



Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Denver Zen Center

Summer 2000

Weaving the Practice of Zen into the Fabric of One's Life Danan Henry Sensei

When returning from Hawaii after working with Aitken Roshi, I am always gratified to see so many people energetically engage the practice at the Temple. The style of practice during the Fall (September through December) and Spring (March through June) training periods here at the Lotus in the Flame Temple can be quite intense for many members. It is not uncommon for some members to attend two or three evening sittings, two or three morning sittings and one to three dokusans per week. Such persons usually attend all the teishos, one or two zazenkai (all-day sitting), one or two sesshin (7-day retreat) and at least one samu (half day work practice session) per training period. In addition, most members put in considerable time working on committees and attending the all-sangha meetings by way of maintaining and running the Center and practicing together in the arena of interpersonal relationships. Also, the Monastery Without Walls participants are under considerable pressure to run the zendo in a correct, meticulous, wholehearted, and kindly way, and are subject to the pressures of accountability. Finally, in addition to having family and job responsibilities, some students are engaged in systematic mindfulness training that is carried out away from the Temple and taken up in dokusan.

There is no end to formal practice, but during the Winter (January & February) and Summer (July & August) training periods it is natural and beneficial that those who have been practicing so intensely at the Temple spend more time at home with family, take more time off for recreation and travel if possible and get more rest. This is a time for strengthening one's sitting at home, but do not completely abandon formal practice. Sit at the Temple once or twice a week, and listen to taped teishos at the Temple when they are scheduled.

However, new members who wish to sincerely engage Zen practice so that it might truly make a difference

in their lives, must not decrease their amount of participation in formal practice at the Temple during the Summer and Winter training periods. It is by practicing at the Temple with the support of like minded people that we are able to establish the practice as an integral part of our lives and experience the results of this practice (greater equanimity, selflessness and compassion). During the Winter and Summer periods, the Monastery Without Walls members maintain the full schedule of sittings for the Sangha, regularly scheduled tape teishos are played and daisan (instruction in the dokusan room) is provided for those working on a breath practice. It is also essential that new students go to zazenkai to get the feel of extended sitting during these training periods.

Because I am away from the Temple during the Summer and Winter training periods, after intense training during the previous four months, there is naturally a drop in attendance at the Temple. As was said, this is not only natural but necessary for those who have been deeply involved in practice during the Spring and Fall periods. However, this may not be the case for those who have not yet established a regular practice and wish to do so. New practitioners must be a little more disciplined in sitting at the Temple with fewer people in the zendo and without the benefit of live teishos and dokusan.

The membership is growing steadily and the time will soon come when there will be a 4-day sesshin conducted by the Monastery Without Walls during the Summer and Winter training periods for those attending their first sesshin.

Constancy and perseverance are essential if you wish to weave the practice of Zen into the fabric of your life. You can traverse an entire continent if you'll just put one foot in front of the other, ceaselessly. Don't let up.

Sangha News

Realizing the Vision: an Update

It's been almost 2 years since our move to this facility. We've settled in and our practice forms have taken root here. Now we mobilize to move upstairs to make the vision that precipitated the move a reality.

The Architecture and Design Committee is meeting frequently and finalizing goals so as to be able to make our needs known in a concrete way to architects and contractors. The committee's current focus is on determining realistic funding needs for this ambitious project.

Sensei, working with the newly revitalized Fundraising Committee, is preparing for his first foray to the northeast (planned hopefully for the fall) to solicit donations for our Temple renovation.

Now is the time for you, as a Sangha member, to prepare yourself for this effort. First, we need funds. This is a somewhat complex project, and seed money may be necessary for fundraising materials, consultants, architects, and as yet unforeseen resources. Any donations in excess of dues are especially appreciated at this time. We also need your energy. The Fundraising Committee is looking for a few good members, as is the Architecture and Design Committee. Most of all, we need your spirit. It was only through the consensus of the Sangha that the mandate to move to this beautiful facility came into being, and so it will be with the renovation.

Don't get too comfortable in our temporary zendo. Visit the auditorium more frequently and sit quietly for a few moments. This is the space in which we and future practitioners will sit zazen, go to dokusan, sleep in dormitories during sesshin and monastic residency training periods, contemplate the heart of compassion in the Kannon Room, and take part in many other Zen Center practice forms and activities.

Our destiny at the Zen Center of Denver is on the verge of being realized. Please consider this and get involved. Let's enjoy our new struggles together.

