



Mountains Talking

Lotus in the Flame Temple, Zen Center of Denver

Winter 2006

Luminous Mind

A morning talk given by Roshi during the December 2005 Rohatsu sesshin, which commemorates Shakyamuni Buddha's Supreme Enlightenment.

The Buddha said, "Luminous is this mind, brightly shining, but it is colored by attachments that visit it. This unlearned people do not really understand, and so do not cultivate the mind. Luminous is this mind, brightly shining, and it is free of the attachments that visit it. This the noble follower of the way really understands; so for them there is cultivation of the mind."

The luminous mind is brightly shining like an eternal moon forever glowing in the sky. But it is darkened because we remain involved with our various preoccupations. Remember, your most important thoughts distract you from your practice so that your original bright mind cannot shine through.

Aitken Roshi said, "It may seem to us that there are things more important than counting the breaths, breathing Mu or the salient point of a particular koan. But in fact all these things are simply distractions."

We are here in sesshin to ceaselessly practice the cultivation of the mind, whereby we become unattached to all thoughts, preoccupations, and distractions, and reach the clear bright mind, the luminous mind.

You don't have to try to get rid of your preoccupations. You need only do the practice gently and let other things go.

Practice can be like reading your favorite poem. You naturally want to savor each line. So savor the breath, savor Mu. Stop right there and savor it; enjoy your Mu. It can be delicious.

Just practice with interest. Just practice for its own sake, for the fun of it, for the joy of it. When we practice zazen like this, ideas, thoughts, preoccupations, and attachments dissolve; the mind becomes transparent and its inherent luminescence shines forth.

"Luminous is this mind, brightly shining, and it is free of the attachments that visit it."

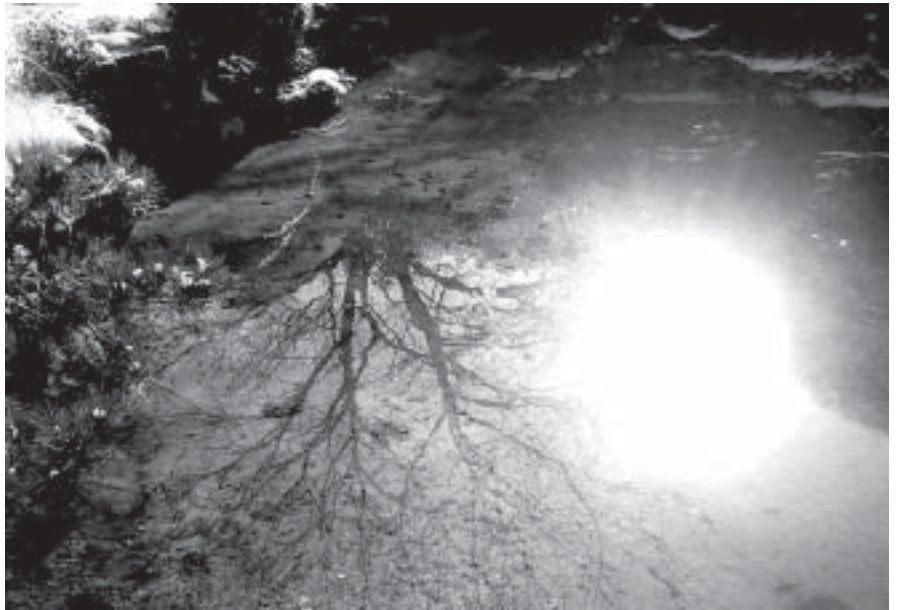


Photo by Shonen Dunley

Sangha News

Calendar Changes

The Center will be returning to a yearly training schedule that alternates four-month prajna angos and two-month shila angos. The prajna angos will take place from March through June and September through December, and the shila angos will take place during January and February, and July and August. Other than adding an additional month, the prajna angos will remain the same in that they represent a more intensive period of practice, with Roshi being in residence full-time.

The shila angos, however will undergo a more extensive change. Roshi will not be in residence, and leadership and teaching responsibilities during these times will be shared among those he has appointed as assistant teachers: Shonen Dunley (January only), Karin Kempe, Ken Morgareidge, and Peggy Sheehan, along with the strong support and assistance of the Lay Order and Monastery Without Walls. Dokusan will no longer be held on Thursday evening and Friday mornings, but daisan will be offered at every sitting. The reason for this change is to allow those who are growing into a teaching role greater autonomy in leading the sangha, and to enable Roshi to have time for rest and personal development. Roshi will still be available to personal students who wish to meet or talk with him to discuss practice issues.

