



# Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Denver Zen Center

Winter 2000

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## You are Already Such a Person

*A morning talk given by Sensei during the April 1999 7-day sesshin.*

Every morning, in and out of sesshin, we recite in Master Hakuin's *Song of Zazen*, "How near the truth yet how far we seek" and "This very body the body of Buddha." And every evening, in or out of sesshin, we recite in *Ta-hui's Vow for Awakening*,

Not to seek the truth outside of ourselves,  
So we may instantly enter the right way...  
And have immediate enlightenment on the  
Great Matter.

Can we believe in ourselves? Can we trust *in* ourselves?

There is a wonderful koan in the Denkoroku which reads: "One day Yun-chu said to Tung-an, 'If you want to attain such a thing, you must be such a person. As you are already are such a person, why do you worry about such a thing?' Hearing this, the Master attained realization by himself."

You are already such a person, so there is no need to seek outside of yourself for what you are. You are already such a person. This very body is the body of Buddha.

This does not mean that we don't need to practice hard and realize this. We still have to eliminate the gap that has formed and separated us from ourselves. For this we must practice hard. But we need to have faith that the truth is here within in us. That the sought after mind is none other than the seeking mind. That the truth is no further from us than our own nostrils. We need to stop looking afar for what is so near. You are already the one you are seeking.

Our practice is really the practice of taking a backward step right into our own selves. Whether we are practicing Mu or shikantaza or counting or experiencing the breaths, our work is to melt back into pure being and thus become the person we already are.

Can our practice be a mix in equal parts of effort and the faith that what we seek is already here within us? Can you trust in the fact that you are already such a person, that you are already the one you are seeking?

# Sangha News

## Our First Ordination of a Priest

David Dunley will be ordained as a Zen Buddhist priest in the Lotus in the Flame Order of the Denver Zen Center on Saturday, February 19, 2000 at 10 AM. As a priest, David will commit himself to Dharma as his vocation for the rest of his life. Such a commitment will enable David to give himself entirely to practicing and sharing the Buddhadharma, and will strengthen our Sangha immeasurably. Please let us all join together for this auspicious event. The ceremony in the Zendo will be followed by a quiet celebration in the foyer.

## Sangha Social Events

As a way of helping us to get to know one another outside of the formal atmosphere of the Temple, a couple of regular social events have been established, and hopefully more will be on their way. The first is the "Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club", where after the Wednesday morning sitting, everyone is invited to go out for breakfast at a nearby restaurant. So far, the Breakfast Club has been very enjoyable and well attended. The other new event is the "First Friday Sangha Potluck and Salon" at Jann Chasteen's house, the first Friday of every month from 6:30 to 10:30 PM. Bring food, family and friends for an evening of fun! Jann lives at 2929 W. 39th Ave. in Denver. She can be reached at 303-433-7291.

## Resident Departures

Joel Tagert and Lindsey Trout have relocated to Hawaii to spend six months to one year serving as Aitken Roshi's attendants. Though we will miss them greatly during their absence, their work with Roshi will certainly benefit us all. Joel and Lindsey plan to return to Denver after their stay and resume residency at the Center or find an apartment nearby.

The room that Joel and Lindsey renovated is available to anyone who wishes to be a resident trainee. Please contact Sensei if you are interested.

David Dunley will be studying with Aitken Roshi in Hawaii from November 30 through January 20. Gati Moore will be filling in for him in the Office during his absence.

Laurel Conroy will be leaving on December 31 to stay at the Providence Zen Center for six weeks to participate in a retreat.

## Voluntary Dues Increase

The Center is doing very well in meeting its financial obligations, due to the generous support of everyone who has contributed to recent fundraisers or is contributing above and beyond their monthly dues. However, there is still a deficit of several thousand dollars expected for the year, and most likely for coming years if current trends continue. To address this, the Board of Directors would like to suggest that those Supporting Members who are able voluntarily increase their monthly contribution. A number of members are already doing this, and this extra income has helped the Center greatly in maintaining financial solvency. Please help if you can.

## Groups Appropriate for Use of Auditorium

Recently, the Income Generation Committee were approached by members of the John Birch Society, an extremely right-wing conservative organization, to rent our auditorium for a speaking event. This touched off a debate between those who wish to honor the First Amendment, and make our hall available to whoever wants to use it; and those who feel that the Center needs to show discretion in who we rent the auditorium to, as an association could be created in the public's mind between us and the people or groups using our space.

