

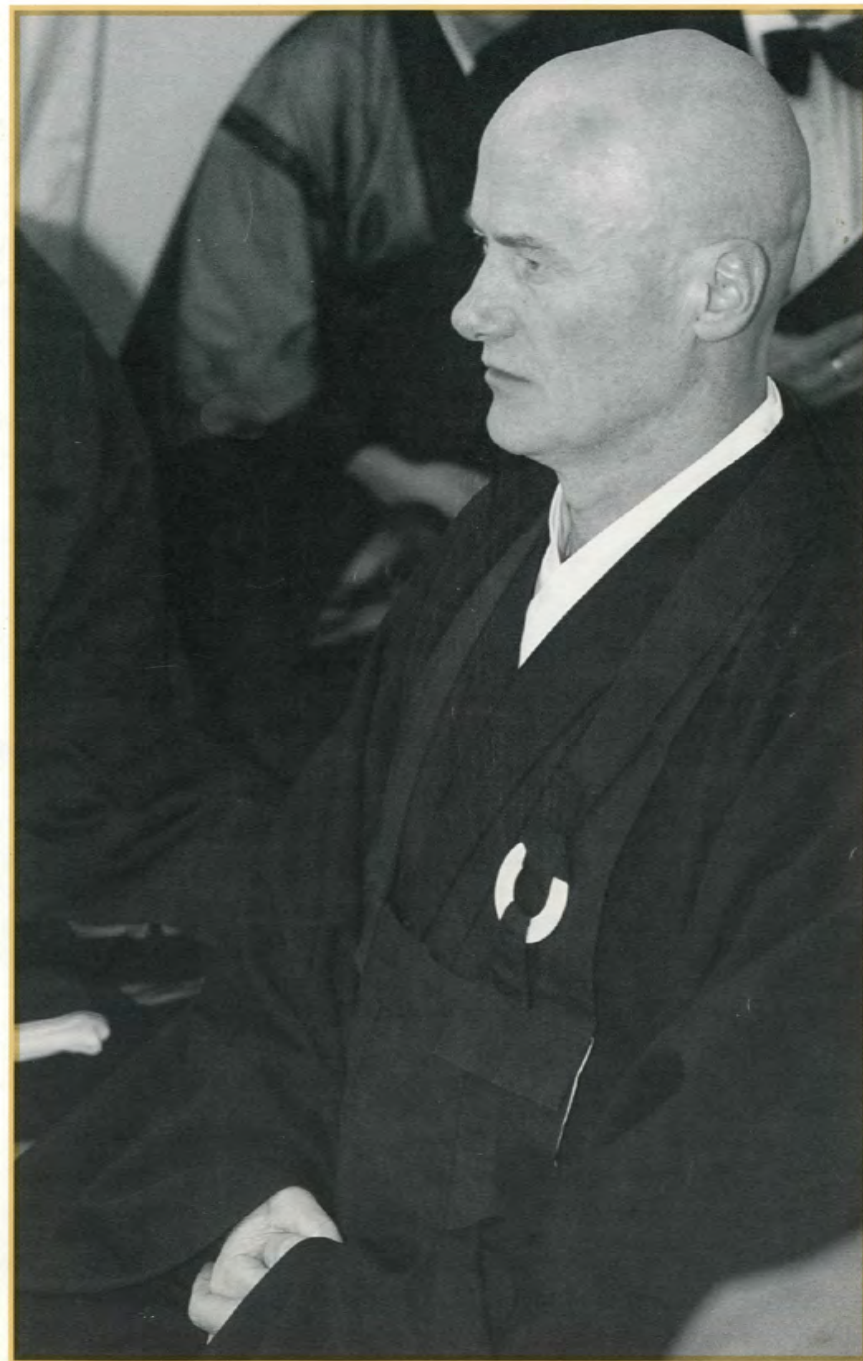


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**Denko Osho John Mortensen is the new
Vice-abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo.**



Calligraphy by Eido Roshi

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven;
A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up
that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace
and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

A time to change.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

The announcement of Denko Osho John Mortensen as the new Vice-abbot of DBZ, to replace Jiro Osho Fernando Afable was formally and publicly made on April 12, at the close of Holy Days Sesshin in Dai Bosatsu Zendo. For more information please see page 16.

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Renunciation

By Eido T. Shimano Roshi

From a teisho given on December 7, 2002-
Rohatsu Sesshin, Day 7
-Rinzai Roku: Teachings, Chapter 19



"Followers of the Way, he who is a renouncer of home ought to practice. Take this mountain monk for example. In the past I studied the Vinaya intensively and I also researched the sutras and shastras.

Later I realized that these were mere prescriptions of medicine and shallow descriptions. Eventually I relinquished them all, searched for the way and started to practice Zen.

Later I met outstanding teachers. At last my Dharma eye became clear. Thus I could discern all kinds of teachers under heaven and tell the true one from the fake. This discerning eye was not with me when I was born from my mother but rather after extreme discipline and ceaseless investigations, one day all of a sudden, I could clearly see who I am. Followers of the Way, if you want to attain right understanding, simply do not be deceived by others. Whether you are facing internally or externally, whatever you meet, kill it. If you meet a Buddha, kill the Buddha. If you meet a patriarch, kill the patriarch. If you meet an arhat, kill the arhat. If you meet your parents, kill your parents. If you meet your relatives, kill your relatives. Then for the first time you will attain true emancipation by not clinging to anything. How can you not pass through freely?"

According to the Eastern Buddhist tradition, December 8th is the day Shakyamuni Buddha attained great enlightenment for us all some 2500 years ago. This is called Jodo E. In the case of Christmas, for example, everybody knows that Jesus Christ was not born on December 25th; Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment day is not necessarily on December 8th. Every morning we chant, "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 Tathagata's true meaning." So it is not necessarily 2500 years ago on December 8th or hundreds of thousands, of countless of kalpas ago. In fact true Jodo E is right this moment. Thus the awakening of Shakyamuni Buddha and our Dharma eye opening come together.

However, the location where Shakyamuni Buddha's awakening took place was Bodh-gaya in Northern India. I was there a few times. Each time I was overwhelmed. Knowing that this is the place where Buddhism was born, it is appropriate for me to rededicate myself to walk this great path.

This sesshin brought deep understanding to many students. That made me so happy.

Certainly we could requite Shakyamuni Buddha and all other patriarchs. The best way to express our gratitude is to do Rohatsu sesshin year after year and to transmit this tradition to the next generation. It has been an intensive, profound, and quite subtle practice. Someone told me during dokusan - he has been sitting for the past nine years - that today for the first time he felt that he did real zazen. So Bodhidharma's sitting nine years facing the wall is not necessarily Chinese exaggeration. Many of us felt, or feel from time to time, that kind of freshness. This is the taste of zazen.

Master Rinzai said, "Followers of the Way, he who is a renouncer of home ought to practice." This sentence must not be taken lightly. Renunciation and ordination are two different matters. Some of us have done ordination ceremony and became monks and nuns. Shakyamuni Buddha, so far as I know, did not have an ordination ceremony. But he *did* renounce his position and family.

What I am going to tell you now will interpreted by each one of you according to your karma. It must not be judged as good or bad.

Shaving the head is one of the symbols of renunciation. I know someone who renounced and came here to practice zazen. With the readiness of time, he wanted to be ordained. It was done. A few years later, again with the readiness of time, I sent him to Japan. There he renounced his renunciation. This is his karma. Although Master Rinzai said, "He who is a renouncer of home must continue to practice," practice *too* was renounced. What a pity!

I know another person who renounced her profession and she became a Buddhist nun and still continues to practice.

