

Mt. Equity Zendo Zephyr

Mt. Equity Zendo, Jihoji

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A Giant Step for Mt. Equity Zendo, Jihoji Abess Installation Ceremony for NiOsho

by NiOsho

After an equal number of years of training in Japan, and founding a Soto Zen temple in North America, the head teacher of Mt. Equity Zendo Jihoji, Rev. Dai-En Bennage, has been informed that it is time to take on the test of "ascending the mountain seat" to become Abbot/Abess of Mt. Equity Zendo, Jihoji. This last test of the fourth rank of a Soto Zen priest will take place here on May 21st and 22nd of 2005. The head teacher's Training Master, Abess Aoyama Roshi, will be attending the event in the company of forty other Soto Zen nuns and lay followers accompanying her from Japan. Her lineage teacher, now training master at Sojiji, Noda Daito Roshi and his entourage, and the Bishop of North America, Akiba Gengo Roshi, will also be in attendance, along with other guests, a large number of American Soto Zen nuns, and our Sangha.

There are at least four ranks that someone dedicated to the Awakened Way must pass through.

The first is called *Joza*, one who is initiated, the first step in ordination, and registered as a Soto priest. The second is *Zagen*, one who has completed a 90-day *ango* (training period) as a junior monk, taking the first step into leadership and being tested in Dharma combat in a ceremony

ognized as an abbot or abbess of a temple in an Installation Ceremony. If a Soto Zen teacher gives the priest initiation ceremony to his or her disciples before completing the fourth rank, the disciples are registered through the teacher's master's temple, as is the case with NiOsho's disciples.

Once the Installation Ceremony has been completed, all further registration happens directly through one's own temple. Soto Regulations state in Article 6 that a master-priest is one who attained the monastic rank of *Osho* or higher.



called *Shuso Hossen*. This generally happens after the third year or so of novice training. This ceremony often is included in an Installation Ceremony. The third step follows Transmission when one is permitted to wear a colored robe, is called *Osho* after completing the *Zuise* ceremony at the Two Head Temples, symbolic of attaining the rank of abbot, and added to the Soto Zen Register. The fourth step is when one becomes a *Dai Osho* by leading a 90-day *ango* and being rec-

Getting Started

Entrance into the Zen priesthood as profession begins with the tonsure. Not unlike the Catholic tradition, there are years of novice training wherein one's position is tenuous until signs of stability and maturity become evident. This changes when a monk or nun is eligible for the ceremony called *Shuso Hossen*, or Chief Junior Monk's Dharma Combat. It can be done as a single ceremony or in con-

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Five MEZ Students Receive Precepts

by Daijun

On a warm and humid evening in August, the last night of our Long Summer Sesshin, friends, family and Dharma brothers and sisters gathered to extend their support to five students taking

with the Five Precepts “spilling over” to benefit others, an acknowledgement from both student and teacher are made to signify a student’s readiness to take on this new level of responsibility. Several months prior to the ceremony, as a symbol of



part in the Precepts Ceremony. Four students, Jakuen Fedorowicz, Keien Boustellis, Tokuen Gray, and Daijun Brenner all made a commitment to practice the Sixteen Precepts; Dokai Wenger undertook to practice the Five Precepts.

After much hard work, commitment to practice and evidence of students’ work on themselves

entering this level of commitment training (sixteen precepts), students set forth to sew and assemble a *Rakusu*, analogous to the Buddha robe. The complexity and vexing nature of sewing the *Rakusu* offers many opportunities to follow in the Buddha Way: compassion, diligence, interbeing, patience and single-pointed focus. To symbolize the



The Precepts Ceremonies, July 24th. Jakuen Fedorowicz and Daijun Bressler in front, and Tokuen Gray and Keien Boutselis second row sewed rakus for the Sixteen Precepts. David Dokai Wenger, middle, received a wagesa with the five mindfulness trainings.

Five Precepts a student wears a *Wagesa*, adorned with the symbols from Soto Zen’s two head Training Monasteries, Eiheji on the left and Sojiji on the right.

In true Zen fashion, all those present joined in celebration with cake, ice-cream, tea and lots of hugs.

