



Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Zen Center of Denver

Summer 2001

Foregoing the Self

A morning talk given by Sensei during the April, 1998 sesshin

During the sixties and seventies I collected aphorisms and teaching stories from the various spiritual traditions by way of inspiration and instruction. During this sesshin I've been revisiting my little hand written book.

If I had to choose but one aphorism to take with me to that proverbial island, I think it might be, "Foregoing self the universe grows I".

It says it all. Master Dogen tells us to forget the self, to drop off body and mind, and the ten thousand things will advance and confirm the self. And his personal statement, "I am the sun and the moon and the stars and the great wide earth", will always be for me a poignant call to practice and realization. The baby Buddha said, "Throughout heaven and earth, I am the only one". And our own Walt Whitman reminds us, "I am large, I contain multitudes". If you are at all like me, you yearn to let the universe in and be large.

"Foregoing self the universe grows I." When there is no sense of an "I" hanging in the mind, standing apart from what is seen, then there is simply the phenomenal world reflected in the empty mirror of the mind.



"Foregoing self the universe grows I." If you are anything like me, from time to time you become weary and exhausted with this small self, with self centered living based upon the endless preoccupation with my little self concerns - with what Bernard Shaw called this "feverish clod of petty grievances and ailments". If you are at all like me, you become tired of holding off the world at arms length, you yearn to step out of your own shadow into the brightness of the universe, your own true nature.

All that is necessary for this emancipation is that we forget the self. We forget the self by absorbing ourselves utterly in the practice and letting everything everything else go. Every single time we practice wholeheartedly we forget the self and actualize our true self. On the mat we forget ourselves when we focus clearly and accurately on Mu or the breath or that still point of shikantaza and let everything else go. Off the mat we forget ourselves when we focus clearly and accurately on the reality of our lives, the task at hand and let everything else go. This is how we forget ourselves and the universe grows I.

Have Faith in Yourself

From the Recorded Sayings of Lin-chi:

The Master instructed the group, saying, “Those who study the Dharma of the buddhas these days should have a true and proper understanding. If you approach it with a true and proper understanding, you won’t be affected by considerations of birth or death, you’ll be free to go or stay as you please. You don’t have to strive for benefits, benefits will come of themselves.

“Followers of the Way, the outstanding teachers from times past have all had ways of drawing people out. What I myself want to impress on you is that you musn’t be led astray by others. If you want to use this thing, then use it and have no doubts or hesitations!

“When students today fail to make progress, where’s the fault? The fault lies in the fact that they don’t have faith in themselves! If you don’t have faith in yourself, then you’ll be forever in a hurry trying to keep up with everything around you, you’ll be twisted and turned by whatever environment you’re in and you can never move freely. But if you can just stop this mind that goes rushing around moment by moment looking for something, then you’ll be no different from the patriarchs and buddhas. Do you want to get to know the patriarchs and buddhas? They’re none other than you, the people standing in front of me listening to this lecture on the Dharma!

“Students don’t have enough faith in themselves, and so they rush around looking for something outside themselves. But even if they get something, all it will be is words and phrases, pretty appearances. They’ll never get at the living thought of the patriarchs!

“Make no mistake, you followers of Ch’an. If you don’t find it in this life, then for a thousand lifetimes and ten thousand kalpas you’ll be reborn again in the threefold world, you’ll be lured off by what you think are favorable environments and be born in the belly of a donkey or a cow!

“Followers of the Way, as I look at it, we’re no different from Shakyamuni. In all our various activities each day, is there anything we lack? The wonderful light of the six [sense] faculties has never for a moment ceased to shine. If you could just look at it this way, then you’ll be the kind of person who has nothing to do for the rest of his life.”

Lin-chi I-hsuan (Jap. Rinzai Gigen) was one of the most important figures in the history of Zen, the founder of the school that bears his name. The main body of his teachings can be found in a work entitled *The Recorded Sayings of Lin-chi* (*Ch. Lin-chi Lu, Jap. Rinzaïroku*). Lin-chi presented a vigorous and often rough manner of teaching; he is particularly well known for his shout in response to questions about the Dharma. Lin-chi’s master was the illustrious Huang-po, and his line of descendents has continued to the present day in Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and now North America, Europe, and Australia.

The above section was quoted from *The Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi*, translated by Burton Watson, 1993 Shambhala Publications, pp 23-24.

