



# Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Zen Center of Denver

Fall 2001

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## The Horses Mouth

### **Dogen Zenji speaks his mind:**

A nun once asked Dogen: “Even ordinary women engage in the study of Buddhism. Is there any reason then why a nun, despite the few small faults she may have, should be unfit for Buddhism?”

Dogen replied: “You are wrong. Although ordinary women can study Buddhism and gain enlightenment as members of the lay community, those who have left their homes cannot gain the Way unless they have attained the necessary determination. It is not that Buddhism discriminates among people but that people do not enter fully into Buddhism. Monks and laymen have different motivations. A layman who thinks like a monk can free himself from delusion, but a monk who thinks like a layman compounds his error. The two approaches differ. It is not the doing that is difficult, but rather the doing it well that is hard. The practice of leaving the world and gaining the Way attracts many people, but there are few who do it well. Birth and death are vital matters; the changes of transiency are swift. Don't relax in your determination. If you are forsaking the world, then really forsake it. Provisional designations, such as layman or priest, seem of little significance.”

### **Rinzai nails it on the head:**

“Here at my place, we don't talk about who is a monk and who is a lay believer. When someone comes to me, I can tell exactly what he is like. Whatever circumstances he may come from, I take all his words and utterances to be so many dreams and phantoms. But when I see a man who has learned to master the environment, I know that here is the secret meaning of the buddhas.”

### **Danan Sensei puts in his two cents:**

“What is transformative lay practice? It is living in the world as a nun or monk - living in a monastery without walls. What does that mean? It means to understand the Four Noble Truths and practice the Eightfold Noble Path at the temple, in our homes, and in the market place. If you practice as a monk or nun in the market place you will realize and embody the Buddha's Way. If you enter a monastery and practice like the ordinary lay person you will never realize the Tao no matter how many kalpas you remain in the monastery.”

# Sangha News

## New Head of the Zendo

The position of Head of the Zendo will be rotated from Dennis Tesar to Peggy Sheehan during the first part of the Fall training period. Dennis has served as Head of the Zendo for about 2 years, fulfilling his responsibilities with diligence, warmth, and humor. His successor, Peggy Sheehan, has been a highly involved member of the Center for about 10 years.

The Head of the Zendo is Sensei's assistant in the overall running of spiritual matters of the Temple and is responsible for overseeing the practice and training in his absence. The Head of the Zendo also conducts membership interviews, daisan, and meets with supporting members who are interested in becoming personal students of Sensei.

## New Chant Books

A new edition of the ZCD chant books will be in use at the start of the Fall training period, due to a number of corrections and modifications. Also, the chant pamphlets that are kept under the cushions in the Zendo have undergone a major overhaul. The morning and evening services are written out in their complete form from start to finish, and the Sunday Teisho chanting is also included, eliminating the need for chant books to be handed out at the beginning of the teisho.

The chants which have received corrections or changes are *The Names of Buddha*, *Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo*, *Ancestral Teachers*, *Master Hakuin's Song of Zazen*, and *Ta Hui's Vow For Awakening*. The *Ancestral Teachers* chant has undergone significant changes. Unlike many centers which use the actual lineage of their roshi or sensei, we use a selection of ancestral teachers that we encounter in the course of koan study or who figure prominently in our tradition. A number of women ancestors are now included, as well as a few more male ancestors, and the names of Chinese ancestors have been rearranged to better show their places within the tradi-

tional genealogies. Another new feature of the *Ancestral Teachers* chant is that the Japanese pronunciations of the Chinese ancestors are included in the margin, so that those who are more familiar with the Japanese can begin to connect with the Chinese names.

The meal chants used at samu and sesshin will soon be changed as well. The meal chants we have been using were developed at the Rochester Zen Center. The new chants will incorporate aspects of both the Rochester version and the traditional Soto meal chants as used by the Diamond Sangha.