Obon Ceremony for the Deceased

At the end of our August Sesshin we commemorated the passing of our loved ones, known in Japan as *Obon*. As the story goes, one of the Buddha’s first disciples, Mokuren Sonja, learned that his mother was suffering in hell. Whenever she tried to eat something it turned into fire. So Mokuren Sonja went to the Buddha and asked him how he could save his mother from hell. The Buddha told him that if he made offerings of food to “hungry ghosts” then he would not



only save his mother from hell, but save seven generations of his ancestors. Hungry ghosts are mythical creatures that have huge bellies and big appetites. But their necks are so long and thin that they can never get enough to eat. They are symbolic of that dimension of our self which is never satisfied.

This act of feeding hungry ghosts in order to save our ancestors became a tradition which was passed on through India, China, Japan, and, now, the United States. It is a special time

set aside to show gratitude to our ancestors, and is also an opportunity to bring about closure, especially with those lost within the past year.

Our *Obon* Ceremony this year held special importance. Shortly beforehand, we were contacted by a Hawaiian-born Japanese American lady, Mrs. Amy Ino Tsuji, who wished a memorial ceremony for both her parents who were deceased last year. A *Butsudan* or Buddhist home altar that she had ordered arrived on that day, the birthday of her father, and she wanted by all means to have it blessed before the day was through. She brought her two delightful children with her from Baltimore, MD, along with offerings of bright fruit and flowers that made one think of Hawaii. Shortly after, she came again at the end of our *Obon* Sesshin to participate in the closing ceremony. We offered up the Heart Sutra in Japanese as she was accustomed to hearing it at her home temple on Oahu—headed by a colleague of NiOsho’s. The closing sutra, *Kanromon*, we recited in its English translation, to her delight, now being able to understand the meaning. It was a great gift to our Sangha to have been able to hold this ceremony, not only to our members just beginning to understand the full significance of *Obon*, but also to someone very far away from her parental home, for whom the ceremony held poignant meaning, and also the ability to make closure. It is without a doubt that the *Obon* Sesshin of next summer will mean even more to our ever-maturing Dharma Sangha.



FUNZOE

The Buddha's Grand Robe of Tatters

by NiOsho

Zen Master Dogen has written a fascicle in his great masterpiece SHOBOGENZO (The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teachings) called "The Merit of the Buddha Robe". In it he describes the *Funzoe*, the *okesa* or Buddha robe made of material that no one else wants. It has been chewed by insects or rats or cows, used in childbirth, or to

in color is also made. When the tiny sewing goods shop near Kyoto Station learned we needed 106 cards of light grey silk thread for a Buddha robe and they only had five in that color they asked us to return just before closing time to pick up our purchase. In the meantime, they went about to branch stores collecting the same color thread until they had fulfilled our requirement!

When the head teacher went on a personal alms round in Nagoya in 1982, in order to pay for her food and simple health insurance, she came upon a mound



Yuko and Daishin hold the funzoe on loan from the Nisodo in Nagoya, Japan. Sangha members will sew Mt. Equity's funzoe for the abbess ceremony.

wrap corpses. It is washed and the suitable areas cut and patched to make the *okesa*. Traditionally, it is made in panels of from seven to twenty-three strips, nine being the most prevalent. In each strip are three panels, one short and two others twice as long, alternating. The *Funzoe* is made of four layers of very lightweight silk kimono lining material, if available. Where material might be weak, patches are applied resembling clouds or mountains. They are stitched around without any hem. Then to further strengthen the material, double thread is sewn in the pattern of rain over the panels and patches, taking care not to cross the threads. Strips of a stronger material surround the *Funzoe* and separate the short and long panels. A bowing mat that matches

of material in front of a kimono shop that had gone bankrupt, and was donated the material. Kept all these years, they at last will have come to fruition as a Buddha robe for part of the Abbess Installation Ceremonies in May. Greatly aided by Yuko Wakayama here, and our sewing teacher in Japan, disciple of Sawaki Kodo Roshi, Okamoto Kobun Sensei, *via* her disciple's computer expertise, we have set out to assemble one of the first *Funzoe* made in the western world. Yuko-san has done a great deal of preparation work, basting, sewing one mountain per panel as an example, making lines for the rain stitch with light chalk, and sewing three lines as examples. Volunteers have but to follow her heartfelt example. Meigetsu Robishaw took a panel

home, and her mother, a quilter, finished it in one day and is the first person to have completed a panel.