I also know another person whose karma in this lifetime did not allow her to be ordained. However, she renounced the country where she was born and came to America for the Dharma. Her dedication to the Dharma is still fresh. We must remember that Shakyamuni Buddha did not become a monk through ordination ceremony, but through renunciation and constant dedication to the truth.

I can tell you a few more cases, but instead

let me say this much. Particularly to the lay people who came for this Rohatsu sesshin. You sacrificed at least 8 or 10 days - this is not quite renunciation - but you sacrificed your time to be with your family, your time at work and came to do Rohatsu. So in that sense we are all "renouncers of home." We all did Rohatsu sesshin. Nobody dropped out.

In the past, many people asked me to ordain them. And in some cases I had to say, "no." And in some cases I said, "yes." There is no rational explanation for this. It is simply karmic congeniality.

Ordination is a ceremony. Renunciation is a big sacrifice. Strictly speaking renunciation is the requirement for ordination. I tell you this because nowadays some students mix these two important terms up and want to be ordained without renunciation. Shakyamuni Buddha did it the other way around. He renounced but was not ordained.

"Followers of the Way, he who is a renouncer of home ought to practice." Not only zazen. The other day I asked my attendant to tell someone to look under the fireplace where "Zen-dust" has been accumulating. If someone cannot see this dust, I say, "What kind of 'cleaning-Zen' are you doing?" If he or she is a senior citizen and cannot see the dust without glasses, it can be excused. Look at the pagoda at the altar for example! At least one inch off-center! It must be exactly in the center. Setting up the altar is another kind of practice. Sitting down on the cushion is just one of them. Perhaps the easiest one.

Nobody knows what you are thinking, what kind of delusions you have. But "Zen-dust" we can clearly see. An off-center arrangement can also be seen clearly. As soon as I came into the Dharma-hall I immediately noticed it. Discerning eye! It's not something special. "He who is a renouncer of home ought to practice." Walking, sitting, lying down and so on. Master Rinzai said, "Take this mountain monk for example. In the past I studied the Vinaya intensively and I also researched the sutras and shastras." "Vinaya" is the precepts, "sutras" are the written teachings of the Buddha, and "shastras" are the commentaries.

"Later I realized," Master Rinzai continues," that these were mere prescriptions of medicine and shallow descriptions. Eventually I relinquished them all." We often say, "Get rid of your delusions. Forget the past." It is impossible to get rid of one's delusions and to forget the past. And it is especially difficult to "forget the self," as Master Dogen said. The *most difficult* thing is to forget the self, indeed. But how about relinquishment in the sense of studying the Vinaya, sutras and shastras? It is not easy, but relinquishment is possible. It is the relinquishment that shows one's real commitment. "Buddham Saranam Gacchami. Dhammam Saranam Gacchami. Sangham Saranam Gacchami." "I give my life to the Buddha. I give my life to the Dharma. I give my life to the Sangha." This is relinquishment! It is not a ceremonial saying. "Eventually I relinquished them all, searched for the Way and started to practice Zen."

"Later I met outstanding teachers." Due to his relinquishment, the Dharma "arranged" for him to meet outstanding teachers. He met Master Obaku and Master Daigu. (The details of these encounters are in the "Record of Pilgrimages".)

"At last my Dharma eye became clear." Often we chant, "This Dharma incomparably profound and minutely subtle." Profound and subtle. Those of you who are doing koan study know that profound and subtle. At first our understanding is shallow and rough. Years later the same koan can be appreciated on a much deeper level. Still years later the same koan can be seen in an even more profound and subtle way. Then for the first time a koan becomes your flesh and bones.

"Thus I could discern all kinds of teachers under heaven and tell the true one from the fake. This discerning eye was not with me when I was born from my mother. But rather after extreme discipline and ceaseless investigations, one day all of a sudden I could clearly see who I am." Having sat seven days I am sure that everybody would agree with me that Rohatsu is difficult. But all sesshins throughout the year should be done with Rohatsu schedule. Even that is not extreme discipline and ceaseless investigations. These are mere big fancy words. But take them literally. Extreme is extreme!

Discipline is discipline! Ceaseless is ceaseless! Nothing else!

"One day all of a sudden I could clearly see who I am." Like that person who told me that after nine years of sitting he was able to do real zazen. Another person told me this morning that "today after chanting the Diamond sutra for the first time I was able to do zazen." He was not quoting anything. He was using his own words. Not artificially created. It naturally came out. Not only in his case but throughout this sesshin, I was so glad to hear your inner struggle and inner voice. For me the discerning point is whether he or she is quoting or using his or her own words.

As sesshin is nearing to the end – more and more I can hear his or her own words. No quotations! Really fresh. During this sesshin I learned that there are so many ways to express one's real gratitude. If it is a mere quotation it goes something like this: "I am so grateful. Thank you." It somehow does not reach my heart. But your own fresh words penetrate. That's the way to discern. Without being "with-it" and without fresh words, how can you come to the Dokusan room?

I was trained and brought up in the Rinzaï Zen tradition. And it is my hope and my responsibility to transmit this great and authentic tradition to the next generation in the West.

"But rather after extreme discipline and ceaseless investigations, all of a sudden I could clearly see who I am. Followers of the Way, if you want to attain right understanding, simply don't be deceived by others." This doesn't mean to be stubborn. It does not mean don't listen to others. In fact, listen carefully and discern what is useful for you and what is not.

"Whether you are facing internally or externally, whatever you meet, kill it. If you meet a Buddha, kill the Buddha." I trust nobody would take this literally. But as Gempo Roshi often said "the real practice is to tear off your flesh and return it to your mother. Grind your bones and return them to your father." Then, for the first time, you could do real practice. Relinquish, requite, return!

In contrast, "asking for more" doesn't

work! It is an upside down view. "If you meet a Buddha, kill the Buddha. If you meet a patriarch, kill the patriarch. If you meet an arahat, kill the arahat. If you meet your parents, kill your parents. If you meet your relatives, kill your relatives."

In the New Testament, Book of Mathew, there is a similar expression. "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword. So I have come to set man against his father and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter in-law against her mother in-law, and a man's foe will be those of his own household." He did not say, if you meet God, kill God. Compared to Master Rinzaï Jesus Christ was quite mild. But the spirit is there. It's very similar. Kill, or relinquish, or renounce all have the same source. And it requires a deed, not a concept. "Then for the first time you will attain or experience true emancipation" has a profound meaning. You may say, "emancipation, relinquishment, killing, renunciation, detachment ... these are mere words." Yes, these are words. But they can be translated into action.

"By not clinging to anything. How can you not pass through freely?" This is the teaching of Master Rinzaï. Tonight we will sit until midnight in this spirit. And tomorrow morning we will get up at 3 AM. You don't have to sleep or lie down. Final dokusan and then, "Ode to Joy." Real joy. The more you practice, the more you enjoy. And then Jodo E ceremony (Enlightenment ceremony). I guarantee that some of you will cry during "Ode to Joy" and during Jodo E ceremony.

As I said before, it is a ceremony. Everybody knows that Jesus Christ was not born on December 25th. It's a consensus, so people celebrate. In the same way, we agree to do Rohatsu sesshin from Dec. 1st to the morning of Dec. 8th. This, too, is a consensus. The entire world, the global Sangha, does Rohatsu and Enlightenment ceremony. Let us express our heartfelt gratitude to Shakyamuni Buddha whose grinding discipline discovered the Way for us all to follow.

The last is the best. The best is the last. Don't look around. March on, march on.





From a Dharma Talk by Denko Osho given December 6, 2002, sixth day of Rohatsu Sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo Monastery.