John Emelin
Architecture & Design and Fundraising Committees

Initiation of Renovation Project

Efforts to begin the renovation of the Auditorium and ultimately the temple as a whole have begun in earnest. The Architecture and Design and Fundraising Committees have been meeting regularly to develop preliminary plans for the renovation and to prepare materials and strategies for fundraising, as mentioned in the above article.

As we shift into this active mode for renovation, all projects that will permanently affect the appearance or structure of the property need to be cleared by the Architecture and Design Committee. This is to ensure that such changes are in harmony with the overall renovation plans, so that people's energies and funds are not wasted.

The Architecture and Design Committee is open to anyone with an interest in how the building will be renovated.

Those with strong design skills and anyone with a background in construction are especially encouraged to join.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is also seeking members. Without the funds, our dreams for a fully functioning Zen training center cannot be realized, so this is a vital area for Sangha participation. The main thrust of this fundraising campaign will be towards individuals and organizations

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that are known to support Dharma organizations. The campaign will require some travel on Sensei's part to meet with potential donors to present our plans and needs. There is a lot of planning and work that needs to be done to make this happen, and anyone who is interested should contact Debra or Ron Zapka, or just call the DZC Office.

Sangha Picnic

The annual Sangha Picnic will be held this year at Peggy Sheehan's house, on Tuesday, July 4th, starting at noon. The Center will provide beverages, everyone else should bring a dish, snack, or dessert to share. A sign-up sheet is posted in the foyer; please indicate what food item you would like to bring, and if you can help set up or help with the cleanup afterward. Please note that there is no formal zazen scheduled for morning or evening that day. Peggy's address is 3020 E. 10th Avenue in Denver, between Milwaukee and St. Paul Streets. Directions can be found on the sign up sheet, or simply call the Office.

All-Sangha Workday Schedule Change

The All-Sangha Workdays provide two important benefits to the Sangha: They give us an opportunity to work with like minded people and get to know each other better, and they bring Sangha members together to complete projects that cannot be accomplished alone.

Both the schedule and formalities are relaxed during the All-Sangha Workday to create a comfortable atmosphere where participants will naturally see each other from a different point of view. The workday is divided into three blocks, and participants are requested to work for at least two blocks. Everyone is encouraged to stay for lunch as a time to socialize. Structured in this way, the organization of the workday will not be disrupted by participants leaving unexpectedly.

The schedule is as follows:

Early Morning Block	8:00 -10:00 AM
Late Morning Block (bagels)	10:00 -11:45 AM
Lunch	11:45 -12:45 PM
Afternoon Block	12:45 - 3:00 PM

Note: The early morning block starts with zazen. The last 15 minutes of the late morning and afternoon blocks will be cleanup periods.

The workday schedule should pose less of a quandary for participants and planners. Organizers and work leaders can more effectively allocate resources with better knowledge of participant availability. A sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board several weeks prior to the Workday. Please sign up at your earliest convenience. All in-town Supporting Members are required to participate in one All-Sangha Workday per year; Associate Members are encouraged to participate as well. Our gratitude cannot be expressed sufficiently for your past support. Please, let us come together as a Sangha on August 26th.

New Kannon Statue

The new Kannon statue residing in the Temple foyer appeared shortly after the April sesshin (which was, incidentally, dedicated to Kannon). Given by an anonymous donor, the large, finely detailed porcelain statue is in the "thousand hands" style, representative of the infinite responsiveness of the Bodhisattva to those in need. The statue was made in China early in the last century, just prior to the Communist Revolution. It takes the place of the wooden Kannon figure, which now watches over the dokusan line. The new Kannon is a magnificent addition to our temple, and we are very grateful to the donor for giving it to us.

Gassho Corner

A deep gassho to:

Peggy Sheehan for making the last training period special by providing yoga classes and meals for the Sangha.

The Yard Committee for planting and maintaining the lovely flower beds around the Temple grounds.

Lindsey Trout, Joel Tagert, and Shonen Dunley for the beautiful handmade tea ceremony cups.

Several Sangha members have made very large financial contributions, totalling about \$8,000. Because of these donations, the Center's financial health is very strong.

Upcoming Events

Sangha Picnic	July 4
Kannon Ceremony	July 18
Zazenkai	July 23
Children's Zendo	July 30
Repentance Ceremony	August 3
Zazenkai	August 20
Ceremony of Aid	August 24
All Sangha Workday	August 26

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