Good morning. How wonderful it is to wake up here on this mountain. Such a still, quiet and cool morning, watching the array of colors on the horizon, sipping tea. Sitting and walking, as the coolness gives way to the warmth of the sun with the sounds of cooking in the trailer and creaking of the roof.

The simple facts are always awake and alive ready to be met in their bare essence. The simple facts dance with mystery. This mystery is really none other than the great silence from which we all come. The silence that is our True Home. Here on Blue Mountain we remember - we remember that this silence is not created by us, rather we ARE this silence as is everything we encounter. This silence is ever-present, continually expressing.

Jesus said “contemplate the flowers and learn from them how to live.” Jesus, one of the greatest spiritual teachers of all times attests to the Truth of Nature. Nature has profound power to help us remember who and what we are simply by its reflection. Contemplate the flowers, a pine cone, a rock, a cloud, a star, a tree, a humming bird, and learn from them how to live. They will show you the way home. They express and reflect the ever-present silence in an infinite variety of ways: Follow them in, follow them to the source.

In the Zen tradition there are two primary practices used as tools to lead us to the Truth of our being, to the source. One is shikantaza, the practice of simply sitting, of being with what is – just as it is – moment to moment. We hold onto nothing, cling to nothing, carry nothing. We sit still and quiet, open and receptive, creating nothing, opposing nothing. In so doing we actualize our inherent nature, we simultaneously return to and express the source, we wake up. This zazen is enlightenment itself as Master Dogen says. The second practice is koan practice. Inquiry. We actually inquire into the mystery of Being. This act of inquiring throws us into space beyond thought, into the unknown, into silence. The act of inquiring begins to loosen the mortar of ego structure, to peck holes in our perceived identities. I say perceived identities because our identities are already fundamentally empty, totally full of holes – not a bit of cheese. It is our perceptions that pose the problem.

There’s a story of a philosopher who gave a master a lengthy discourse on objective reality. The master said, “What you know is not Reality, but your perception of it. What you experience is not the world, but your own state of mind.” The philosopher asked, “Well, then can Reality be grasped?” “Yes, said the master, but only by those who go beyond thoughts.” “What sort of people are those?” “Those who have lost the great projector called the self; for when self is lost, projection stops and the world is seen in its naked loveliness.”

We may not know it, but that is truly all we really want and yearn for – to see the world in its naked loveliness. How do we do this?

Contemplate the flowers and learn from them how to live.

What is MU?

Does the sound come to the ear or the ear go to the sound?

Make Blue Mountain take 3 steps.

Count the number of stars in the heavens.

Show me an immovable tree in the heavy wind

On top of Blue Mountain a cloud is preparing rice.
These are some of our koans. These are aids to genuine contemplation, ways to enter in, to be with, to go beyond thought.

How about the pine cone? What is it really?
That sound of chirping, of wind – Where does it come from?
Count the number of stars in the night sky. What?!
Make Blue Mountain take 3 steps. How?

These questions are not of the thinking mind. Where do they come from? Do you have a question?

Begin to open to any and all questions and possibilities leaving all answers behind. Whether your practice is counting breaths or Mu or simply sitting- be here with an open heart, allowing yourself to wonder, to not know anything. The minute you know that that is a tree, or that is a star, or that is a bird singing, stop, step back into question. What is it really? Who am I really? Then continue to count your breaths, focus on your koan or simply sit.

There is a story of two monks who were stranded on a mountain. They were snowbound for three days. Yen-t’ou spent much of his time sleeping, but Hseuh-feng sat up all day and most of each night doing zazen. During one of his waking moments Yen-t’ou said, “What are you doing, sitting there all day long like a mad deity by the road?”
Hseuh-feng pointed to his chest and said, “I am not yet peaceful here.” Yen-t’ou said, “What kind of experiences have you had in the past? Tell me, and I will examine them for you.”

So Hseuh-feng told him about several experiences he had had with different teachers, one when reading a verse and another when being hit with a stick. He said it was as though he was a bucket whose bottom had suddenly dropped out.

With this Yen-t’ou gave a shout and scolded him, saying, “Don’t you know that what enters from the gate cannot be the treasure of the house? If you want to propagate the Great Teaching, it must flow point by point from within your own breast to cover heaven and earth. Only then will it be the action of someone with spiritual power.”

At this instant, Hseuh-feng suddenly had realization and cried “Today Tortoise Mountain has finally awakened, Tortoise Mountain has achieved the Way.”

What do you think Hseuh-feng realized?

Zen Master Dogen says, “From the beginning the Dharma-wheel has turned, with nothing in excess and nothing lacking. The whole universe is moistened with sweet nectar, and the truth is ready to harvest. Everything is true, everything is real.”

Don’t you know that what enters from the gate cannot be the treasure of the house?

It is by sitting quietly, allowing all to be as it is, not making a single thing and by questioning, inquiring deeper and deeper that the Great Teaching will flow point by point from within your own breast to cover heaven and earth. The whole universe is moistened with sweet nectar, and the truth is ready to harvest.

Relax, let go, practice with a gentle and questioning spirit. Only the breath, Only Mu. Only your question. Forget everything else. And most importantly do not seek for any answers. Let the mountain bring you home. You, the pine cone, the call of the birds, the song of the wind, the buzzing of flies, the roar of the distant airplane, the twinkle of the night sky are all of the same essence, flowing point by point from within your own breast. Contemplate them and learn from them how to live.

Enjoy your day.

Together with all beings, Blue Mountain realizes the Way.
Lost
by David Wagoner

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you.
If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

Zen Center is Going Green(er)
Through a nonprofit called Groundwork Denver, we agreed
to an audit on how we are doing with our care for the envi-
ronment. Our first step has been to obtain a recycling bin.
Groundwork Denver will pay for one year’s worth of the
pick up charges! If anyone wishes to set out recycling recep-
tacles around the center, and help getting the trash out to
the bin, all gratitude would be sent your way. Our next
steps will be insulation of water heaters and light bulb re-
placement where needed. Thanks to David Lee for return-
ing the phone call that got this started.

Ascending the Mountain Ceremony
On September 12, the ascending the mountain ceremony
for Karin, Sensei, Ken, Sensei and Peggy, Sensei will take
place. Please mark your calendars for this very important
event.

*When I was a child I aroused the wish for enlighten-
ment, pursued the way with various masters in our
country, and learned a little about the meaning of
causes and effects. However, I did not understand the
true source of name and form. Later I entered Zen
master Senko’s (Eisai’s) room and for the first time
heard the rinzai teaching. Then I accompanied priest
Myozen and went to prosperous Song China.
Through a voyage of countless miles, entrusting my
transient body to the billowing waves, I finally reached
Great Song.*

---Dogen, Record of the Baoqing Era

The ascending the mountain ceremony is not only a mile-
stone in the lives of our wonderful teachers, but a signifi-
cant milestone in the life of Lotus in the Flame Temple.
We will start with informal zazen at 8:00 a.m., with the
ceremony beginning at 9:00 a.m. Arrive no later than 8:50
for the ceremony.

Please do come -- let’s celebrate together.
# Calendar Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center Closed</td>
<td>July 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MWW Meeting</td>
<td>July 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCD Blue Mt. Sesshin App. Deadline</td>
<td>July 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangha Workday</td>
<td>August 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>August 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZCD Blue Mt. Sesshin</td>
<td>August 12-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Closed</td>
<td>September 4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascending the Mountain Ceremony</td>
<td>September 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repentance Ceremony</td>
<td>September 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October Sesshin App. Deadline</td>
<td>September 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangha Picnic</td>
<td>September 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>