It is hoped that these changes will enrich our experience of liturgy and help us to better connect with our ancient roots. So that we can more easily begin to use liturgy in the home, the new chant books will be available for sale in the ZCD store.

## New Guidelines Books

The Zen Center of Denver Practice and Guidelines books have also been revised to incorporate changes that have arisen in our forms and general temple procedures. Copies will be available in the Store for a suggested donation of \$3 to cover printing costs. All members are encouraged to look through the book and become familiar with the changes therein.

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## Renovation Update

The Center's in-house fundraising is off to an encouraging start with donations already in the vicinity of \$50,000 as we head toward our \$250,000 goal. Thanks to the members who have pledged so far, we have chosen our architect and begun the real work of design. Jim Paull, assisted by Melanie Parson, of Slater Paull & Associates, will do the architectural work. They have had several meetings with the Architecture & Design Committee as part of the Program Phase, during which we figure out what we need and want from our renovated facility. The needs expressed by all committees are being considered and weighed at this time. Anyone who has some function that he or she feels must be considered in the renovation plans needs to speak NOW. Your input is welcome. There will be opportunities for interested members to meet with Jim and Melanie, to get to know them as architects, and as new friends that will be working with us for a long time. The Fundraising Committee is moving forward with both in-house and out-of-house fundraising efforts. Expect a newly upgraded website soon, with specific news of the renovation for the Sangha and the world. This is a tremendously exciting and creative period in ZCD's history. All of us share in and nurture this joyful effort.

## Laurel Conroy's Departure

"Dear Sangha,  
Just want to say goodbye to all I have not reached. I am leaving Denver to take up residence at Gampo Abbey in Nova Scotia. Thank you, Sangha, for your support and guidance." –Laurel Conroy

Laurel Conroy has been a resident of the Center for about 3 years. Her hard work and diligent practice has been inspirational, and her care and concern for others has touched many of us. She will be greatly missed at our temple.

Gampo Abbey is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the Vajradatu/Shambhala tradition established by the late Chogyam Trungpa. Its head teacher is Pema Chodron, author of several popular Buddhist books, such as *The Wisdom of No Escape* and *When Things Fall Apart*.

## Sangha Camping Trip

Well on its way to becoming a Zen Center tradition on Labor Day weekend, a camping trip has been planned

for Sangha members at Becky Wethington's mountain property outside of Lyons. This year, however, the camping trip will also involve laying the foundation for a small zendo. When completed, the zendo will be available to anyone in the Sangha for individual or small group retreats. The zendo will be built using straw bale construction, and will draw upon a number of sustainable technologies with regard to infrastructure.

The camping trip will begin Friday, August 31st and continue through Labor Day. You may stay for the whole weekend or part of it, or just come up to visit or help with the construction for a day. Please bring work clothes and gloves, food and camping gear. As the property has a well, it is not necessary to bring water.

## Gassho Corner

A deep gassho to:

Bob Dickson and Dennis Tesar for building the ramp from the office entrance to the main floor. This makes our temple semi-handicapped accessible, and has made it possible for Candy Marcellus, a long time member of the Sangha who suffers from MS, to attend sittings. Also, some anonymous donors came forth to pay for the lumber used to make the ramp.

Bob Dickson also replaced missing floor tiles from the kitchen.

## Upcoming Events

Sangha Camping Trip	Sept. 1-3
Kannon Ceremony	Sept. 20
Zazenkai	Sept. 23
Dharma Discussion	Oct. 14
Repentance Ceremony	Oct. 16
Sesshin	Oct. 20-27
Sangha Meeting	Nov. 11
Fast For a World Harvest	Nov. 15
Thanksgiving Ceremony	Nov. 22
Jukai	Nov. 25
Rohatsu Sesshin	Dec 1-8
Buddha's Enlightenment	Dec. 11
Ritual Cleaning of the Temple	Dec. 30
New Year's Eve Ceremony	Dec. 31

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