MUMONKAN

Case 30

Baso's "This Very Mind Is the Buddha"

**Daibai asked Baso, "What is the Buddha?"
Baso answered, "This very mind is the Buddha."**

Mumon's Comment: If you directly grasp Baso's meaning, you wear the Buddha's clothes, eat the Buddha's food, speak the Buddha's words, do the Buddha's deeds - that is, you are the Buddha himself. However, alas! Daibai misled not a few people into taking the mark on the balance for the weight itself. How could he realize that even mentioning the word "Buddha" should make us rinse out our mouths for three days? If a man of understanding hears anyone say, "This very mind is Buddha," he will cover his ears and rush away.

Mumon's Verse:

The blue sky, the bright day,
No more searching around!
"What is the Buddha?" you ask:
With loot in your pocket, you declare yourself innocent.

Last week, I performed a wedding. The bride was Chinese. Most of the wedding guests were Chinese, probably 30 or more Chinese people. Three generations. I was so surprised to find they were extremely curious about the Buddhist altar we had set up, like they had never seen any Buddhist altar before.

One lady talked a little about Buddhism and then she said: "That's very interesting. I'll find a book and I'll read something about it." (Laughter)

I found out that even the oldest among these three generations of Chinese people in their 70's only vaguely remember that their parents were Buddhist. These are American Chinese. They are not from China. They had no exposure to Buddhism before this wedding.

This made me think how important it is what we're doing up here, and how important it is that we continue it. So it doesn't become extinct.

Here we are . . . the sixth day of sesshin; about one and a half days more. But I should say Part Six of this one day sesshin. Instead I was thinking of calling this week one day, maybe it should be "one sitting". One period of zazen, eight days long.

Something curious happened to me many years ago. I think I was 19 or so. I had a girlfriend for several years and then one day I found out my best friend ran off with her. As you know, when you are young you can be seriously attached, and then also have your emotions go out of balance.

I was totally devastated. I walked around in a fog the rest of the day. It was like someone pulled the rug out from under me and there was nothing underneath. Then at night, I went into the forest and I just started crying . . . kept crying, crying, crying. And I walked deeper and deeper into the forest into some kind of open meadow. Cry, cry, crying. I sat down there and kept crying.

Then apparently at some point I became kind of unconscious. I guess you could say this was what we now know is called "body and mind falling off".

The next thing I became aware of were the stars above me and after that my extremely cold body. And then after that, the problem was no more a problem. It was solved. Actually it dissolved. Somehow everything was just perfectly fine.

So I started walking out of the forest. And I noticed it started getting light, which surprised me. So I looked at my watch and discovered I had been sitting out there for about 4 hours or so. One moment magically turns into four hours, or it's the other way around - I don't know.

But this may be what made Siddhartha Gotama sit down. He had been trying to find out about This Matter for many years. No one could help. He found no help whatsoever. Brahmins and priests could not help. Yoga did not help. Ascetic life did not work either.

So he simply couldn't do anything. . . So I think he just sat down and the next thing you know . . . the Morning Star.

Who knows?

So these eight days - One sitting.

There's a story about a hermit monk. I don't know whether it's a Chinese or Japanese story. But anyway, this hermit monk was cooking his breakfast of rice gruel early in the morning as it was getting light. It was a little too hot to eat, so he took it outside and put it next to himself and said: "Oh, I'll do a moment of zazen while it cools down a little." So after a moment of zazen, he picked up his spoon or chopsticks and looked at this rice gruel and it was all moldy. Apparently he was sitting there for some days.

By now, by this time of sesshin, many of you have already experienced a certain kind of phenomenon; you go into some state where truly both your body and mind are really outside of time and space. Totally outside of time and space for awhile.

Strange.

Anyway, instead of one day, how about one sitting?

So . . . Baso's "This very mind is Buddha."

Daibai asked Baso -- Daibai was a student of Baso at this point -- "What is Buddha?" Baso answered, "This very mind is the Buddha."

We all think we know, don't we? Sentient beings are primarily all Buddhas. But this is theory. We believe in it, but it's theory. And we are here this week, this day, this one sitting to testify - to see whether this is actually so.

I don't know where this expression comes from, maybe the CIA or the government or corporate headquarters. But there are these internal, confidential papers and you get them on a "Need to Know" basis. I think it's the same with what we are trying to get to here. It's on a "Need to Know" basis.

If you really, really need to know, then it's not a problem. Then you know what to do. It's easy. Actually, it's beyond easy and difficult. If you would like to know, then it is difficult, according to your past karma. So if you can live without the answer, then it's difficult - maybe - depending on your karma.

That's why Hakuin is coming up with these artificial things like "Make your mind as an iron wall." If you need to know, no need for that kind of stuff. Need to know means you simply cannot go on living without penetrating This Matter.

To truly penetrate, you have to get to the point where you not only need to know but you need to know to a degree where you are genuinely willing to give your life. Then there is no need for zazen instructions. No need for counting breath or anything like that.

You discover zazen. You discover samadhi and you get to know.

So here we are trying to frustrate people with things like Mu and pain. Pain can be so bad that it makes you need to know.

For many people, I think in one of their first sesshins, probably their first sesshin, they get to a point somewhere in the second day where they say "I can't do this one moment

longer." ... and they want to leave ... but they also say, "I can't leave either". So we get to the point where we are completely blocked. The way Siddhartha Gotama was before he sat down. We cannot go on. It is simply too painful. But we cannot leave. I don't know why, but I cannot leave. Pretty strange. So that kind of tension creates the need to know situation for many people. Pain. So those with pain, you're lucky. Those without pain. Easy zazen. Ah, too bad, maybe next lifetime.

So: what is Buddha? This very mind is Buddha. The reason this is a koan is, of course, because Daibai was awakened by this comment by Baso. He went into the mountains and became a hermit. And that's all he needed to know: This very mind is Buddha.

Therefore if you directly grasp Baso's meaning: you wear the Buddha's clothes, eat the Buddha's food, speak the Buddha's words, do the Buddha's deeds. That is, you are the Buddha himself. So Daibai *did* directly grasp Baso's meaning.

And the meaning is ... It is not what you think it is. It is not "This very mind is Buddha." That's not the meaning. That's just something you think. So you have to sit.

Actually if we move up a little in the case history to Case 33, a monk asked Baso, "What is Buddha?" Baso answered, "No mind, no Buddha."

This is Case 33.

So is Baso really saying something else or is he saying the same thing?

If you trying grasp his words, then the words themselves don't mean anything. It doesn't matter if he says "This very mind is Buddha". Or "no mind, no Buddha." But if we hadn't been sitting here for awhile, then we might have been confused by this. We might say, "What? Baso changed his mind?"

In fact, while Daibai was living out there in the mountains, Baso sent a monk up to check on him one day. The monk asked, "What did you learn from Baso?" Daibai said, "This very mind is Buddha." And then the monk said, "Yeah, but, by the way, Baso changed his mind. He's saying something else these days. Now he's teaching 'No mind, no Buddha.'"

Daibai said "That's OK. Baso can say what-

ever he wants. For me, this very mind is Buddha".

So it doesn't matter what you hear. It doesn't matter what happens, what you see. Shakyamuni Buddha saw Venus, the Morning Star.

It can be the sound of a pebble hitting bamboo, sound of a gong or sutra leader or Baso saying, "This very mind is Buddha." Something triggers our coming to our senses. And that's the point. The point is not what the words might mean conceptually. So one day, something will trigger and we become what is known as "awakened".

I think we all fall into that trap, similar to the one Jiro Osho mentioned from Hakuin's biography. We think we've got something. But it's actually like getting out of jail. A man getting out of jail doesn't *gain his freedom*. Freedom is the natural state. No, he loses his imprisonment.

So no gain, only loss.
Loss.

After all, Mind is empty and Buddha is merely a name given to it.

"However, Daibai misled not a few people into taking the mark on the balance for the weight itself." In other words, don't get fooled by "This very mind is Buddha." Don't get fooled by "No mind, no Buddha."