There are twenty-seven panels to be stitched before the end of the year. Some of the panels, including the bowing mat, went to Japan on NiOsho's last trip for volunteers there to work on. In January, we hope to begin the task of assembling all the sewn panels and attaching the strips.

Aoyama Roshi most generously entrusted the Nisodo *Funzoe* to Mt. Equity so that students have a living example before their eyes in order to have a good start. [See photo.] The *Funzoe* has just been returned, and photos and a short video clip are now here for our reference. We would love to hear from anyone who believes they would be able to help us with this challenging work.

A Giant Step

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junction with another. In temples so authorized—as MEZ will be—the *Shuso* ceremony may be held each practice period. But just as NiOsho was *Shuso* for Daito Roshi's Abbott Installation Ceremony, Daishin McCabe will now be the *Shuso* for NiOsho's Abbess Installation Ceremony.

Such a ceremony is frequently generational. The son or disciple of a temple head trains, is given permission to teach, and takes the place of the retiring head. NiOsho was given permission to teach, called Transmission, and given Daito Roshi's colored Buddha robe. But she found that Transmission is by no means the end. She then had to prove herself by making her own temple, as Daito Roshi had. The last tests are to see if the Abbess-prospect is capable of management, administration and fund-raising. Quite often large portions of the temple grounds consisting of the typical seven buildings are razed and built anew, or at the very least, re-modeled. Depending

on the circumstances, millions of Yen might be spent, or, as in the example of Daito Roshi, and now, NiOsho, less so.

Preparing the Temple

As this is written, the hook-up to the sewer line, discussed for several years by the township, before and after its construction, has been decided for December 7th, and we are checking out contractors for the long trench to the back of our building. Outside, the asphaltting work for the south lane past our building has been laid in front of the Zendo, with hopes the other half will be completed this year. The Civil War-era west wing first floor residence, available as of October 1st to become our Library, is due for its first renovation in over forty years. Sound and clean, its walls and high ceilings all need major repair. A tent 30 feet by 80 feet will be raised for the grand ceremonies as our altar area is too small for the guests, totaling somewhere between 80 and 100 people. Besides expenses for building repairs, gifts and a dinner, we must find the best way to offer hospitality for three days with a very limited number of practitioners. There are three of us who live in residence. We would like to ask those practitioners for whom it is at all possible to offer a few days' time prior to the events for helping out at this most crucial time. And we ask all who wish Mt. Equity Zendo to finalize this grand step in rooting a spiritual oasis in sight of Bald Eagle Mountain to join hands with us now.



International Nuns' Practice Period

by NiOsho

Winter and spring was a very rich practice period. Daishin, who received priest's vows on New Year's, began monastic training with us, soon joined by Jokei Lambert, who had trained with Ryoen-ni ("ni" means "nun") in the Nisodo. Jokei-ni was called away after one month by her grandfather teacher, Moriyama Daigyo Roshi, to go to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay by bus to assist her Dharma sister, the German nun Zuiten Lichtenfeld in visiting and encouraging South American Soto Zen groups. Afterward, she came back and resumed her practice. In the interim, Yuko-ni, able to obtain a 3-year visa for religious work in the U.S., rejoined us. Shonen-ni, the Rinzai nun who has been a guest speaker here last summer, arrived for a month's stay on March 10, to share her long monastic training and tutor the non-native English-speaking nuns. Ryoen-ni, followed after 10 months in France. Jokei-ni flew back north to join us March 15th, as Daishin prepared to leave on March 23rd for practice at Zuiioji and Shogoji, its branch

temple, six weeks each. Rev. Kyoki Roberts of Pittsburgh Zen Center joined us for three days, giving our nuns an additional teacher to learn from. The day after Jokei-ni returned to France, Shotai de la Rosa, originally from Colombia and now a disciple of Shohaku Okumura Roshi at Sanshin Zen Community in Indiana, came to practice with us for a week, sharing her experience of being Tenzo for over sixty people at San Francisco Zen Center for a number of years. Some of the nuns had the experience of joining us for the first time in offering the ceremony *Anan Tange* on the 7th of each month to thank Venerable Ananda and his mother, Mahapajapati, for petitioning the Buddha for the right to ordination for women. After the big spring ceremonies in May 2005, we plan to work toward the translation into English of the entire work, called *Anan Koshiki*, and hopefully someday perform this full ceremony, which requires a minimum of sixteen nuns participating.



