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MEMORIAL EDITION FOR SOEN ROSHI

A man who looks like our Patriarchs-
Bodhidharma, Rinzai, Hakuin- I don't know-
Passed over the ice of Dai Bosatsu Lake
Without leaving a trace.



MITTA KUTSU SOEN GENJU ZENJI DAI OSHO

MARCH 19, 1907 - MARCH 11, 1984

ON SOEN

by Eido Roshi

On March 11th my teacher, Soen Nakagawa Roshi, passed away at Ryutaku-Ji Monastery in Japan. On March 19th, he would have been seventy-eight years old. Because he was a man of such extraordinary vitality and energy, I was truly shocked to hear of his death. With his passing there goes a very special personality, a powerful karmic energy which attracted good and evil, joy and sorrow far more dramatically than the ordinary person. Naturally, his death has caused me to reflect on our long experience together; our relationship spanned thirty-one years, and my memories seem inexhaustible.

I vividly recall our first encounter; I was a young monk attending several Roshis in a room filled with lively conversation. Some were smoking, and all seemed absorbed in their various discussions, and as I offered tea, none took particular notice of me, none except Soen Roshi who put his palms together in silence and gratitude. This simple gesture made a very deep impression on me, and shortly thereafter, I became his student and remained at Ryutaku-Ji under his guidance for eight years.

His way was really quite unique, he was not at all typical of the Rinzai Zen Masters. For instance, unlike most, he ate with his monks, attended morning service, and did zazen with all the rest. Ordinarily, there would have been a separation, but this aloofness did not appeal to him in the least. Neither did the systemization of the monk's "education;" although tradition called for the completion of 1,700 koans, Soen Roshi said that he completed only 500 and that he considered even this excessive. He would say, "If you truly understand MU, then come to dokusan with a pencil and paper and I will give you all the answers!"

While I was with him at Ryutaku-Ji, his style was very polite, not overtly demanding or harsh. Unlike his teacher, Gempo Roshi, he would not scold or shout at his monks. There was an event which must have made a very great impression on Soen Roshi because he mentioned it to

me on several occasions. He and Gempo Roshi were once aboard a very crowded train, the passengers were pressed together, and so Gempo Roshi made himself as small and as inconspicuous as possible. Soen Roshi, on the other hand, sat doing zazen in full lotus in the midst of the crowd. Later, at the monastery Gempo Roshi said in a powerful voice, "Soen! What's the matter with you?! Do you think that was zazen? Under such a circumstance, zazen must take another form!" To be scolded made Soen Roshi very angry, so he went out for a walk until he came to a quiet pool, a Shinto shrine. There he took off his clothes and plunged in, and after a strong swim, he felt purged of his anger-- Purified. Even when he was fifty years old, he was scolded by his teacher! But this style Soen Roshi did not retain. Rather, he used more subtle means to guide and activate his monks. He used manipulation to create competition amongst us. It was not so clear at the time, but now we can look back and laugh to realize his skillful means to inspire great efforts in us.

A portrait of Soen Roshi reveals a character of great originality and complexity, one truly impossible to pin down. Colorful stories about him are abundant. What tends to emerge from the stories of American students is a picture of a rather eccentric and unpredictable Zen Master. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that Japan's cultural restraints were lifted in America, and his spontaneity and vibrant enthusiasm were given free rein. The stories of his nocturnal revelries, especially during a full moon, are innumerable. In Jerusalem in 1968, excited and unable to sleep, he danced continuously for three days and nights. And once late at night in New York, filled with curiosity and energy, he went out into the streets and returned in the morning with a story of the beauty of the moon and how he had danced on Second Avenue with the newspapers as they were blown in circles by the wind. On such a night he would instruct us to look up and open our mouths, and inhale the moon's energy. The sacred things of the night he taught me and the secular as well. His curiosity was boundless, and so we gambled in Las Vegas and visited a strip-tease and a discotheque there. His free spiritedness sometimes led to rather awkward and comical scenes, like the trip that we once took out west. There were four of us-- Soen roshi, a driver, a monk, and myself. Soen suddenly ordered the driver to pull over. He got out, took off his clothes,



Soen Roshi and Eido Roshi at the grave of Nyogen Senzaki, their last visit together. August 1982.

and eased into a hot spring. The rest of us joined in and had a very nice time, but then Soen Roshi decided that it would be exhilarating for the four of us to run naked in the sun, so off he went with the three of us in tow. In this condition who should appear but a highway patrolman. As usual, I was told to offer the explanation, and so I did. As I recall, it was something about an esoteric Japanese ritual, but at any rate, we got back into the car, and off we went.