Actually why don't you just burn your sutra books. And you won't get fooled.

In Case 21, a monk asked Ummon, "What is Buddha?" Ummon replies, "Kanshiketsu!" Today I'll translate that into: "What is Buddha?" Used toilet paper - already used by Daibai.

So watch out.

Therefore, Mumon continues, "How could he realize that even mentioning the word Buddha should make us rinse out our mouths for three days?"

"If a man of understanding hears anyone say 'This very mind is Buddha,' he will cover his ears and rush away."

It is said if you talk about Zen or Buddha,

Buddhism, you will lose your eyebrows. Meaning, it shouldn't be done. Actually it can't be done. It's just impossible.

I remember when I went to Ryutakuji many years ago, I got frustrated because Soen Roshi wouldn't talk about Buddhism and Zen. Impossible man.

First they just stuck me in the zendo without zazen instruction. So after several days I asked Soen Roshi, "How do I do zazen?" He said, "I don't know I haven't found out yet." I think that's the best because we really have to figure it out for ourselves.

And some days later, I asked something about Zen or Buddhism and he said, "why don't you come up to my room this afternoon and we'll talk about it."

He served tea, there were a couple of other people there. We had some strange Japanese cookies. Nowadays, I like them but I wasn't used to all this Japanese stuff in those days. But Soen Roshi never mentioned anything about Zen or Buddhism. Not at all. He talked about the weather, and his aunt coming to visit or something like that. Talked about how to make tea. ... so I guess he still has eyebrows.

Actually the cookies weren't the worse thing I discovered over there. For breakfast, there was something that looked like prunes, stewed prunes. Oh, I love prunes. So I took a big scoop of that. I couldn't understand why the monks looked so surprised.

It was almost pure salt. Impossible to eat, but you had no choice. I had enough salt for six months. Here at Dai Bosatsu Zendo we have umeboshi with our breakfast - not nearly as salty. This was so salty it was crystallized. So I was sitting there chewing on salt.

Very strange experience.

Here at Dai Bosatsu, I see people putting food in whatever size bowl they choose. Apparently monks in Japan cannot do that. I don't remember what it was, but I apparently put something in the wrong sized bowl and all the monks gasped. As if I committed a terrible sin.

So there was one embarrassment after another. I couldn't take it. After a couple weeks I ran out crying and went home to Denmark

and tried to forget all about Zen but I didn't succeed.

Anyway, here's Mumon's verse:

*The blue sky, the bright day
(Laughing: The gray sky, the white snow.)
No more searching around.
What is the Buddha, you ask.
With loot in your pocket, you declare
yourself innocent*

That reminds me of another koan, Case 10: Seizei said to Sozan: "Seizei is utterly destitute. Will you give him support?" Sozan called out, "Seizei!" Seizei responded, "Hai!" Sozan said, "you have finished three cups of the finest wine in Chinese, and still you say you have not yet moistened your lips!"

What is Buddha, you ask. With loot in your pocket, you declare yourself innocent. "In the midst of water, you cry and thirst so imploringly". Why? Why? Why? Does it make sense? You're soaking wet. (Laughs).

At this point in Rohatsu, I know we all enjoy every moment of zazen, so I will let you have some extra moments today.



"Transgression Will Be Wiped Out"

by Roko ni-Osho Sherry Chayat
Excerpted and Revised from Dharma Talk,
Rohatsu Sesshin 2002



Every now and then, someone asks me, "What brought you to Zen?" In a word, I tell them, suffering. It was suffering, in all its many guises, that brought me, at the age of seven or eight, to the discovery that sitting absolutely still could open out into an all-pervading, limitless experience of pure being.

There's a passage in the *Diamond Sutra* that says, "If virtuous men and women are downtrodden, their unfortunate destiny is the inevitable result of karma in their past mortal lives. By virtue of their present misfortunes, the effects of their past will be worked out, and then they will be in the position to realize supreme enlightenment."

Actually, the karma we have accrued in this life is enough, let alone our past mortal lives. This minute is enough. Right now, we can look into all our greed, anger, and folly born of this body, this mouth, this thought.

Upon waking up, the Buddha taught simply this: how to understand suffering, and the root

of suffering; that suffering can cease, and that there is an eightfold path of liberation from suffering. Right in the midst of our complaining and whining, we can encounter this path. All eight aspects of walking this path are none other than what is known as practice: beneficial understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

Putting one foot after the other on this path, in the midst of affliction, we don't inflict our suffering on somebody else. We don't evade it. We don't look for a way out. We don't justify the negative behavior that erupts because we're upset or angry or we're in pain; we see it for what it is. We see it before it erupts. This introspection is the heart of our sitting; it is the gift we can make to all beings. To see affliction as our teacher; to see negative emotions, solid as they may appear, in their fundamental emptiness; to have compassion for ourselves and to have contrition: this indeed is our practice. When we are feeling lost in unbearable suffering, when we are sure that this is hell through and through, we can remember a scroll by Hakuin Ekaku: *Great Hell Bodhisattva*.

What brings us to hell? All the narrow, confined, tiny views of "I"—I am in pain, I have some substance, I have some unchanging identity. As the *Diamond Sutra* puts it, what creates suffering is "cherishing the idea of an ego-entity, a personality, or a separated individuality." If we don't fall back to such self-cherishing, then we won't be deluded by the idea that "I" am a victim, that "I" have some unchanging fixed nature called my suffering. Then, the *Diamond Sutra* tells us, we will have immediate insight, and the Tathagata will recognize us—which means, we will recognize the Tathagata, right here, in ourselves and in each other, directly.

In the wake of September 11, 2001, the federal government established a Department of Homeland Security. But we are all imprisoned, like some perceived terrorists in detention, by our own homeland security systems. We're in for life—we have a life sentence. Our craving for security is the great obstacle to our waking up. The endless process of justifying and defending ourselves, the overwhelming need to protect our limited views about the nature of reality—this is what forms the bars of our self-imposed cell.

At the same time, we're serving for life! Everything we do to ourselves, and in turn to others, can be turned around in this very moment, from upside-down views to beneficial understanding. As the *Diamond Sutra* reminds us, when we are downtrodden and feeling oppressed, we can realize we are the oppressors; we are our own jailors; and in this very realization, our karma is purified. Every sitting, every step presents this opportunity to turn, to look at what is really here, to right our upside-down views so that in the midst of dying, we are being born. In our life sentence, we are serving life. Thus we can stroll freely through whatever comes, whatever difficulties arise. In the midst of whatever affliction "I" may feel, I can remind myself that this "I" is a construction. Who made it? I'm the architect of my life. And also, I can remember, I may be crying in thirst so imploringly, but there's no escaping it—I'm wet, through and through!

This "inevitable result of karma": to this we can say the Verse of Purification over and over again:

*All the evil karma ever committed by me
since of old
On account of my greed, anger, and folly
Born of my body, mouth, and thought
I now confess and purify them all.*

To do true practice is to acknowledge our faults, to acknowledge our weaknesses. Of course, this goes against the prevailing views of our society. Our lawyers tell us, no no! Don't admit to any wrongdoing! You'll lose your case! So what happens when we win? Who suffers? Who loses? Deep down, we know. We can't cheat our karma. What we can do is to feel regret, honestly and openly. There's a big difference between feeling regret, which is based on acknowledging our harmful behavior, and feeling guilt. To feel guilt is to get stuck in self-identity, and it's a secretive, knife-twisting business. To feel regret is to understand that our suffering is "the inevitable result" of our own actions; to see the habitual behaviors that have imprisoned us; and to vow sincerely to be free of them.