During the International Nuns' Ango, Shotai de la Rosa of Sanshin Community, IN, Yuko Wakayama, Ryoen Mahler and Shonen Bressler in the Rinzai tradition, recite the breakfast gatha before partaking of the informal meal of sour dough pancakes every "Slack Day", Wednesday. Not in photo was Jokei Lambert of France. During this angu, we were visited by Rev. Kyoki Roberts.

Yuko Wakayama in Residence

Joining us from Japan for three years is Rev. Yuko Wakayama. Formerly a Franciscan nun, Yuko has been a tremendous help to the Sangha. She teaches Tea Ceremony, and Japanese cooking. Yuko and NiOsho will be working on a translation of the *Annan Koshiki*, a ceremony which thanks Ananda, the cousin of the Buddha, for asking the Buddha to allow women to enter the Sangha.

Presently, she has been working with us to make the *Funzoe*

or Great Buddha Robe. This is the first time something of this magnitude has been done in the United States. The *Funzoe* is the robe offered by the Sangha to the teacher upon her installation as abbess of Mt. Equity Zendo.

Beyond all her hard work for our Sangha, Yuko joined the Bethel Presbyterian Church for five days to help feed the homeless of Washington D.C. She has been an inspiration to us all embodying the ideals of selflessness, compassion, and joy.



Rev. Yuko Wakayama, left, had an in-depth opportunity to visit our nation's capitol. She participated in volunteer work in Washington, D.C., for five days with Rev. Darlene Little of the Bethel Presbyterian Church of Williamsport and Alan Little, right, who practices at MEZ on Tuesday mornings. Members of the church go bi-annually to serve meals to the homeless. Here, the crew was helping to make 3,000 sandwiches.

Starting in Sesshin

For those new students able to sit for 30 to 40 minutes and who wish to deepen their practice, a good way is to take on the challenge of a part of an intensive retreat we call Sesshin, which literally means "to touch the heart". To make an analogy, martial arts such as karate and aikido begin with *kata*, set forms. Eventually they are strung together for a more effective practice. When we are able to sit one or two sittings of zazen, we are then able to take on more, and experience the difference it makes in our

body and mind. In the cases that we have openings in Sesshin, attending part of one is open to students after talking it over with the head teacher. Some suggested times are as follows:

1. Friday night 7 p.m. through Saturday after breakfast, ending 9 a.m.
2. Saturday 10 a.m. through Dharma talk/zazen, ending 5 p.m.
3. Above, plus staying for the evening repast.
4. Above, if local, returning after one or both sittings.
5. Sunday 6:15 a.m. through end at 3 p.m.

"You Broke The Tea Bowl"

by Daishin

I was not looking forward to telling Jisen San that I had just broken the tea bowl. Monks always asked for forgiveness during tea-time for something they did not do right. Usually this meant that they forgot to light a candle or missed ringing the bell at the appropriate time. In my estimation, breaking a ceremonial tea bowl was much more serious.

"What?! You broke tea bowl? Doooooshite? Why?" asked Jisen San, as her face and eyes turned red.

She was quite upset.

"Because I was carrying too many things at one time." As usual, I was pinched for time and trying to get everything done in a hurry. What I ended up doing was making things worse in the long run. I offered to pay for a new one.

"It's not about the money," she said. "You have to look at the reason why this happened."

Later I was given the assignment of Doan. I was in charge of ringing the bell to begin and end zazen. In between bells I was to carry the *kyosaku* (stick

used to keep people awake during zazen) and to walk slowly and quietly around the zendo. The *kyosaku* was always taken out and put away in a ceremonial way. I looked at the clock as I was holding the *kyosaku* and realized the bell should have been rung in that moment. I began to panic. It would take me too long to ceremoniously put away the *kyosaku*. So I unceremoniously put it away and moved quickly so that I could ring the bell on time.

I was safe. The *kyosaku* wasn't put away properly, but at least people heard the bell on time. No one would notice the *kyosaku*. But as I passed by Jisen San she said to me, "You broke the bowl." Because I did not put the *kyosaku* away properly, it was the same as breaking another tea bowl.