Also during the shila ango, morning sittings will be held only on Wednesday and Friday. With less emphasis being placed on temple practice during the shila angos, attendance at sittings during these times customarily decreases. However, members of the Monastery Without Walls still had to run the same amount of sittings and be at the temple just as much, so this new schedule allows them to have a break as well. During the prajna angos, we will continue to have morning sittings Tuesday through Friday. Though we will be having fewer events during the Shila angos, there is still plenty going on at the Temple, and everyone is encouraged to continue to come.

Office Manager Position Opening

As Shonen Dunley will be relocating to Tempe, Arizona at the end of January, the position of office manager will be open. An ideal starting date would be January 16, to allow time for training. The job is around 30 hours per week; general office hours are Monday through Friday 9-4, but are flexible. The position pays a monthly salary, plus waiver of ZCD dues and fees (sesshin, zazenkai, samu, etc), free room if needed and available, Kaiser Permanente health insurance, and some paid vacation time. Applicants should possess general clerical/administrative skills, computer skills (Windows 98, XP), and good knowledge of Zen Center policies, structure, and membership. Accounting, desktop publishing, database, and web page design skills are a plus. Experience is preferred, but we will train a highly motivated individual. Zen Center members will be considered for the position first.

Jukai

At the Jukai ceremony, held on Sunday November 27, the following people received the precepts for the first time: Dan Baldwin, Marilyn Gruver, David King, and Connie Lane. To receive the precepts is to formally enter the Bodhisattva path, and to make a commitment to the Buddhadharma.

On the same day, during a private ceremony held by members of the Lay Order, Dennis Tesar was granted full ordination, receiving a black sitting robe. Full ordination recognizes that a person's practice has matured to a point where there is no longer any separation between their life and the Dharma. Dennis has been a member of the Temple for around 30 years, and his constant, steady presence, great sense of humor, and generosity with his time, skills, and energy has benefitted us profoundly.

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Weekend Sesshin

A weekend sesshin is scheduled from Friday, February 17 through Sunday, February 19. Those who are considering attending their first seven-day sesshin in the future are especially encouraged to attend, as it is a wonderful way to gain some experience in extended sitting and the forms of sesshin. The sesshin will begin on Friday evening at 7pm, and will conclude on Sunday at 3:30pm. Sunday will be a regular zazenkai, with a Dharma Talk that is open to non-sesshin/zazenkai participants.

Talk and Discussion

During this shila ango, the talk and discussions will be on the Four Abodes (also known as the *Brahmaviharas*, or Divine Abodes). These are lovingkindness, compassion, joy in the good fortune of others, and equanimity. The four abodes can be viewed as an expression of the functioning of Buddhature, profound states arising from practice, or ideals for the individual and society. They are a rich subject for study, and everyone is encouraged to join in the discussions.

Self-Service Teisho Copying

The audio committee is in the process of setting up a self-service teisho copying station that will be located in the tape library. Equipment and instructions will be available to copy CDs and tapes of teishos and talks given by Roshi and others. The cost for each CD or tape will be \$5.00. The committee hopes to have the copy station set up during this training period.

Daisan Schedule

Tuesday Evening: Peggy Sheehan

Wednesday Morning: Shonen Dunley (January only; Ken will take over in February)

Thursday Evening: Ken Morgareidge

Friday Morning: Karin Kempe

Upcoming Events

Shila Ango Opening Ceremony	January 8
Kannon Ceremony	January 12
T&D: Lovingkindness	January 17
Zazenkai	January 22
Repentance Ceremony	January 26
T&D: Compassion	January 31
Parinirvana Ceremony	February 9
T&D: Joy in the Good Fortune of Others	February 14
Weekend Sesshin	February 17-19
Zazenkai	February 19
T&D: Equanimity	February 28



Photo by Ken Morgareidge

Participants in the December 2005 Rohatsu sesshin

Front row, from left: *Peggy Sheehan, Mike Tabor, Danan Henry Roshi, Jason Polk, Becky Wethington.*

Back row from left: *Bill Hamaker, Mark Douglas, Ken Morgareidge, Geoff Keeton, John Steele, Peggy Curry, Dan Baldwin, George Matthews, Joseph Kinczel, Laura Menzer, Karin Kempe, Patty Kelley, Rafe Martin, Susan Kay.*

Not pictured: *Janice Petersen.*

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