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The Lotus in the Flame Temple, Denver Zen Center:  
3101 West 31st Ave. Denver, CO 80211  
303-455-1500 (Tel.), 303-455-1062 (Fax)

E-mail: [DZCenter@aol.com](mailto:DZCenter@aol.com)

Website: <http://members.aol.com/DZCenter>

Spiritual Director: Ven. Danan Henry Sensei

The matter was brought before the Board, who denied rental of the auditorium to the John Birch Society, but from now on will give all discretion to the Income Generation Committee in these matters. Any supporting members are welcome to join the committee if they wish, and anyone with strong feelings on this subject is particularly encouraged to join.

### Zen Center E-mail List

Jann Chasteen has recently set up an e-mail discussion list for members of the Center through Listbot.com. Subscribers can send and receive messages that are seen by everyone on the list. It's a handy way to make announcements or to get discussions going. To subscribe to the list, send an e-mail to dzcenter@aol.com requesting that you be signed up. You will then receive an invitation from Listbot. Then, just send a blank reply, and you are automatically subscribed. Listbot will then send you instructions for how to use the list.

### Obis Optional

During the Fall Sangha Meeting, a number of Sangha members voiced their discontent with the obis (sashes) that grace our standard-issue brown robes, saying that they restrict deep breathing, look funny, and just don't stay on very well. It was suggested that they be made an optional part of the robe. Furthermore, Urszula Sapeta, our source for robes in Rochester, has redesigned the robes to include wraparound ties instead of obis, so anyone ordering robes from her will get this new style. A motion was made to make the use of obis optional, which was approved by those present.

### Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Committee has been deeply involved in a project called "A Circle of Support" this year. Our circle formed around Rick Harper, and has worked with him on his journey away from homelessness and alcohol dependence. It has been an extremely rewarding experience for us all. Rick has now been sober for seven months, is employed, and has his own apartment. Currently, our biggest stumbling block is the very thin financial thread of meeting day to day expenses. We would like to ask for donations to the Community Outreach Committee in hopes that we may be able to provide a bit of a cushion for Rick while he works his way up to a higher paying job and more security. Also, we would be happy if anyone else would like to join us on the committee.

### New Items in DZC Store

New practice support and gift items available in the Store include:

- Votive candles and candle holders that maximize their ten hour burning time.
- Incense samplers and extra long, boxed incense sticks
- Wheel and leaf shaped glazed ceramic incense burners
- Year 2000 wall calendars in four styles with Buddhist related images
- Taped teishos by Danan Henry in sets related to Zen practice themes
- New book titles coming soon

At any time, but especially during the holiday season, remember that special book orders on any topic can be made through the DZC Store by calling Bill Minyard at 303-393-8239.

### Upcoming Naropa Events

Fred Kaufman, "Authentic Leadership", Friday, February 4, 7 PM

Susan Taylor, "Diet and Nutrition: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Science", Friday, February 18, 7 PM

John Bradshaw, title to be announced, Friday, February 25, 7 PM

### Gassho Corner

The Center would like to gratefully acknowledge the following donations and services:

Sandy Kim made and donated a beautiful, large stoneware serving crock for us to use during sesshin and zazenkai.

Sandy Kim and Bill Zaun made some death defying repairs on the roof, replacing some broken and missing tiles. This feat was made possible through Sandy's rock climbing equipment and experience.

Roger Voight made a general donation of \$2,000.

And, from Sensei, in response to his 60th birthday celebration at Linda Hardesty and Dennis Sienko's house:

Dearest Sangha,

Thank you so much for the wonderful birthday party to ease me into my sixties, replete with great food and fine

gifts. The greatest gift of all is your friendship. With some good fortune, we might repeat this shindig in 10 years...

Love,  
Danan

### Upcoming Events

Kannon Ceremony	January 20
Zazenkaï	January 16
Ceremony of Aid	February 3
Children's Zendo	February 6
Zazenkaï	February 12
Parinirvana Ceremony	February 15
David Dunley's Priest Ordination	February 19
Board of Directors Meeting	February 23
All Sangha Workday	February 26

Denver Zen Center  
3101 West 31st Ave.  
Denver, CO 80211