When we engage in this kind of introspection, things come up quite unbidden. Not long ago I participated in a workshop with a visiting monk-poet who asked each of us to compose an elegy for someone important to us. I have

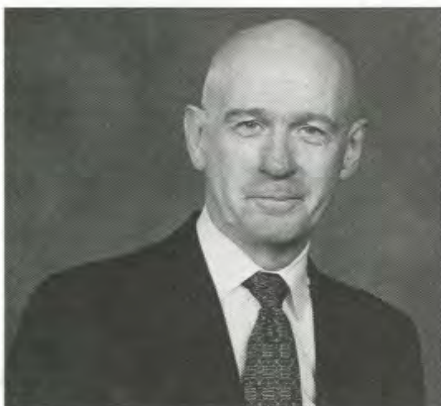
had many people die in my life, but that day, I felt the strong presence of my grandmother, Lillian Wasserman. It was as if she were demanding that I pay attention to an unresolved matter. When my father died, my grandmother took my mother and me into her house. She was truly my savior, lifting me up when I felt thoroughly downtrodden, always there for me. We lived with her until I was four. After my mother remarried and we moved away, I would go to visit her, and we continued in an unparalleled relationship of love. But later, when I went to college, my grandmother fell ill with cancer. She grew weaker and weaker. She lay in bed, first at our house in New Jersey, where my mother took care of her, and then later on at a hospital in the Bronx, and finally, in a nursing home. I visited her now and then, but mostly I was too busy; too greedy for experience. It was a long, withering illness; a slow progression toward a painful death. And I wasn't there.

To recognize that one has not required the unstinting, loving concern shown to us: this is a terrible feeling. There are so many instances in our lives where we blithely go along in a self-obsessed way, and don't see what's being done for us. It happens all the time, with our teachers, our families, our friends. We take so much for granted. How do we requite these gifts that are precious beyond words?

For my grandmother, what can I do now? All I can do is to be to others what she was to me. And of course, the same is true for each one of us. What can we do to repay our debt to our teacher? We can be completely dedicated, awake, diligent, joyful, cheerful—and when something comes that we don't like, OK! No problem! We can refrain from making something out of nothing. We can be grateful to our present misfortunes, acknowledging them as teachers. "By virtue of their present misfortunes, the effects of their past will be worked out, and then they will be in the position to realize supreme enlightenment." We can bow to this process of purification. As we do this, our hearts open wide, and everyone can come in. No one is excluded. When he looked up and saw the morning star, Shakyamuni Buddha said, "I and all beings together are perfect and complete!" This is what we're doing. All beings without exception, together!

Tea for Thousands of Miles

by Zenrin Chido Robert Lewis



Perhaps the family legend about my grandmother helped me begin to respect tea. She was Canadian by birth, which made her all the more English for not being quite English. It seems that she hosted tea in the humid afternoon heat of central Africa. Grandmother was headed (along with several other whites) for the West Coast to cross to safety in the States, fleeing the German wartime menace. Nothing would do but that every day the entire caravan would come to a halt, even in mid-jungle, for the tea. Once their ship was underway, a German raider sank it, and they watched their illusory safety sinking with the ship as they were being taken away to prison in Europe. That devotion to their very-English daily tea was about all they had left.

Driving up to Dai Bosatsu Zendo nearly half a century later, I arrive the night before sesshin begins in order to be rested and ready. And then in the morning there is sure to be morning service, zazen, silent breakfast, morning meeting—and, especially, tea. With Eido Roshi as host, there is enough time but not too much, and neither too much nor too little conversation.

Here in Jacksonville, we meet for tea, with myself as host, every other Sunday following zazen. At times, the conversation is like the music of several instruments, the players easily passing the theme among themselves, neither intimidated by each other nor hustled by some-

where else to go, something else to do. The harmony includes riposte and contrast, and the pauses, like cadences in music, signal that something is complete.

Yesterday, Asahara Hiroko, who has been studying tea in the Omote Senke tradition for one year, came and hosted tea for us. The *cha-gama*, the kettle used for the boiling water, was a copper-bottomed saucepan we happened to have and had polished almost as an afterthought. All the other tea utensils she brought with her; they were authentic. It was only natural to respect Hiroko-san as she calmly mastered the delicate task of balancing the bamboo ladle on the very thin handle of the *cha-gama*. The encouraging single word *manabu*, to learn—referring to us all learning together—was there on the *kakemono*, the hanging scroll.

Like bubbles on a stream bursting sooner or later, after awhile the purity of taking tea together seems lost, the cloudy film of “self-and-other” descending like dusk. But what does tea have to do with loss and gain? It’s just time for the host to see, and say, that it’s time.

If you think of life off the cushion as *kinhin* (walking meditation), then tea is also *kinhin*. And, like the physical relief that comes from *kinhin*, during tea there is relief from having to “push” an idea—to explain, advocate or reject. Ideas flow easily among us, ever-changing. The tranquil solitude of being together alone on the cushion is still there, within the experience of tea.

These four principles of taking tea together—harmony, respect, purity and tranquility—do they happen separately? Or could it be that they’re different words for the one quality of life? Have some tea.



New York Zendo-Shobo-ji News

Ring in the New Year

On New Years Eve nearly a hundred people attended Shobo-ji’s “Oshogatsu” Ceremony, a traditional Japanese festival welcoming the New Year. Strong zazen was accompanied by chanting “Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo”, a chant dedicated to Kanzeon Bosatsu and ringing the Zendo gong 108 times. With this, 2003 was safely started. Refreshments and a wonderful meal prepared by Aiho-san were offered.

New Garden is Born

The blizzard on the morning of February 12th caused a water pipe above the Garden Zendo to burst, sending water gushing into the Zendo. Parts of the ceiling, roof, floor and altar were significantly damaged. As fate would have it, it was discovered in time and Sangha members attending morning zazen were able to salvage the tatami mats, cushions, shoji and precious objects on the altar.

In the following weeks the pipe and roof damage were repaired, the ceiling torn down and replaced with new sheetrock, a new floor installed, the Zendo was repainted and the altar was refinished. All these projects were successfully completed on the evening of March 8th, just in time for a memorial service the next day and a wedding ceremony the day after.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Sangha for their warm concern and co-operation throughout the repairs. Special thanks are in order to those who were able to make donations. There is a Japanese saying “Ningen Banji Sai O ga uma” which implies: “Misfortune turns into Good fortune”. After thirty-five years a new garden Zendo is born.

Wedding Ceremony for Genno Linda King and Bill Lehman



On Sunday, March 9th a wedding ceremony for Genno Linda King and Bill Lehman was conducted by Eido Shimano Roshi. The monks and nuns from Dai Bosatsu Zendo attended as well as 53 family members and friends. We hope that their new life together will be happy and blooming.

New York Zendo Upcoming Schedule

Teisho will be presented by Eido Shimano Roshi on the text: Tetekki Tosui "Blowing the Iron Flute Upside Down". Please wear white socks or tabi on those evenings. Aside from Teisho during Weekend sesshin, please note the following dates:

Jun 19, Thursday
Aug 14, Thursday

Please check our website www.zenstudies.org for further teisho updates.

Japanese Dharma Class

Presented in Japanese by Eido Roshi, doors open at 1:30 pm, class is from 2 to 4 pm. Class includes Zazen, Chanting and a lecture on Shinran's "Tanni Sho" from a Zen point of view. In addition, our Japanese Sangha are welcome to attend the Segaki All Day Sitting with a traditional Segaki service (see below), and Dai Bosatsu Zendo's O-bon Ceremony held Aug 9 to 10, see DBZ section for details.

Saturday, Jun 21
After July, please check our website www.zenstudies.org for Japanese Dharma Class TBA.