"Hai. Wakarimashita." "Yes, I understand," I replied.

Later that practice period my friend Koun, an American monk said to me, "If you don't break in some way the ango wasn't successful." These were actually Jisen san's words to him after having had difficulties with his first ango at Shogoji.

Just as improperly putting away the *kyosaku* is symbolic of breaking the cup, breaking the cup is symbolic of breaking the mind. When the mind holds too much knowledge, too many concepts, too many ideas, it breaks. Then what fills it for that moment is reality, "things as it is."

My practice period at Shogoji was not only successful, I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it.

Precepts Ceremony at Baltimore Dharma Group

On October 24th, Chauna Brocht and Mark Fradkin of Baltimore Dharma Group, led by Gry Esho Gambert, will receive the Five Mindfulness Trainings at the end of a two-day Zazen Gathering. They will be the first students at our affiliation to take this step. May the enthusiasm and perseverance in their practice be a good example and be of great support to their home Sangha. Congratulations!

Zendo Construction

by Daishin

In preparation for this May's Abess Ascension Ceremony Dale Hessler was hired to renovate our zendo. Dale took down parts of the wall that separated both the Library and the Kannon Do (the room dedicated to the Bodhisattva of Compassion) from the Zendo. Dale also installed ceiling light fixtures in these three rooms. As a result, we have broadened the scope of the three rooms to welcome more practitioners to zazen.



Eric Daishin McCabe, who received the priest's precepts on January 1st, went to Zuijōji and its branch, Shogoji, for a successful three months of spring practice period, at the temple where NiOsho's teacher and grandfather teacher had trained. Seeing him off at Osaka Airport to return home is Ms. Mihoko Morita, a long-time supporter of Mt. Equity, who, among countless other examples of the bodhisattva's helping hands, personally delivered Daishin's robes from Kyoto in time for his ordination.



It was NiOsho's 25th anniversary of priest ordination when Gry Esho Gambert, front, 2nd from right, took the lay ordination anew from Mt. Equity Zendo after March Sesshin. The re-ordination marks the affiliation between Mt. Equity Zendo and the Baltimore Dharma Group.

"Each of us,
inextricably and forever,
contains the other."

— James Baldwin

Yard Sale a Success

by Daijun and Daijo

Offering everything from jewelry and books to Japanese keepsakes and an antique Chinese chest, Mt. Equity held its first ever yard sale this past August. With a few white clouds against a shining blue sky and no humidity, the day was welcoming on many levels. The event was organized by Barbara Tokuen Gray, an old hand at yard sales, with the help her husband, Dom Santavicca. Sangha members donated items



Tokuen helps arrange items for the yard sale.

for the sale that together sold for a total of \$1203.35. The entire amount will be donated to help cover the expenses for the Abbess Ceremony in May, 2005.

Many students stayed to help with the sale after the conclusion of the Summer Long Sesshin. The students helping with the sale had the opportunity to meet folks from neighboring towns. Several highlights from the day included Yuko's tea ceremony booth located under the large maple tree. For one dollar Yuko would demonstrate making the tea and the customary way to hold the cup. Visitors were delighted to partake in this special treat. A young girl, about 13 years old, even offered Yuko flowers she had bought that morning to show her appreciation.

NiOsho sold a number of prints of her iris calligraphy. Our singer-songwriter Liza Entsu Moscatiello sold copies of her latest CD

at a reduced price, which are still available as her contribution to the Abbess Ceremony. David Dokai Wenger parted with a beautiful wooden desk, and Barbara Tokuen Gray sold a wonderful antique Chinese chest. Everyone had something of value to donate to help make the yard sale a success.

Animitta "Signlessness"

The Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh writes in his book, *No Death, No Fear*: "In Buddhism there is the teaching of signlessness (*animitta*). "Sign" means the outer form or appearance of things. The practice of signlessness is the practice of not being fooled by the outer form or the appearance of things. When we understand *animitta*, we understand that appearance is not all of reality."

Understanding signlessness is the mark of a mature Zen practitioner. As citizens of a democracy we need to be responsible in seeing clearly the choices for wise leadership. Please study all electoral candidates mindfully.



