn't speak with each other over the phone every month or write so often, there was strong support knowing that there was another Japanese Rinzai teacher who gave his life for the transmission of Buddha Dharma to the West. Three of us, namely you, Sasaki Roshi and myself were like the legs of a tripod, and you were the youngest. Now only two of us are left. No Japanese Rinzai monk or teacher is interested to come to America, at least for now. Your departure made me feel extremely lonely. However, this too must be the arrangement of the Dharma. So I have no choice but to accept it.

I have been chanting Daihishu for you. I understand that on April 21st, Daibosatsu Mandala Day, there will be the 49th day memorial service for you in Seattle. On that day, I will be in Istanbul, Turkey, doing Sesshin. I will mention this during Teisho and together, with all participants, we do a special ceremony for you.

“Where are you from? And where will you go?” These two are the most fundamental questions for all human beings. May your transmigration journey go smoothly without much disturbances. And, someday I will join you on your pilgrimage.

Gassho

Eido [nine times bows]

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