It was only in America that Soen Roshi spoke to me at length about his life, about his early

days, his memories and experience. We would sit together with a whiskey or beer, and he would talk for hours and hours. Once from Yokohama to Seattle, a voyage of two weeks, he discoursed continuously. Our formal dokusans of the past became spontaneous Dharma dialogues; once on a stroll down Fifth Avenue he said, "What do you think about 'Everyday is a good day?'" I replied, "Today is March 13th." I remember how he smiled and squeezed my hand. Another time as we discussed Nietzsche I asked, "Is God dead or alive?" and he replied, "That which was never born cannot die." Soen Roshi- Always testing, probing, challenging your understanding of This Matter.

But the rather common epithet "eccentric" would have been highly inappropriate and inaccurate had it been used to describe him earlier in his life. When I was with him at Ryutaku-ji, Soen Roshi was quite subdued, not at all unconventional, not at all so volatile and full of surprises. It is clear that a remarkable change took place in him during the early sixties. One important event took place in 1962- a very sad and unfortunate

accident. All that we know is that he received a blow on the back of his head. Why or how it happened Soen Roshi never told; always he would say, "I will tell you later," but I knew that he would not, and he never did. This injury, however, caused him great pain, and he only found relief with alcohol. As a result of this pain and increasing use of pain killer, he began to take long, solitary retreats into his room. Those who knew Soen Roshi at this time were confused by the change that was taking place. The more familiar and stable persona alternated with the emerging eccentric nature until the Soen Roshi that we know now predominated. Two other important events took place during this period of transition; one was the death of his mother who lived at Ryutaku-ji, and the other was the death of Gempo Roshi. Surely these events contributed to the evolution of Soen Roshi, but whatever the combination of causes, it is clear that a dramatic change took place in him at that time.

But though his style of expression transformed, his intensity, keen intelligence and memory remained with him always. Soen Roshi was a most appropriate man to aid in the transmission of Buddhism to the West. His background and understanding of classical Japanese culture was deep, and his own stature as a haiku poet is well established. I asked him once which of his haiku did he feel was best. Without hesitation he replied:

Hana No Yo No
Hana No Yoh Naru
Hito Baka Ri

All beings are flowers blossoming
In a blooming Universe

Soen Roshi was drawn to study the culture of the West as well, in particular its literature, music, and philosophy. His love of Beethoven, Dante, Goethe, and Schopenhauer are very well known. His first encounter with Beethoven was when he was a youngster in the ninth grade. He and some of his friends pooled their money to buy a recording of Beethoven's Ninth which had just been introduced to Japan. They played it for days on a crank gramophone with a bamboo needle. He was enthralled and said that its power and beauty made his body shiver.

On one occasion I asked him why he loved Dante so, and he replied that he was in love with Beatrice and would go to Heaven and Hell with her. "In fact," he said, "I have gone to Heaven and Hell many times." I recall so well how we once read the "Divine Comedy" to each other aboard an airliner en route to some place or another.

The works of Goethe he had studied in German. And, of course, it was Faust that he loved particularly. To enact scenes from this great drama, he created a Noh presentation that he called "The Ghost of Faust." Usually he would appear in a very subdued light wearing a garment with a cowl, and beneath this he'd wear a Noh Mask with an expression of torment. He would announce, "I am the ghost of Faust," and then he would deliver one of the plays famous passages, most notably:

I have, alas! Philosophy,
Medicine, Jurisprudence, too,
And to my cost, Theology,
With ardent labor studied through.
Here I stand, with all my lore,
Poor fool, no wiser than before.
Magister, doctor styled, indeed,
Already these ten years, I lead,
Up, down, across and to and fro,
My pupils by the nose-- and learn
That we, in truth, can nothing know!