According to the Roots the Leaves Spread Forth

by Keien

What started as a seed of an idea sprouted when watered by the Sangha. On the day of Buddha's Birthday celebration, twelve Sangha and family members planted 11 arbor vitae trees along the western edge of Mt. Equity's property. The process of how the trees came to put down their roots at Mt. Equity is as beautiful as the trees themselves. It began as NiOsho's simple comment to Daishin that arbor vitae might make a suitable privacy screen between MEZ and the road. The seed received its first drops of water. Having overheard this comment, Tokuen was then fertile for observing the four-foot saplings at a plant nursery near her home. Members of the Six Rings' Sangha, a Mt. Equity-affiliated zazen group, offered to support the arbor vitae effort by purchasing several trees. Gathering more energy, the idea was put out to other Sangha members during Sesshin. More support came forth. After having obtained enough to purchase 11

trees, again a request was made to obtain help in unloading the trees during Buddha's Birthday celebration. By now, the well-watered seed had put down roots and was beginning to sprout. Sangha members and their families happily came forth to not only help unload, but to plant the trees. Holes were dug, compost was added, trees were planted and watered. It was a project destined to happen. The earth yielded easily, no one was "in charge." It was truly an organic process and was a sight lovely to behold. Even the children who had come for Buddha's Birthday pitched in by carrying water.

Many have commented that the trees "belong" in the spot they now assume, as if they have always been there. They will surely provide a beautiful, natural interface between Mt. Equity and the "world beyond." More importantly, the trees serve as a reminder of how, at its best, Sangha flows as one and how, when watered, the seed thrives.



Glad News and Sad News

NiOsho's first student **Judith Daiyu Randall**, received the priest's precepts at San Francisco Zen Center from Abbott Paul Ryushin Haller, and the additional name of Roko, on September 18th. We are deeply pleased with her example of constancy. Congratulations!

Pamela Koen Hunter and her husband Jeff recently experienced the flooding of their home from Hurricane Ivan. It was good to hear that MEZ members nearby could extend some helping hands as they re-settle in other quarters for the time being. May they be able to re-establish themselves very soon!

Gratitude

With so much time passing since our last issue, it's almost impossible for us to list the many ways in which Sangha members have donated funds, goods and help to ensure that Mt. Equity Zendo thrive as an oasis for others. But, just to list one thing for each student:

Sally Daisen Hess: European treats; David Daijo Carpenter: DVD of our Eiheiiji Trip to donors; Natasha Shin'en Turaki: Russian jams and jellies; Jeff Dainen Barkstrom: persevering in acupuncture to open his practice back here; Lisa Entzu Moscatiello: donations of her latest recording for our fund-raising. [She has more here...] Pamela Koen Hunter: secret, come-upon gifts of helpful household items; Jesse Daikan McKinney: publishing articles of "quiet" Dharma; Melissa I'en Hess: checking NiOsho's meds; Becky Meigetsu Robishaw: Dharma books/cookies; Gry Esho Gambert: *dana* for Installation ceremony; Chris Jakuen Fedorowicz: transitioning Daishin into Treasurer; Mary Keien Boutselis: much of our beautiful landscape; Barbara Tokuen Gray: yard sale expert management; Marcy Daijun

Brenner: "interesting" cookies; Eric Daishin McCabe: building a "pillar" under Mt. Equity; Yuko Wakayama: practicing fully every waking minute. Evelyn Rakuen Bennage: maintaining her "Milton Berle" gene into her third year at Muncy Skilled Nursing; Mike Daiyi Jones: sponsoring Daishin's flight to Japan; Lucine Gyokuen Folgueras: expert financial advice; Kevin On'en Cramer: health foods/Dharma videos; Jerry Jido Lindauer: grant advice; Rich Ritsuen Reilly: privacy fence builder/donor; David Dokai Wenger: visiting Rakuen; Horst de Lorenzi: computer/brochures.

Hind Khadry Matthews: her enduring spirit; Katrina Broach: tofurkey; Nancy Cleaver: her calligraphed greeting cards; Jan Hambridge: trail mix and chocolates; Nancy White: loan of video taping equipment for *Funzoe*; Laura Bates: veggies we don't have; Lois Passi: roses for the Buddha. And to our faithful far-off Friends of MEZ: Janice Belgraden, Arthur and Mary Clarke, James and Lee Crouse, and Damien Futurick. With many deep bows of sincere gratitude, and bows of apology if anyone's name has been inadvertently overlooked.



