

Mt. Equity Zendo Zephyr- *January 2012*



A Very Happy New Year of the Dragon 2012 to Everyone!

A bouquet of brilliant red arthurium and white orchids, air-shipped from Kona, Hawaii, gift of Rev. Jiko Mary Beth Nakade, head priest at Daifukuji Temple there, set us an extra special scene for beginning the New Year.

Between eight and 12 practitioners participated in either all or part of our Yearend Sesshin, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day programs. On New Year's Eve, 108 well-wishing bows were offered to those dear to each of us and was followed by yogi tea and cookies.

New Year's Day morning gave the opportunity to all to put the Abbess "on the spot" with rapid-fire public questions. This day is one of the special occasions when the Great Robe of Tatters (funzoe), sewn by many hands over the period of a year from pieces of old material into patterns of mountains, is worn by the Abbess. A Great Robe of Tatters is considered the highest treasure belonging to a Zen temple. It is a manifestation of the principle of "Mottainai", to see the deep beauty of the mundane.

Mottainai

Japan has exported many ideas, particularly aesthetic ideas, that have influenced people and thought in other countries. The one closest to living and the heart is *mottainai*. *Mottainai* honors everyday life, the preciousness of things. It respects the inherent dignity in things, the soul of matter, of making do, not wasting. The sense of treasuring what there is resides deep in the Japanese heart.

The concept of Japanese life, in the use everything don't use it at all; save This respect for the or people or situations Japanese use of all resourceful, ingenious, everything is used, and

There is nothing whose food, in dress, in tools, to use what was to wear, and then to use elicits pathos and feeling of wonder from generation. It is also a parsimony fits perfectly where the environment cries out for using precious materials sparingly, and then reusing them.



Photo permission from Tanaka collection.

mottainai underlies past and also today—carefully, reuse it, or it; it is too good to use. intrinsic value of things or events reflects the materials. Frugal, nothing is thrown away, reused sparingly.

spirit is not honored. In in housing, the instinct available to live, to eat, again and yet again compassion and a a later, more wasteful principle whose careful into today's world, is at risk and the earth

In 2005 Wangari Mathaai, the Kenyan Nobel prize winner came to Japan and embraced *Mottainai* and brought the concept to the UN as a rallying cry to encourage a wasteful world to treasure its diminishing resources: to respect, recycle, reuse and restore. She brought the idea to the world, as she reawakened Japan's own re-appreciation of *Mottainai*. She died on the 25th of September last year of cancer at age 71, but not before she had spread the concept of *Mottainai* around the world.

-Quoted by permission from Amy Katoh, a champion of salvaging the beauty of Japanese traditional culture, author of "Boro" and other books on Japanese art.

Bringing Cranes into a Day of Silence

On December 10th all donations for the Day of Silence were offered to Son Light House the local food pantry in Muncy. The total came to \$190. Special thank yous to all who participated in this event including: Cathy Emery, Shudo, Michel Lau, Susan Gresens, Dendo, Tokuen, Nanshin, Daijo, Jido, and Misho. We also acknowledge Michel Lau for giving us the opportunity to help her string the 1000 cranes she had folded over a two-year period which, when finished, was given to Esho Gambert, founder of the Baltimore Dharma Group. Stringing the cranes was a superlative example of how an unplanned event was enveloped by everyone seamlessly into the Day of Silence schedule with “no hindrance in the mind”.



Special/Upcoming Events

Half Day of Zen* (1:30 - 4:30 pm)

Dogen's Guidelines for Practicing the Way

Part I, February 4th

Part II, March 3rd

Part III, March 31st

Zen and Yoga: Freedom in Body and Mind, July 7th

Full Day of Zen* (10:00 am - 4:00 pm)

Nirvana, February 5th

Jesus and Buddha with Rev. Wakoh Hickey, March 4th

Unlocking the Power of Rebirth, April 1st

Buddha's Birthday, May 6th

True Freedom, July 8th

Day of Silence

Saturday, May 19th, 9 am - 5 pm - all donations go to local food pantry

Sesshin Schedule

Deep Winter Silent Sesshin, January 27th - 29th

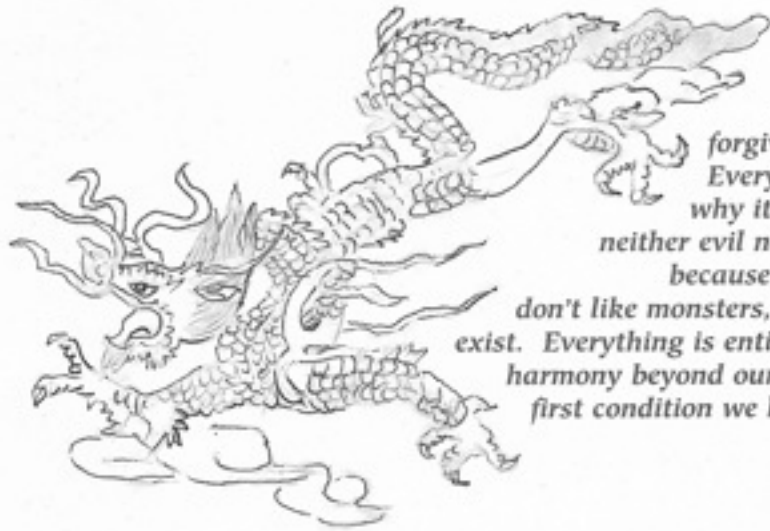
Shuso-Nirvana Sesshin February 17th - 19th

33rd Ordination Anniversary Sesshin March 16th - 18th

Earth Day Sesshin April 20th - 22nd

Long Summer Sesshin with Doyu Roshi and Rev. Tom Wright, June 1st - June 8th

Gratitude to the following people for making offerings of food and related items the month of **December**: Nanshin, Tomei, Melodie Russell, Emily, I'en, Misho, Shudo, Dendo, Michel Lau, Fujiko and Frank Robbins, Susan Faeder, Rev. Jisen Coghlan, Tokuen, Jan Hambridge and Carol, Mike and Prudence McCabe, Esho, Domon, Koen, Daijun, Meigetsu, Candie Adams, Daiko and all others we may have inadvertently missed. Our heartfelt gratitude.



All sentient beings are allowed to live and are, from the beginning, forgiven for living their lives in this world. Everything, whatever it is, has some reason why it exists: evil, good, even something neither evil nor good. You cannot destroy devils just because you don't like them. Even though you don't like monsters, still there is some reason why they exist. Everything is entitled to live in the world in peace and harmony beyond our judgment, our evaluation. This is the first condition we have to realize - everything is Buddha.
— Katagiri Roshi

Email Comments from Senior MEZ Students

One student wrote the day after Sesshin...

One time, during Sesshin a newcomer repeatedly asked me questions such as, "What are we doing next?", "Where is the schedule?", "What do we do at the New Year's eve ceremony?", etc. I found myself disrupted by so many questions. I also noticed other senior students being disrupted by the same person's questions. Finally I realized that in order to be helpful, rather than simply answering questions, I said with an open heart, "Just stay in the moment and see what happens." This appeared to have 'landed' more deeply than all the words I had been using before. Sometimes new folks need direction and clear instruction for some matters, but other times the questions come from anxiousness. Being lulled into this energy is not useful.

Another student writes...

I reread the page-a-days saved from both Insights from the Dalai Lama and the Zen calendar. The daily quotes and sayings keep me morally focused, and baffled too. It is like waking up daily and turning on the light.

Sawaki Kodo Roshi: "The life in which you are glared at by zazen, scolded by zazen, obstructed by zazen, pulled by zazen, and get along with tears in your eyes is the happiest life, isn't it?"