I have been asked if Soen Roshi always seemed so childlike and pure, and certainly there was a dream like quality to him that we associate with youth and innocence. But one of my deepest intuitions about him was that his is an ancient soul, tried and tested and strengthened through many many lives. This impression was very strong and hence, his complexity. I have often said that he was my greatest koan, truly ungraspable. Soen Roshi would say, "If I am caught, it is the end of me." Now that he is gone, I cannot believe it. It is difficult to imagine my adult life without him. Though he was seventy-seven at his death, I feel that his life was full far beyond the years. He savored life and knew how to enjoy it, to appreciate its subtlety, and draw fullness from experience. Once he instructed me in the drinking of a cup of coffee. He would sip the first third plain and black, then he would add a little cream and drink the



INKA: Acknowledgement of
Dharma Transmission from Soen
Roshi to Eido Roshi.

Completely complete.
Now realize!
There is nothing to complete.

second portion. To the final third he would add a little sugar, and thus, in a sense, he'd enjoy three cups in one, and so it was with his life.

So on March eighteenth (in Japan it was the nineteenth, his birthday) the Sangha gathered at New York Zendo Shobo-ji for Soen Roshi's memorial service. I never thought I would conduct it; Sochu Roshi and I agreed that we would die before his death, but when I heard the news, I began to compose a verse for the occasion. Many times I wrote and then erased my feelings, and on the morning of the eighteenth, I was still undecided. Even as the memorial service began and as I stood to offer incense to him, I still was not clear. With a deep breath I began, "To Mitta Kutsu Soen Zenji Dai Osho," and then, spontaneously, the Great Vows for All poured out of me:

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

Afterwards, I realized that I was standing on the very spot where I had stood on the Day of my installation as Abbot of Shobo-Ji. At that time he asked me, "With what Mind do you establish Dai Bosatsu Zendo?," and I replied by reciting the Great Vows for All. Now that he is gone, all we can do is chant Namu Dai Bosa, and recite and practice "Shu Jo Mu Hen Sei Gan Do..." As he would say, "Just march on, March On, MARCH ON!" With this spirit True Dharma will march on. With this spirit True Dharma will continue.

* * * * *

I am talking humbly, out of ignorance; indeed, I am the most ignorant, proud monk. Today, we are appearing now in this world, this present human world. So wonderful, this drama! Seeing each other, hating each other, loving each other, this is the world we are making by our own ignorance. This is the present. So we say, "I now confess and purify them all." Yet from the beginning the Dharma is always open.

This Dharma, incomparably profound and minutely subtle, is hardly met with even in hundreds of thousands of millions of eons. We now can see this, listen to this, accept and hold this. May we completely understand and actualize this Tathagatha's true teaching.

My talking is foolish, so be careful. One act is finished. Now the curtain falls, and I too, should disappear!

In the second act, yesterday or today or tomorrow, Rinzai is sleeping in the zendo. Obaku came from his quarters and of course every monk pretended to be wide awake. Obaku, seeing Rinzai asleep, struck the platform once. Rinzai lifted his head and seeing it was Obaku, closed his eyes again. Obaku again struck the platform and went to the upper part of the zendo and seeing the head monk sitting straight said, "That youngster down in the lower part of the zendo is sitting sincerely — what are you doing here, cooking up wild fancies?" And the head monk thought, "What is the old man up to?" This ends the second act. Close your eyes and imagine this drama. No need to see Kabuki! But Kabuki is wonderful too of course. And Noh. And I admire the wonderful actors in New York very much.

There are so many pleasures in life! Cooking, eating, sleeping, every deed of everyday life is nothing else but This great Matter. Realize this! So we extend tender care with a worshipping heart even to such beings as beasts and birds — but not only to beasts, not only to birds, but to insects too, okay? Even to grass, to one blade of grass, even to dust, to one speck of dust. Sometimes I bow to the dust.

"When I pick up one particle of dust, all nations are united."