Kurita Daishun Shimbi DaiOsho, grandfather teacher to NiOsho, passed on the 14th of January, 2004. NiOsho went to his traditional memorial service 49 days later which was attended by high priests and officials from both Eiheiiji and Sojiji.



The Yamagata Prefecture branch of Soto Zen, via Daito Roshi's "classmate" at Zuioji, invited NiOsho to Japan in both June and September to give a lecture to Soto priests of that area, and later to the parishioners. Pictured are Hanabusa Roshi, NiOsho and Mrs. Hanabusa. The two trips made it possible for NiOsho to bring back the Nisodo Funzoe Great Robe entrusted to Mt. Equity through Aoyama Roshi as a living example for students to study, and then hand carry it back in September.



MEZ precepted student Missy I'en Hess was married to recently-precepted Richard Ritsuen Reilly on November 1st, 2003, in the garden of their home, officiated by NiOsho. Our congratulations to this couple joined in the Dharma!

Mt. Equity Zendo, Jihoji
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Mt. Equity Zendo, Jihoji, is incorporated under the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Our mission is "to provide training in the spiritual practice of Soto Zen Buddhism in the shikantaza (serene contemplation) tradition, and to serve the community in a spirit of compassion." Members of the Board of Directors, and the years their terms expire, are:

Head Teacher	Rev. Patricia Dai-En Bennage
President	Natasha Shin'en Turaki
Vice-President	Marcy Daijun Bressler
Secretary	Melissa I'en Reilly
Treasurer	Eric Daishin McCabe
Newsletter	David Daijo Carpenter

Event Schedule for Mt. Equity Zendo First Half of 2005

January 8	Half Day of Mindfulness	1:30-4:30 p.m.
January 9	Full Day of Mindfulness	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
January 21-23	Sesshin	
February 5	Half Day of Mindfulness	1:30-4:30 p.m.
February 6	Full Day of Mindfulness	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
February 11-13	Sesshin	
March 5	Half Day of Mindfulness	1:30-4:30 p.m.
March 6	Full Day of Mindfulness	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
March 15-17	Sesshin	
March 26-27	Full Intro to Soto Zen	
April 2	Half Day of Mindfulness	1:30-4:30 p.m.
April 3	Full Day of Mindfulness	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
April 15-17	Sesshin	
April 30-May 1	Full Intro to Soto Zen	
May 7	Half Day of Mindfulness	1:30-4:30 p.m.
May 8*	Full Day of Mindfulness	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
June 4	Half Day of Mindfulness	1:30-4:30 p.m.
June 5	Full Day of Mindfulness	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
June 11-12	Beginning Soto Zen Practice	
	Stay Over for Women	2:00 p.m.-10:00 a.m.
June 25-26	Full Intro to Soto Zen	

*Buddha's Birthday Bash

For further information call 570-546-2784, send email to info@mtequity.org, or visit <http://www.mtequity.org>

Weekly Schedule:

Lay Morning Zen (Tu., Wed.)	6:25 a.m.-7:45 a.m.
Monastic Zen (M., Th., F.) (Formal Breakfast optional)	5:25 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Tuesday Evening Zazen (two 30 min. periods/service/reading)	7:15 p.m.-9:30 p.m.
Thursday Evening Zazen (two 15 min. periods/reading)	7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Morning Meditation for Women at Mt. Equity

For four Thursday mornings, from 9:30am to 10:45am, we will be offering Mindfulness meditation for Women on October 21st, 28th, and November 4th and 11th.

If there is enough local interest, we will be continuing with a series of short sittings and the in-depth readings on "Sati", or Mindfulness after the New Year. Suggested donation for the four mornings is \$35.

Long Summer Sesshin Date Change

Students are asked to notify NiOsho of which dates work best for the 2005 long summer sesshin, July 8th through 16th (not much ready to eat from the vegetable garden), or July 29th through August 6th? The change from the more usual time in late July is needed to allow NiOsho to attend the 2005 annual meeting of the American Zen Teachers Association.

MEZJ is a member of the American Zen Teachers' Association (AZTA), the Association of Soto Zen Buddhism (ASZB), and the Soto Zen Buddhists Association (SZBA)

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