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Sangha News

Fundraising Update

Many thanks to those who have made pledges to the in-house fundraiser. If you haven't yet made a pledge, please consider doing so. The Fundraising Committee has recently completed and made available to all supporting members the Centers' Core Business Document, which details the goals of the Center regarding the renovation of the building; what we hope to achieve, and how we plan to accomplish it. It is designed mainly for potential large donors who would be interested in funding our project. Nevertheless, as this is a group effort by and for all of us, it is important that we all be familiar with what it presents. If you are a supporting member and have not yet picked up your fundraising packet (which includes the Core Document, a cover letter, and several fundraising brochures that can be distributed to friends, family, and others who may have an interest in contributing to our cause), you will be receiving one in the mail shortly.

The completion of this document represents the launching of our out-of-house fundraising efforts. Current estimates place our renovation costs, which include the purchase of neighboring properties, at around \$2.5 million. Of this total, the Sangha has been asked to contribute \$250,000. At the time of this writing, we have received \$48,500 in pledges from the Sangha. This is an excellent start on our in-house fundraising efforts, but there is still further to go. Even a small pledge helps, so please contribute if you can.

New ZCD Website, E-mail

The Temple has obtained its own domain name and consequently has a new website address:

zcenterofdenver.org. There are also new e-mail addresses for the office, Sensei and a newly established address for the Board of Directors. They are respectively: **office@zcenterofdenver.org**, **mdhenry@zcenterofdenver.org**, **bod@zcenterofdenver.org**

The Temple will soon phase out entirely from AOL so please update your address books. Sensei is still using his AOL address (mdhenry@aol.com) for the time being; he will send out notification when he makes the change.

Zen Center of Denver?

Some may have noticed that our Temple is being referred to as the Zen Center of Denver. For years we have been accustomed to using "DZC" or "Denver Zen Center". The change is in fact no change, merely a correction of usage to correspond with the Temple's legal name. We are officially known as the "Zen Center of Denver."

Childcare Night

In order to accommodate childcare needs of Center members, parents are welcome to bring their children to the center on Tuesday evenings. Each parent gets the opportunity to sit and go to dokusan while the other parent watches the child/children upstairs in the auditorium. Childcare can also be arranged on Tuesday evenings for single parents. For more details, please contact Leda Swann and Hoag Holmgren at 303-258-0240 or call the Center.

Sangha Picnic

The Sangha Picnic will again be held at Peggy Sheehan's home, 3020 E. 10th Ave (between Milwaukee and St. Paul St.). Bring family, friends, and food, and maybe a musical instrument! Directions to Peggy's house can be found on the bulletin board in the foyer, or feel free to call the ZCD office or Peggy to find out how to get there. Festivities will begin around noon.

Wind Power

Colorado residents have the opportunity to buy electricity generated by wind power. The switch is seamless, appearing as an extra line on your utility bill, and only costs a few more dollars per month. Buying just 100 kilowatt-hours per month at \$5.00 prevents 1200 pounds of coal from being burned and keeps 2400 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere or is equivalent to planting a half-acre of trees. For more information, visit www.cogreenpower.org or call 1-800-824-1688.

New Buddha Figure

Roger and Susan Voight, Sangha members who have recently relocated to Germany for an undetermined period of time, have loaned to the Center their large gilded Bud-

dha figure. The figure was made in Nepal and is around 500 years old. Transporting the figure to Germany is difficult, as it is very fragile, so it will remain here for the time being in our safekeeping. The figure depicts Shakyamuni Buddha in the Earth Witness Mudra (right finger tips touching the earth) on the backs of 3 elephants. It is a breathtakingly beautiful statue, with a lovely smile, that naturally inspires feelings of devotion. The statue currently resides in the Auditorium. Thank you, Roger and Susan, for sharing this treasure with the Sangha!

Gassho Corner

A deep gassho to:

Kathy and Ed Wydallis, and other members of the Yard committee for planting and maintaining flowers and shrubs around the Temple. They have all put in a great deal of work to create such a pleasing garden for our enjoyment and for the enhancement of our temple.

Upcoming Events

Sangha Picnic

July 4

Kannon Ceremony

July 12

Children's Zendo

July 15

Zazenkai

July 22, August 19

All Sangha Workday

August 25

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