



# Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Zen Center of Denver

Spring 2001

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## Renunciation

*A talk given by Sensei before shosan at the Rohatsu (December) 2000 sesshin*

In the course of this Rohatsu sesshin we have carefully examined the events of the Buddha's life leading to his Great Enlightenment. The deciding factor in his life which set him on his spiritual quest was his complete act of renunciation.

And so it is with us as well. To seriously start along a spiritual path it is of fundamental importance that one renounce the world. One need realize beyond a shadow of a doubt that the ways of the world, that is, the accumulation of wealth, power, position and the ceaseless pursuit of pleasure will never solve the question of suffering at its root.

The act of renunciation is made when one sees that the world and all that it stands for cannot assuage one iota the anguish of the spirit. The act of renunciation is completed when we forget the self, drop off body and mind, and come forward selflessly and affectionately. This forgetting everything and coming forth from nothing at all continues endlessly.

The Buddha said, "The bliss of a religious life is attainable by everyone who walks the Noble Eightfold Path... The Way of the Teacher does not require one to go into homelessness or resign the world, unless one feels called upon to do so... If one lives in the world not a life of the self but a life of Truth, then surely joy, peace and bliss will dwell in his mind".

In coming to sesshin we have renounced the world and have worked for seven days and nights to forget the self and live a life of Truth. Now, can we return to the world without returning to the ways of the world. If we can, then authentic lay practice will flourish, bringing greater peace and harmony to ourselves and the marketplace. If we cannot, then those that are serious will have to join religious communities, ashrams, monasteries and hermitages isolated from the world.

So again, the question is "can we return to the world without returning to the ways of the world"? Please come forward and let's investigate this question together.

*Supreme enlightenment is attained  
the moment you truly renounce the world  
and receive the precepts*

*Dogen Kigen  
"Shukke"*

# Sangha News

## Song of the Grass-Roof Hermitage

I've built a grass hut where there's nothing of value.  
After eating, I relax and enjoy a nap.  
When it was completed, fresh weeds appeared.  
Now it's been lived in--covered by weeds.  
The person in the hut lives here calmly,  
not stuck to inside, outside, or in between.  
Places worldly people live, he doesn't live.  
Realms worldly people love, he doesn't love.  
Though the hut is small, it includes the entire world.  
In ten square feet, an old man illumines forms and  
their nature.  
A Great Vehicle bodhisattva trusts without doubt.  
The middling or lowly can't help wondering;  
Will this hut perish or not?  
Perishable or not, the original master is present,  
not dwelling south or north, east or west.  
Firmly based on steadiness, it can't be surpassed.  
A shining window below the green pines--  
jade palaces or vermilion towers can't compare with it.  
Just sitting with head covered, all things are at rest.  
Thus, this mountain monk doesn't understand at all.  
Living here he no longer works to get free.  
Who would proudly arrange seats, trying to entice  
guests?  
Turn around the light to shine within, then just return.  
The vast inconceivable source can't be faced or turned  
away from.  
Meet the ancestral teachers, be familiar with their  
instruction,  
bind grasses to build a hut, and don't give up.  
Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely.  
Open your hands and walk, innocent.  
Thousands of words, myriad interpretations,  
are only to free you from obstructions.  
If you want to know the undying person in the hut,  
don't separate from this skin bag here and now.

Shitou

Translation by Daniel Leighton and Kazuaki Tanahashi.  
Excerpted from Tanahashi and Schneider, *Essential Zen*,  
p. 36, HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.

Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien (700-791) was one of the seminal figures in Chinese Zen. He is known in Japanese as Sekito. That the two main lines of Chinese Zen derive from Shih-t'ou and Ma-tsu is summarized in the old saying, "West of the river, Ma-tsu; south of the lake Shih-t'ou." Shih-t'ou's Dharma descendants include such luminaries as Tokusan, Seppo and Ganto

## Sangha Wedding Bells

Two couples from within the Sangha will marry this Spring. Emily Jackson and Chandler Snyder will tie the knot on Saturday, May 12 at 10 AM. Lindsey Trout and Joel Tagert will wed on Saturday June 9 at 2 PM. Both ceremonies will take place at the Temple and all of the Sangha are invited. Please wish Emily and Chandler, and Lindsey and Joel well as they embark on their lives together.