Segaki

On Sunday, July 13th, New York Zendo Shobo-ji will host a Segaki All day Sitting with a Segaki service. Segaki is a traditional Buddhist ceremony held each year during the summer months. It is a ceremony dedicated to all ancestors, known and unknown deceased Dharma brothers and sisters, spirits of nature and the formless realms. The day will include Zazen, morning service, lunch, a special Segaki service and a Dharma Talk by Eido Roshi. Reservations required. 9 am to 5pm, doors open at 8:15 am.

All Day Sitting

Sunday, June 15th New York Zendo Shobo-ji will have an All Day Sitting with lunch included. The day will include Zazen morning service and afternoon chanting. 9 am to 5pm, doors open at 8:15 am. Reservations required. With lunch included the cost for Members is \$20, non-members \$40. For All Day Sits with out lunch being served there is no fee for members, non-members a \$15 fee.

Other upcoming dates:
Saturday, Oct 11



Weekend Sesshin

September 12th to 14th, The 35th Anniversary Weekend Sesshin will be held at New York Zendo Shobo-ji. The retreat includes zazen, chanting, meals, a Teisho and dokusan (private interview) with Eido Roshi. Sesshin begins Friday evening 7:00 to 9:00 pm and continues to Sunday afternoon. Reservations required. Members: \$85, Non-members: \$120, Saturday only: \$70, Sunday only: \$50
November 14th to 16th Soen Shaku/Kaigen Weekend Sesshin will be held. This sesshin is dedicated to Zen Master Soen Shaku.

New Years Eve Sitting and Celebration

On the evening of December 31st, Shobo-ji will be offering a New Years Eve sitting with zazen, a Dharma Talk by Eido Roshi, Chanting and ringing the gong 108 times for a happy upcoming Year of the Monkey. Call NYZ for details, reservations required.

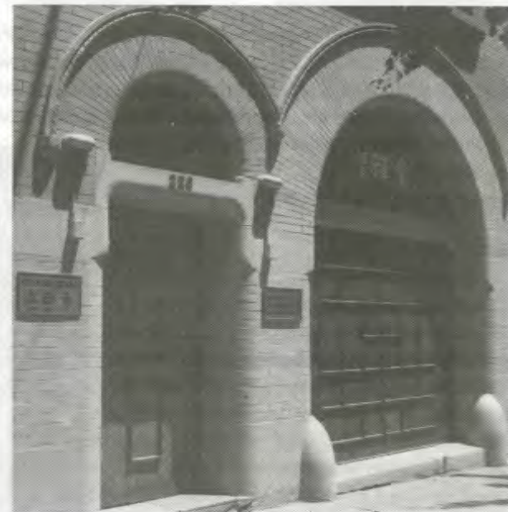
Interim

Shobo-ji will enter its summer interim period from July 14th to August 13th. The Zendo will be closed for all activities except for Wednesdays and Thursdays, on these nights our regular schedule is in effect and the Zendo is opened. Shobo-ji will re-open for Fall Training on Aug 14th with a Teisho by Eido Roshi. In addition the zendo will be closed July 4th and 5th for Independence Day and also November 27th and 28th for Thanksgiving.

Thursday night Dharma Talks

In addition to the Beginners Zazen Instruction class every Thursday night, New York Zendo hosts Public Dharma Talks. No reservations are necessary, \$15 for the evening.

Jun 26 Seigan Ed Glassing
Aug 28 Michael Fayne
Sep 25 Senjo Andrew Lagomarsino
Oct 9 Seigan Ed Glassing
Oct 23 Andy Pawelczak
Nov 6 David Thaler
Dec 12 Aiho-san Yasuko Shimano



Denko Osho John Mortensen is the new Vice-abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

The announcement of Denko Osho John Mortensen as the new Vice-abbot of DBZ, to replace Jiro Osho Fernando Afafe was formally and publicly made on April 12, at the close of Holy Days Sesshin in Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

After a decade of residence at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, first as General Manager then as Vice-abbot, the time has come for Jiro Osho to be an independent teacher. The Board of Directors of the Zen Studies Society supported his new direction during a recent meeting. We all wish him and his family good luck in their future endeavor.

During the same Board Meeting, at the recommendation of Eido Roshi, Denko Osho was unanimously endorsed as the next Vice-abbot. Denko Osho was born in Denmark in 1947. In 1971, he went to Ryutaku-ji, where he met Soen Roshi. Perhaps the seed of the Dai Bosatsu Mandala was sown at that time. He then returned to Copenhagen. By "coincidence", he found the book "Namu Dai Bosa" through which he found the existence of DBZ. In 1979 he came to DBZ as a Kessei student. In 1980 he was ordained by Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. He has continued his practice since, and in November 2002, he was given Dharma transmission by Eido Roshi. Currently he is the Abbot of Pine Hill Zendo in Katonah, New York.

This Spring Kessei, 2002, he will act as Vice-abbot and Zen teacher at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. The residents and Sangha welcome him wholeheartedly. The Sangha sees this change as an opportunity to give a new light and energy to its monastic community. At the same time it will give Jiro Osho and his family a chance to move on and grow.

You may reach Jiro Osho at (845) 439-5772.

Summer Work Exchange

Thank you to the following work exchange students for your help during our busy summer season: Shinjo Michi Felber, Shunsho Judith Molis, Jigen Delys Mullis-Young, Sean Law, Hope Blosser, Petra Felkl, Anthony Bez, Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz, David Collins, Peter Roszczenko, Gail Freed, Karen Farver, Shunrai Sophie Gacser, Christine Formhals, Manu Sassoonian, Kazuko Stone, Dennis Kass, Ben Mayock, Brooke and Nordis Nasset, Andrea Puglese, Conor Keenan and Michael Popper.

We apologize if we've inadvertently left anyone out. Your efforts were much appreciated especially during O-Bon.

This year our summer work exchange program will run from July 9 through August 31. If you have prior experience at DBZ and would like to exchange work for room and board for a minimum of two weeks please call the office. (Please note: the cost for Summer Five Day Sesshin, August 1-6 is not included as part of work exchange.)



Birthday Celebration

On Sept 29, following Golden Wind Sesshin, over 120 people showed up to honor Eido Roshi on the occasion of his 70th birthday. The celebration included a full musical program with an afternoon classical performance in the zendo by Chi-in Lionel Party and his students. Fujin was featured as flute soloist. Marvelous acoustics and a flawless execution set the tone for later performances of jazz and bluegrass. Roshi himself thrilled the attendees with a bravura performance of "The Impossible Dream". The sincerity of testimonials by many long-time students was a tangible demonstration of our deep gratitude for Roshi's lifetime of tireless dedication to the Dharma. Many thanks to Dr. Party and his students from the Juilliard School and to Koshin and Gemyo Aikawa who played during the reception.



Jukai

On November 7, the last day of Harvest Sesshin the following students received Jukai, taking the precepts and receiving Dharma names, thereby publicly declaring themselves as Buddhists:

Ellyn Kerr---"Eiko"--- Glittering Rainbow
Stephen Rossi---"Goho"---Enlightened Peak
Christopher Phelan---"Shoteki"--- Correct Target
Joseph Buxbaum---"Choshu"---Beyond Category
Claudine Ashley---"Chushin"---Heart of Heart
Ben Howard---"Shiju"---From First to Last
Boris Zoubok---"Zogen"---Treasury-Eye
Jeff Covey---"Renshin"---Refine the Heart/Mind



Farewell

*A water bird comes and goes,
Leaving no traces at all.
Yet it knows
How to go its own way.
- Ancient Zen saying*

On December 10, 2002, a ceremony was held acknowledging the completion of three years monk's training of Kigen James Frechter.

On April 3, 2003 Yayoi Karen Matsumoto left for Japan where she will continue her training at Shogen-ji Monastery under Sogen Yamakawa Roshi. Yayoi was ordained at the end of Rohatsu 1995 and has been a source of good cheer and tireless work during her time here at DBZ. We wish her the best of luck and look forward to seeing her again in the future.