Soen Roshi by Beecher Lake

IKITE KONO
AOBA WAKABA NO
HI NO HIKARI

Alive!
The light of the sun
In new green leaves

ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY NEWS

It was resolved by the Board Of Trustees that beginning January 1, 1984 three Executive Committees would be created to direct the activities of The Zen Studies Society. The purpose is to allow each part to grow and mature independently of the others so that each may more fully realize its individual goal. The committees are:

THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY EDUCATIONAL FUND; it will provide support for educational activities that will promote the understanding of Zen Buddhism in the West.

THE NEW YORK ZENDO SHOBO-JI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; this committee will create and activate programs to insure and further the opportunities for those in the New York City area to practice and study Zen Buddhism. It is also responsible for the operation and maintenance of the 67th Street building.

THE DAI BOSATSU ZENDO KONGO-JI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; this committee will be the governing and decision making body of the Dai Bosatsu Zendo community and it will be responsible for the maintenance of the monastery and its 1,400 acres.

The committee chairmen were appointed by Eido Roshi, and they are: Muso David Leddick for the ZSS Educational Fund, Genro Lee Milton for New York Zendo Shobo-ji Committee, and Bugyo David Schnyer for Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji.

THE SOEN ROKU

The Soen Roku, a record of the life and teachings of Soen Nakagawa Roshi, is now being compiled for eventual publication; Eido Roshi will act as its editor. Any who knew Soen Roshi and would like to contribute a memory, a story, or an article should please mail them to Genro Lee Milton at New York Zendo at your earliest convenience. March 11, 1985 is the date projected for the completion of the project.

YAMA SUZUSHI
HOMO IMA YA
NISHI HIGASHI

Coolness in a Mt. Temple
Dharma net now spread ya
East and West

HATSU BOTARU
KANASHIKI MADE NI
HIKARU NARU

First firefly-
Sad ,so sad
Tries in vain to light
The World

ZENDO NO
NAKA NIMO MAINU
YU MOMIJI

Evening-
Even into the zendo
They dance,
The red maple leaves

NANATSU BOSHI
JUHYO NO UEO
ARIKU NA RU

In Winter,
The Seven Stars
Walk upon a chrystal
Forest

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NEW YORK ZENDO

The New York Zendo Shobo-Ji is the city center of the Zen Studies Society. Its schedule is designed to meet the needs of those who wish to practice Buddha Dharma with others in a clear and intensive atmosphere but whose daily lives are devoted to work, family, or school.

New York Zendo offers two five-month training periods annually, and during this time, it provides a very full schedule of zazen activity. Those who are just beginning and those who have never attended New York Zendo before are asked to attend Thursday evening public meetings for zazen instruction and zendo orientation; also on Thursday night a talk will be given by Eido Roshi, a senior student, or a guest speaker. Students who have attended at least three of these meetings are invited to attend the meetings listed below.

DAILY ZAZEN SCHEDULE

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	6:00-7:45*		7:00-9:00
Tuesday	6:00-7:45	2:00-4:00	
Wednesday	6:00-7:45		7:00-9:00
Thursday	6:00-7:45		7:00-9:00
Friday	6:00-7:45		7:00-9:00
Saturday	-----	-----	-----
SUNDAY	9:00-12:00		

*Doors will open forty-five minutes ahead of scheduled sittings; a three dollar donation is asked of all non-members. All donations are tax deductible.

New York Zendo Shobo-Ji Schedule for Second Training Period 1984

In addition to the daily zazen schedule, New York Zendo will conduct Kesshu and Weekend Sesshin. Kesshu is a 9am-5pm zazen meeting; unless otherwise announced, students will be responsible for providing their own lunch. Weekend Sesshin is highly recommended for all but especially for those who wish to experience something of the intensity of the longer sesshins at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Weekend sesshins are conducted by Eido Roshi and include zazen, dokusan (private interviews with the Roshi), and Teishos (formal talks by the Roshi). Weekend Sesshins begin at 6pm on Friday and end at 6pm on Sunday. The resident should be notified of your intention to attend at least one week in advance.