*...In creating a marriage, the bride and groom create a new being. As wife and husband, and then possibly with children, the family is a sangha with its own needs, its own delights and suffering. It is a tangible entity, separate and yet inclusive, in which the family members take part and within which they fulfill their individual lives.*

*Thus our wedding vows, the words we stand by in our marriage, are not promises to to one another but to our marriage itself, the tender being we bring into existence and which we nurture with our honorable conduct and love. In our promises to be true to each other, the words we use are the ancestral jewels of our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents, and so on into the misty past. Keeping those jewels faithfully, we nurture the being of marriage through its own natural life.*

Aitken, *Original Dwelling Place*, p.118, Counterpoint Press, 1996.

*Mountains Talking* is a quarterly newsletter published by:

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## Taiko Drum Fund

David Lee has established a fund for the purchase of a taiko drum for ceremonial use at the temple. Taiko drums are a traditional part of the ensemble of instruments at a Zen Temple. The addition of a taiko drum to our Temple would greatly enhance our liturgy. If you would like to contribute to the fund, please mark your check "Taiko Drum Fund"

## Library Teisho Tapes Emergency

The teisho tapes in our library are disappearing at an alarming rate. Please remember, these tapes are never to be removed from the library. The library provides the only accessible location where all of Sensei's teisho may be listened to by Sangha members. They are our collective resource. If we remove the tapes from the library, we deprive our Sangha brothers and sisters of the opportunity to hear these Dharma words. The practice of the Bodhisattva is to place the welfare of others before that of one's own self. Depriving others of the opportunity to encounter the Dharma runs directly contrary to our Bodhisattva vows. Also, during our winter and summer training periods we use the taped teisho for zazenkai and Sunday teisho. When the tapes Sensei has chosen to be played at these times are missing, the Sangha at large suffers.

If you have any tapes from the library, please return them immediately. If any more tapes go missing, we will have no choice but to institute a system whereby we check tapes out of the office, listen to them in the library and then return them to the office.

## Gassho Corner

A deep gassho to:  
Mike Griffiths and Ed Wydallis for raising the height of the kitchen sink. This will greatly ease back tension for all kitchen workers

Roger Voight for the donation of a Pentium computer to the Temple.

## Upcoming Events

MWW Meeting	March 17
Zazenkai	March 18
Kannon Ceremony	March 29
Dharma Discussion	April 8
Sesshin	April 21-28

Zazenkai	May 13
Vesak	May 20
Ceremony of Aid	June 7
All Sangha Meeting	June 10
Sesshin	June 16-23

## Frank Van West

Many of us fondly remember long time member Frank Van West. Attending sesshin well into his later years, Frank's commitment was a great inspiration to all. Frank recently died of leukemia. In his will he left a generous donation of \$25,000 to the Temple to be used to establish an endowment to help ensure and protect the future of the Zen Center. We will all benefit from Frank's gifts well into the future.

## Fundraising and Architectural Committee

The fundraising and architectural committees are working hard to initiate the process to transform our current makeshift Temple arrangements into a space that can fully contain and implement Sensei's vision for authentic lay Zen training. In the next few months the committees should make considerable progress in selecting an architect, beginning preliminary reviews and estimates, initiating internal fundraising, and formulating external fundraising strategies. Please make sure to attend the Sangha Meeting scheduled for Sunday June 10 as these matters will be considered and discussed in depth.

## Mrs. Henry Forgives Temple Loan

A little over three years ago, Mrs. Annette Henry, Sensei's mother, made the purchase of our Temple possible by loaning us the money necessary to acquire it. Without her generosity at that time we would have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make the move from the Columbine Temple. Mrs. Henry has once again stepped forward on our behalf by recently forgiving the balance on our loan from her, over \$180,000.00. We owe Mrs. Henry a deep debt of gratitude for her extraordinary generosity. With her help we are beginning the work of planting and tending the seed of the Dharma.

## Head Of Zendo Absence

Dennis Tesar, our Head of Zendo, will be working out of state for several months. During this time please direct questions concerning membership applications, becoming a formal student of Sensei, Entering the Gate and Entering the Stream ceremonies to Shonen Dunley, our office manager. Shonen and Dennis are in regular contact so Dennis will still supervise all areas under the purview of the Head of Zendo

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