Winter interim

During the cold, busy months of January, February and March, we were blessed by the addition of Nicky Grieve from the town of Rugby in the UK, (where the game was invented). Nicky, who found out about us on a Buddhist chat room, has been Ms. Fixit around the monastery, a computer advisor, Reiki healer and gourmet cook.

Like a Dream, Like a Fantasy

"Like a Dream, Like a Fantasy", the collected writings and translations of Nyogen Senzaki is being reprinted and will be available at DBZ and NYZ sometime this fall. Edited by Eido Roshi, this collection presents the thoughts and teachings of this most influential Dharma pioneer in America and karmic founder of Dai Bosatsu Zendo.



Programs and Events

Kessei/Ango

"Each Kessei, is as the saying goes, *ichi go ichi e* ... unprecedented, unrepeatable. For each Kessei, the faces are different and yet, Kessei itself continues year after year, since Shakyamuni's time. No matter what happens, in one form or another, this tradition of gathering together twice a year for the training period will continue."

-Eido Roshi

This year, spring Kessei began on April 2 and ends July 7. Fall Kessei is from September 4 to December 9. Each Kessei includes three seven-day sesshins. Every student has a private room and one rest day a week for personal use. Dokusan with Eido Roshi or Denko Osho is offered when they are present. Daily work includes cooking, cleaning, landscaping, caring for guests, gardening, and clerical work and sometimes manual labor. The cost for Kessei is \$2000 for the entire 3 months and \$750 for one month. Please call the office for an application.

Introduction to Zen Weekend

Mar 21-23, Apr 25-27, May 16-18, Jun 20-22, Sep 12-14, Oct 10-12, Nov 14-16

The Introduction to Zen Weekend is designed to give beginners a taste of Rinzaï Zen training. The weekend includes zazen (meditation) instruction, a Dharma talk, question and answer sessions, work practice, chanting services, and vegetarian meals. The fee is \$175, which includes meals, and two nights stay. Reservations are required.

Sesshin- the Essence of Zen Training

The word 'Sesshin' means to collect the Heart/Mind and is practiced by all Zen schools throughout the world. While our practice is always concerned with Self-Realization, this intensive, rigorous retreat is completely devoted to this aim. Sesshin is a rare opportunity to transcend our self-imposed limits and spend seven days investigating into our true nature with undivided attention. The sesshin schedule is:

4:00 am Wakeup
4:50 Fast Kinhin (Brisk walking)
5:00 Morning Chanting service

6:00 Sarei (tea/coffee)

Zazen, Dokusan (Private interview with Eido Roshi or Denko Osho)

7:30 Breakfast

8:00-8:40 Monastery Cleaning

9:00 Chanting

Zazen, Dokusan.

12:00 PM Lunch

1:30 Sarei (tea) Zazen

2:30 Dharma Talk or Teisho

4:15 Zazen or Optional Yoga Class

5:00 Supper

6:30 Konsho (twilight gong)

Chanting

Zazen

8:30 Dokusan

10:00 Kaichin (closing)

(During Rohatsu, we sit progressively later in the evening.)



The sesshins of 2003 are:

Holy Days Sesshin- April 5-12

One week prior to Passover and Good Friday, Holy Days commemorates Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday (April 8) and Rinzaï Gigen Zenji's Memorial Day (April 10). Zazen is accompanied by the sounds of melting snow and ice, Beecher Lake begins to thaw as the first rays of warmth arrive on the mountain.

Pine Planting Sesshin- May 1-4

Two and a half days provide an ideal opportunity for beginners to try a shorter sesshin. The weekend ends with the planting of a pine tree in honor of Master Rinzaï.

Memorial Day Sesshin May 24-31

Springtime explodes on Dai Bosatsu Mountain. Wildlife returns, trees blossom and the "Gai Symphony" accompanies our efforts.

Anniversary Sesshin- June 28- July 5th

Commemorating our founding on July Fourth, this sesshin coincides with the peak of summer. The long hours of daylight and the warm temperatures energize every zazen period.

Summer Five Day Sesshin- Aug 1-6

"In summer, a refreshing breeze". Occurring just before O-Bon with nightly Mizu Segaki ceremony to honor deceased loved ones.

Golden Wind Sesshin- Sep 27-Oct 4

Autumn returns to Dai Bosatsu Mountain; a steady rain of falling leaves and changing winds allow us to bear witness to the impermanence that surrounds us.

Harvest Sesshin- Nov 1-8

Just before the cold winter sets in - a quiet, introspective time to harvest the fruits of the past year's efforts.

Rohatsu Sesshin—Nov 30- Dec 8

The most solemn, yet joyous sesshin. Students come from all over the world to commemorate not

only Shakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment, but to emulate his intense struggle. Sesshin culminates on the morning of December 8th with the playing of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' in the light of a mountain dawn.

Sesshin Fees:

Pine Planting \$175.
Summer Five Day \$225.
Seven Day \$350.
Rohatsu \$450.

New York Zendo members receive \$25 off the above rates

Special Events

O- Bon Aug 9-10

O-Bon is a traditional Buddhist celebration that commemorates our ancestors, parents, friends, and loved ones who have passed away. It is believed that during O-Bon, spirits of the deceased return to this earthly plane. Through our remembrance and gratitude we give peace and comfort to those with whom we have shared this life. O-Bon, therefore is a time of joy and reflection. This year's event will take place on August 9 and 10. The cost is \$150 (children under 12, \$75) which includes overnight stay, vegetarian dinner and breakfast and lantern for the lantern floating ceremony on Beecher Lake. Please call at least two weeks in advance to reserve and to inquire about bus transportation from NYC.

Thanksgiving Celebration November 27-28th

Dai Bosatsu Zendo will hold its annual Thanksgiving celebration on November 27-28th. The cost is \$125 per person and includes zazen, a chanting service, Dharma talk by Eido Roshi, a Thanksgiving Day feast, and breakfast the following morning.

Visitors

We welcome visitors to our monastery. Please call in advance and make reservations. Students are expected to participate fully in our schedule including all zazen and work periods. The overnight fee is \$45

Guests are welcome to participate, but may also follow their own schedule if they wish. The cost is \$100 per night.

O-an

Our fully equipped cottage near the monastery is available for private retreats for one or two persons. Please call to inquire about rates and availability.

Open Space

From April through November DBZ is host to various groups of ten or more persons, with accommodations either at our Guest House overlooking Beecher Lake, or in the monastery. There are a few weekends still available in 2003. If you are



interested, please call and ask for Ippo.

Work Exchange Residency

There are a few staff openings for experienced cook, maintenance and clerical persons. If you possess these skills and would like to make a serious commitment to Zen practice at DBZ, please call the office and ask for Entsu.

Related Centers

Hoen-ji, The Zen Center of Syracuse

Roko Ni- Osho Sherry Chayat, Abbot
(315) 492-9773
www.zencenterofsyracuse.org
E-mail: hoenji@yahoo.com

Pine Hill Zendo, Katonah, NY

Denko Osho John Mortensen, Abbot
(914) 767-9240
www.pinehillzendo.org

Jacksonville Zen Sangha

The Jacksonville Zen Sangha (JZS), under the direction of Zenrin Chido Zenji Robert Lewis, has recently acquired a new Zendo in the San Marco area of Jacksonville Florida. Zenrin is a student of Eido Roshi and was trained at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. The JZS is located at 2014 Perry Place, Jacksonville, Florida, 32207-3445
www.zensangha.net
904-398-6905.

Rinzai Zen Society in Switzerland

Zurich, Switzerland
Shokan Marcel Urech, Head Monk

Every year Eido Roshi conducts a sesshin in Switzerland. This year it will be from August 23 - 28 at the Lassalle Haus in Edlibach near Zurich. To make a reservation, please contact Shokan.

