



# Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Zen Center of Denver

Summer 2005

## Effort

Unless we make the effort, nothing happens. It is said in the Abhidharma, the Buddhist psychology, that effort is the root of all achievement, the foundation of all attainment. If we want to get to the top of the mountain and just sit at the bottom thinking about it, it's not going to happen

–Joseph Goldstein

Without energy and the power to concentrate that energy, no Way can be pursued. Energy is increased by living under discipline and in association with those who know how to concentrate; it is dissipated by living planlessly and with planless people.

–Trevor Leggett

There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not starting, and not going all the way.

–Shakyamuni Buddha

He who moves not forward goes backward.

–Johann Goethe

No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright. Those who succeed owe their success to their perseverance.

–Ramana Maharshi

To see what is right and not do it, is want of courage.

–Confucius

Growth is optional...Choose wisely.

–Karen Clark

If you are enlightened concerning what real things are, you will know that we pass from one husk to another like travelers in a night's lodging house. But if you are not enlightened, you rush about wildly. Suddenly earth, water, fire, and air are separated (corporeal death), and, like a crab with its seven arms and eight legs in boiling water you struggle! Don't say I didn't warn you!

–Mumon Ekai

Keeping company with the immature is like going on a long journey with the enemy. The company of the wise is joyful,

like a reunion with one's family. Therefore, live among the wise, who are understanding, patient, responsible, and noble. Keep their company like the moon moving among the stars.

–Shakyamuni Buddha

From the moment we first engage the dharma, we encounter the truth of our Buddhature. This is the fundamental teaching of Zen, our essential reality. Knowing this is our nature, shouldn't we recognize our obligation and assume responsibility to realize it directly? We often think of obligation as a burden, but to realize our true nature is to alleviate the profound weight of our confusion, anger and fear.

–Geoffrey Shugen Arnold

The pathologies of a lay life relate to a kind of getting lost, a forgetting of the quest, an unconscious immersion in the world. So much time is spent changing diapers or watching the stock market ticker that zazen never gets up enough steam to bring about a real change. We are so close to the greed, the sadness, the anger, and the ignorance that it's impossible not to get stained by them...The world penetrates us. But this wounding of consciousness can be the essence if the Bodhisattva life.

–John Tarrant

Zen Masters have just made people alike sit up straight and calmly abide in the Self. This itself is the great teaching of tranquility and happiness. So you should practice carefully and reach the realm of peace and happiness yourself. Once a person has reached this realm of tranquility and happiness, he will be like someone who has eaten his fill.

–Keizan Jokin

It is essential that anyone wishing to realize himself or herself and know the realm of tranquility and happiness, attend at least one evening sitting at the Temple per week, sit at home every day when not sitting at the Temple, attend teisho and dokusan regularly, attend periodic sesshins and practice diligent mindfulness in the course of one's daily rounds. Nothing less can bring about genuine transformation at the core of one's being.

–Danan Henry

# Sangha News

## Zazen

*The heart of Zen training is zazen. Without zazen there is no Zen, no realization, and no application of the practice.*

—Robert Aitken

The most important way that we realize our nature, support one another, and support the Center, is by doing zazen together in the zendo. There is no other reason for the Temple's existence as important as to practice zazen together. It is wonderful that our sense of community, growing out of the shared aspiration of our Zen practice together over the years, is now flowering like never before. So, I find it paradoxical that attendance has fallen off so radically that it is not unusual for only one or two persons to attend a sitting in addition to the Monastery Without Walls members who are running the sitting. While a number of members support the Temple with consistent daily and weekly practice, it is clear that we are in the midst of an ongoing slump.

We decided to open up the Center to the public so that people could come and practice with us at all of our daily sittings. Now there are people coming to practice with us and most of the time there is no "us" for them to practice with! As such, not only do they not receive the support of strong sitters, there is no way for them to be able to understand the kinhin route, how to get up and where to stand, how to bow and do prostrations, find chant booklets, etcetera, as there are not enough members (sometimes none) to follow. I find that I have to apologize at the end of sittings to these good people who are trying their best to sit with us but are having such a hard time doing so.

In order to bring about some genuine transformation at the core of your being and to safeguard the survival of the Temple as a daily lay practice center, I urge you to attend at least one evening sitting per week where circumstances permit. As Woody Allen said, "The secret of life is just showing up." The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. So take yourself in hand, gently but firmly, bring yourself to the Temple, and practice together that you may reach that place of eternal serenity and return to the world with greater clarity, peace, and compassion.

—Danan

## Zen Practice

We all have a limited amount of time and energy available for practice. To help us prioritize this time, the following list of practice forms is given in order of importance:

1. Daily/weekly practice (zazen, teisho, dokusan, samu, mindfulness)
2. Periodic zazenkai, weekend, and seven-day sesshin.
3. Adjunctive practices, including:
  - a) Daily body practice (i.e. tai chi, yoga, kyudo)
  - b) Daily art practice (i.e. calligraphy, ikebana)
  - c) Mountains and Rivers sesshin, Four Postures sesshin, Art Practice sesshin
  - d) Engaged Buddhist practice (social, political, economic, and environmental activism).

## Elimination of Monday Evening Sittings

Due to poor attendance at evening sittings, particularly on Monday evenings, we find that it is no longer feasible to have three evening sittings per week. Therefore, starting July 11, we will eliminate Monday evening sittings until further notice. We hope that concentrating our energies into two evening sittings per week will not only make the sittings stronger for our guests, but more importantly, will ignite and enliven our Sangha. The importance of sitting together in the evenings as a Sangha cannot be overemphasized. We cannot do this work alone. Practice sustains us, and it sustains the Temple. Our practice together is the foundation of our Temple, and there is a real danger at this time for that foundation to crumble. We currently stand at a crossroads, and it is my hope that we remember the joy of practicing together and do what needs to be done to safeguard zazen as the cornerstone of Zen practice at our Temple.