- August 3.....Second Training Period Begins
- Aug. 12.....Shobo-Ji Day Kesshu*
- Aug. 26.....Zazen Workshop (Lunch Served)**
- September 14-16.....Shobo-ji Anniversary Weekend Sesshin
- October 7.....Bodhidharma Day Kesshu (Lunch Served)
- November 9-11.....November Weekend Sesshin
- December 15 & 16.....Zen Art Sale
- Dec. 21.....Training Period Ends

Weekend Sesshin Fee Schedule

	Members	Non-Members
Full-Time	\$35	\$45
Part-Time	\$25	\$30

*Shobo-ji Day will be celebrated every month on the Sunday nearest the 15th. The sittings will be from 9am-5pm.

**The cost for non-members is \$10 and \$5 for members.

To become a member of New York Zendo, students must fulfill the requirements of provisional membership. To be accepted into this program, students must attend at least ten Thursday evening public meetings.* At the end of each training period, those who wish to join the provisional student class may apply. Provisional students are required to attend all Friday evening zazen meetings for one training period. The first Friday of each month will be devoted to practical training (zazen, sutra memorization, general orientation). Other Friday classes will be devoted to Buddhist studies, and the general public is invited to attend these. It is mandatory that provisional students attend the training period workshop (see schedule), and they are strongly encouraged to attend at least one weekend sesshin. A formal acknowledgement of the completion of requirements will occur at the end of the training period.

New York Zendo Notes

The election for the New York Zendo Executive Committee was held in January. Elected were: Korin Sylvan Busch, Seisen Norah Messina, Yayoi Karen Matsumoto, Shori Christine McKenna, Kuya Stephen Busch, Soshin Lynn Thomas, and Hinju James Juszczyk. Aiho Yasuko Shimano was appointed Treasurer by Genro Lee Milton.

Planning for the 1984 Zen Arts Sale is already underway; the New York Zendo Committee is taking responsibility for its creation and operation.

The 1985 calendar will be devoted to the calligraphy of Soen Nakagawa Roshi. Some of his finest work is being selected from The Zen Studies Society collection. Yayoi Karen Matsumoto has been appointed its chief designer.

* * * * *

*If your work precludes Thursday night attendance, then another zazen meeting may be substituted. See Genro.

"Everyone," it is said, "should find the heart of the Buddha in his own heart." Not by turning away from reality but only by surrendering himself to it can Man achieve salvation. In accordance with this, Zen cloisters are not places of contemplation for individuals but fellowship settlements of landworkers; the work is the foundation of their life. It is told of the Patriarch, who founded this way of life in the eighth century, that when the monks besought him to tell them the secret Truth, he commanded them to go to work in the fields, and he said that he would speak to them after their return. When they came back from their labor, he went out to meet them, spread out his arms, and pointed at them.

MARTIN BUBER
"Zen and Hasidism"

DAI BOSATSU ZENDO NOTES

The Spring Kessei began on the 27th of March with a four day orientation Sesshin. The Sesshin served to lay a strong foundation for the coming three months of training. Eleven students are here along with staff members, Bugyo David Schnyer, Zenrin Robert Lewis, Kanna Gus Ballard, Kogen Mike Raftery, Reimyo Rosa Nacach, Gatto Prescott Reiner, and Reiho Ellen Meyers. We're experimenting with a new daily schedule, lengthening the morning work period and deleting the afternoon work for greater efficiency. This leaves an uninterrupted block of time in the afternoon for individual pursuits. Organized activities offered by staff members include Buddhist studies, Shiatsu, Yoga, and Zazen. The texts for group study with the Roshi this Kessei are Hakuin's "The Song of Zazen", and Bassui's "Dharma Talk on One Mind". A full day offers a good balance of zazen, work, study, and dokusan.