Tel. +41 | 342 56 73 or +41 | 364 30 10
e-mail-info@shogen-dojoo.org www.shogen-dojoo.org



Eido Roshi in Poland A personal diary

By Daishin Pawel Wojtasik

August 16, 2002

Roshi arrives at Warsaw Airport. When, after a long wait, we see him emerge out of the gate along with other passengers from NYC, I am deeply moved – I know something extraordinary is taking place. We have been preparing for this moment for at least 1 year. Roshi is elated to set foot in Poland and surprisingly does not seem very tired after an all-night journey. From this point on until his departure 1 week later, it will be a constant state of high alert. It is as if we were doing sesshin, and wherever we go is the zendo.



August 18, 2002

Krakow during the Pope's visit. Three million people descend on the city, the ancient Polish capital. Using a motorized cart designed for tourists we manage to make it to the Center of Japanese Art and Technology 'Manggha.' Roshi is to give a talk there. We have been told that very few people will show up, due to the Pope's visit and blocked streets. Since we arrive at the center early Roshi is given a private viewing of an exhibition of Hiroshige's prints. This is definitely an island of Japan in the midst of the Polish Sea. Roshi's guide and translator is Ms. Bozena Kukuc, the curator at the center and a specialist in Japanese culture. Her command of the Japanese language and her personal warmth are both impressive. 15 minutes before the talk, we visit the huge auditorium where Roshi is to speak. I see about five people gathered outside. While Roshi is changing into his formal robes 10 minutes before the talk, I am told it will be my task to introduce him to the public. I am naturally filled with anxiety about that. When we come on stage I am amazed: the hall is filled with people. Many, mostly young Poles, came to hear the Dharma in spite of the difficulties. My introduction is improvised. Roshi speaks in Japanese, with a simultaneous translation by Bozena. I am struck by how fluid his body language is when he expresses himself in his mother tongue. He speaks of Shinran and Dogen, reconciling an apparent contradiction. Many questions follow from the audience. Here, as well as everywhere else we travel in Poland, a natural sympathy manifests between Roshi and the Poles.



Walking down an ancient street lined with medieval churches and Renaissance palazzos, there is a sudden commotion. We notice a man who looks amazingly like Lech Walesa. Suddenly I realize it is him, the Solidarity leader and former president. Roshi and Walesa shake hands. "He has a strong handshake" Roshi comments. Afterwards, we talk about Gempo Roshi meeting the president of the United States, and now Eido Roshi meeting the president of Poland. An uncanny symmetry!

August 19, 2002

Auschwitz. This place holds a special significance for Roshi. At Auschwitz cafeteria (yes, the place is now a museum) we realize we have only one book of Dai Segaki chanting. We get it Xeroxed at the

office free of charge. We now have 5 copies. We proceed to rehearse the chant right there in the cafeteria. Nobody minds.

Auschwitz itself is too much like a museum, Roshi concludes. We find the perfect place for the ceremony at Birkenau, a 'sister' camp 10 minutes away. Its ominous gate and the single pair of train tracks signify a place from which one does not return. Hundreds of thousands perished here. Roshi locates the spot where the ceremony is to take place. It is on an axis with the train tracks. There we find a huge monument consisting of several boulders. We set up the altar on one of them. The spot is flanked on both sides by crematoriums.



It is an extremely hot, sunny day. We begin setting up and I realize I forgot the salt, an essential offering. I run back to the car, along the tracks -- 3 miles in the blazing sun. As I run I seem to hear cries of thousands of souls. Finally, all is ready. Roshi conducts the Dai Segaki ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau, his long-held desire. Assisting him are Shoshana, Jimin, Jiun, Ala (a Polish Zen student) and myself. All six participants and numerous onlookers realize something of fundamental importance is taking place. Our chanting seems to cool the fire of some unspeakable suffering. It is important to Them, those who have died here, and essential to us, the living. As we chant, suddenly there is a gust of tremendous wind and dark clouds appear in the sky. Roshi ends the ceremony with a powerful, emotional invocation. As soon as it is over, the clouds vanish and the weather returns to normal. Thinking about it today, I feel awe and bow my head low, unable to understand or encompass that place and that moment.

August 20-21, 2002

Warsaw Zen Center. 2-day sesshin. Improvisation is the name of the game. We try to follow the DBZ/NY Zendo model of what a day of sesshin should be but this is Poland, we are in a Korean temple, and our style is unknown here. The thirty or so Poles and five Germans who have gathered for sesshin don't realize that we, the organizers, are making it up as we go along. Roshi is amazingly accommodating. For example, we decide that the first dokusan should be 'sosan,' (which normally happens on the middle day of a 7 day sesshin) so everyone without exception can see Roshi. Jimin translates extemporaneously from Polish. She has the rare opportunity to witness other people's dokusan.

Roshi's quarters are at the Boss hotel. How appropriate!

However we realize we have no kansho bell for dokusan use. It turns out there is another Zen center in the area of Philip Kapleau's lineage. They graciously lend us their magnificent bell.

Everything seems to teeter on disaster, yet works out in the end. Lots of adrenaline in our veins. We (the organizers) work non-stop. At some point I see Jiun (who is Jisha) going out to take a break on the grass with a cup of coffee. I am appalled and reprimand her: No sleep, no breaks! I tell her. She asks: "Are we allowed to use bathrooms?" No bathrooms, there is no time! is the answer. In the midst of trying to prevent one disaster after another, we laugh a lot. At some point I lead a chant in Polish in the zendo. Unfortunately we had no time to translate it, so I am forced to do an instant translation of obscure Buddhist terms just before intoning it out loud.

The teisho is open to the public. Many show up. Someone's videotaping. Everyone's enthralled. The first day's teisho is nyorai (more intellectual) style. In the second; Roshi unleashes the Rinzaï spirit, communicating directly from his hara. Jimin, our excellent translator, has to translate the untranslat-

able: the Mu shouts and other guttural expressions. Her dilemma: to copy Roshi's style (an impossible task) or to provide the cold translation (against Roshi's spirit). She does admirably by choosing the middle way.

Later, having heard the two teishos, a young Polish Zen student by the name Artur, comes up to Roshi and says: "I hated you yesterday but I love you today," expressing his preference for soshi style Zen. I tell Roshi "He's really passionate." Roshi replies: "Everyone I met in this country so far has been passionate."

We eat our meals Korean temple style. First, the food is brought in to the center of the zendo, forming a mandala. From there, the servers bring food to everyone.

The sesshin is a mix of Korean and Japanese styles, plus the Polish influence. The blending is extremely harmonious. Our hosts are students of Master Seung Sahn, a friend of Eido Roshi. They are led by the abbess, Aleksandra Porter who (along with many others at the center), participates in our sesshin, in fact she is Ino.

August 21, 2002: Mandala Day ceremony. First in Eastern Europe.

Sesshin ending ceremony. Roshi expresses his deep gratitude to our hosts. I shed tears, feeling very emotional. Many cry. It dawns on me that this thing we have been working towards for a long time has now become reality. This Polish Dharma thing.



All of us involved in organizing the trip feel tremendous gratitude to Eido Roshi for venturing into our country and manifesting through his very being the spirit of the Buddha. The great tree reached across the ocean. We will never forget that week. Thank you, Roshi, or rather "Dziekuje."

We feel a deep connection with our hosts at the Warsaw Zen Center. Thank you Rev. Aleksandra Porter and Soen Sa Nim's students, Bozena Kukuc and the Manggha Center, and many in Poland who gave their time and energy to make the visit a success. We also want to thank our friends in the U.S. who made the trip possible through their contribution to Dharma Mission Poland