—Danan

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## Sunday Talks

The issue of the new 9am starting time for teisho and other talks on Sundays was revisited at the May Sangha Meeting. A number of members expressed the difficulty they had with the new starting time, the main issue being that the later time cuts into the rest of the day, sometimes even spilling into the afternoon for those belonging to groups that frequently meet after teisho. On the other hand, those who prefer the later starting time appreciate the extra sleep, and some who travel long distances to come to the Center find the new time easier. The result of the discussion was that the Sangha would be polled as to whether or not they preferred starting at 8am or 9am, their reasons for doing so, and how strongly they felt about the issue on a scale of one to five. A total of forty supporting members (a quorum) responded to the poll, with 19 favoring a return to 8am, 14 favoring 9am and 7 who had no preference. With regard to how strongly each group felt about the issue, the ratings of those who favored 8am totaled 71.5 points and those who favored 9am totaled 47.8. Because a majority of those who responded strongly preferred starting at 8am, we will return to this time starting on July 10 with the Shila Ango opening ceremony and Dharma talk. Unless otherwise noted, 8am is the default time for all events that take place on Sunday.

On a related note, the following is offered to clarify the various forms of talks offered at the Temple:

- **Teisho:** one of the “three pillars of Zen,” these are talks given by Roshi or another fully sanctioned Zen teacher. More than a simple lecture or discourse, they are a direct presentation of Zen Buddhist teachings.
- **Dharma Talk:** Dharma talks are given by senior students that are beginning to take a more prominent role as leaders in the Sangha.
- **Senior Talk:** These are talks given by senior students that have begun to show genuine insight and maturity in practice. Senior talks tend to emphasize the speakers own personal experience with the Dharma, and can be very inspiring.

## Credit Card Payments

The Center has recently acquired a credit card service that allows members to make automatic monthly billing for dues and other donations. This enhancement is made through our existing financial software and generally makes credit card based transactions easier to do. If you would like to set up automatic payments for dues and other donations, please contact the office by phone or by meeting with Shonen Dunley. For security reasons, please do not email credit card numbers.

## Talk and Discussion

During this Shila Ango, we will conclude our investigation of the Eightfold Noble Path that began during the previous winter Shila Ango. The series will resume with Right Effort on Tuesday, July 19, and continue with Right Mindfulness on Tuesday, August 16. Right Meditation will be discussed on Tuesday, August 30, and the series will conclude with a recap by Roshi on Tuesday, September 13. Everyone is encouraged to join in this valuable study of one of the most essential teachings of Buddhism.

## Kyudo–Japanese Archery

The Center will soon be hosting Japanese archery classes by the Ryuko Kyudojo, a Boulder-based dojo founded by Kanjuro Shibata Sensei, a reknowned kyudo master. Kyudo is the practice of contemplative archery, made famous in the west by Eugene Herrigel's *Zen and the Art of Archery*. The classes will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7pm, and are currently in the preliminary stages of development. Further notice will be given when the classes are open for enrollment. Please contact Yushin Cicciu for further information.

## Monroe Organic Farms

The Center has recently become a distribution center for organic produce from Monroe Organic Farms, a family farm in Weld County that helped to pioneer the concept of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). According to Monroe Farms literature, “Through a CSA, the farmer and the consumer (member) provide mutual support, and share the benefits and risks of food production. Members pay membership and produce fees to cover the anticipated costs

of the farm operation. In return, members receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season." Each week, the farm harvests organic produce and brings it to various neighborhood distribution centers throughout the Front Range, including the Center. To receive produce, you must become a member of the farm by signing up and paying your membership and produce fee. Sangha members are encouraged to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity for fresh, locally grown food. To find out more about Monroe Organic Farms, brochures with registration forms are available in the foyer, or visit their website at [www.monroefarm.com](http://www.monroefarm.com).

### Sangha Picnic

The Sangha picnic will take place on Sunday, July 3, starting around noon. This is a potluck gathering, so please bring food and/or beverages to share. Family and friends are welcome to come as well. The picnic will be at the same location as last year, on the east side of Sloan's Lake Park where Stuart and 24th come together. To get there, take Sheridan to West Byron Place and go east. West Byron Place will become Stuart at about the place where the picnic is. There are parking lots in the vicinity, as well as ample street parking. A sign-up sheet for the picnic is on the bulletin board.

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### Iraq War Presentation

On Wednesday, July 6th, from 7-9 pm the Zen Center will host a special event focusing on the ongoing suffering in Iraq. This event will feature a presentation entitled, "He's not an insurgent—he's my cousin," by Iraqi American Dahlia Wasfi. Also included will be a report from a U.S. soldier who served in Iraq, and opportunities for community dialogue and action planning. The program is being presented by Community Voices for Peace, a newly-formed group that includes Buddhist Peace Fellowship members Marilyn Gruver and Nancy Peters. Co-sponsors include the Rocky Mountain Buddhist Peace Fellowship, the Conflict Center, and the pastors of several northwest Denver churches. For more information or to help with the event, contact Nancy at [npeters0126@comcast.net](mailto:npeters0126@comcast.net).

### Cell Phones

Everyone is reminded to please turn off their cell phones before temple events. This is true even if you have left the phone in the changing room, as the sound carries to the zendo and lower level.

### Gassho Corner

Many thanks to Jason Polk for donating a color printer/copier/scanner to the office.