Arriving almost at the same time as the beginning of the Spring Kessei was the Maple Syrup Season. The weather has been almost ideal for a very productive season. Over 1000 trees have been tapped. As usual DBZ is offering syrup in very attractive glass containers for gifts or personal

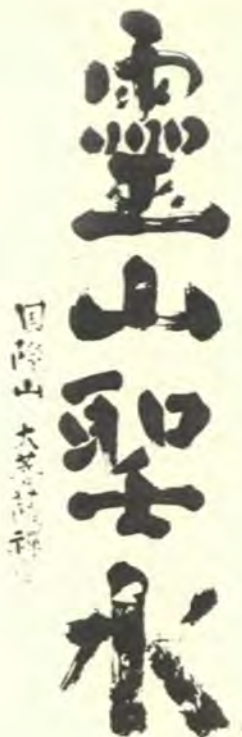
use. Please send \$4.00 for each 8oz container and \$6.00 for each 16oz size. Postage is paid.

The April Sesshin from April 21st to the 28th is being dedicated to Soen Roshi and named HO ON sesshin. HO ON means to "repay with gratitude" Soen Roshi for the immeasurable support he gave to all American Dharma Brothers and sisters. This is our very small way to offer thanks.

This summer promises to be a very active one. At the close of the July 4th sesshin Roshi plans to bury the ashes of Nyogen Sensaki and Soen Roshi, the two honorary founders of Dai Bosatsu Zendo in Sangha Meadow. The Guest House opens on the 5th of July, once again offering people a special kind of vacation in a special kind of atmosphere. The traditional O-Bon festival will be on the 11th of August and the Shiatsu Education Center of America will hold it's annual workshop at Dai Bosatsu from August 27th to September 5th. The summer interim is a good chance for students to visit and take part in the monastery activities on a less formal basis and for more flexible periods of time. The dates and fee schedule are included below. Take advantage of us!

Bugyo David Schnyer and Reimyo Rosa Nacach have made plans to be married this summer, a date has not been set.

Roshi asks that we mark our calendars for a special tenth Anniversary Sesshin on July 4th 1986. Plan ahead.



SPIRITUAL MOUNTAIN
SACRED WATERS
NAMU DAI BOSATSU ZENDO

DAI BOSATSU ZENDO SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES
1984

- MAY 26- JUNE 2.....MEMORIAL DAY SESSHIN
- JUNE 8-10.....SPRING KESSHU (ZAZEN WORKSHOP)
- JUNE 27- JULY 4.....ANNIVERSARY DAY SESSHIN
- JULY 5.....SPRING KESSEI ENDS
SUMMER INTERIM BEGINS
GUEST HOUSE OPENS
- AUGUST 11.....O-BON
- AUGUST 27-SEPT. 5.....SHIATSU WORKSHOP
- SEPTEMBER 19.....SUMMER INTERIM ENDS
FALL KESSEI BEGINS*
- SEPTEMBER 22-29.....GOLDEN WIND SESSHIN
- OCTOBER 12-14.....FALL KESSHU (ZAZEN WORKSHOP)
- OCTOBER 27-NOV. 3.....HARVEST SESSHIN
- NOVEMBER 30-DEC. 8.....ROHATSU SESSHIN
- DECEMBER 10.....FALL KESSEI ENDS

*Applications now being accepted

DAI BOSATSU ZENDO SCHEDULE OF FEES

- KESSHU (ZAZEN WORKSHOP).....\$75.00
- KESSEI.....FIRST KESSEI, \$1000
SECOND KESSEI, \$700
THIRD KESSEI, \$500
- SESSHIN.....SANGHA, \$180. OTHERS, \$210
- ROOM AND BOARD.....SANGHA, \$18/DAY. OTHERS \$20/DAY
- GUEST HOUSE RATES.....\$50/DAY SINGLE OCCUPANCY
\$90/DAY DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
WEEKLY RATES 6 DAYS

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Dear Friends,

We hope to publish The Zen Studies Society Periodical on a quarterly basis. For the next few issues, it is our intention to introduce Zen Masters of the past hundred years whose lives and thought are little known or not known at all in the West.

Though the cost of publication is high, we prefer not to ask a subscription fee. Instead, we hope voluntary contributions will make it possible for us to develop this publication for the dissemination of Zen thought and practice in America.

Please make your checks payable to The Zen Studies Society, and send them to the attention of Genro Lee Milton at the New York Zendo Shobo-Ji.

Thank you very much,
Genro Lee Milton
Editor

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