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250 Attend Dai Bosatsu Day Ceremonies at Zen Monastery



THE PRACTICE OF ZEN BUDDHISM — and the study of Oriental culture is the reason that Dai Bosatsu Zen is being established. The land and the present stage of construction have been paid for, but additional contributions are needed in order to complete it.

Photo by Paul Gerry. Text by Hand Magazine

To those of you who wrote or telephoned with so many favorable comments regarding our series of articles explaining the aims and purposes of the authentic Zen Buddhist Monastery in the western world, thank you.

We invited the International Dai Bosatsu Zen to special invitation, last weekend, at an open house in honor of Dai Bosatsu Day.

There were over 150 people in attendance. In addition to Zen students, their families and friends, there were many young children, who joined in an intimate atmosphere of discussion and enjoyment.

Although his demanding schedule prevented him from attending, Rev. Makoto Wilson sent greetings.

A chartered bus from New York City, carrying 50 people arrived shortly after one who had been invited to speak. An animated conversation on old friends were greeted and new friendships were made.

Peter Matthiessen, noted author and environmentalist, as well as Davis Hamerstrom of Boston, architect of the Dai Bosatsu Zen, and representatives of the surrounding Town People and Business were among the guests on hand to observe the community of Zen students, as well as to see the land and the present stage of construction.

A simple meal and lunch was served. The vegetarian meal was not only colorful in appearance, but absolutely delicious. All of the preparation for the luncheon was done by members of the sangha and

many of the fresh vegetables were grown in their gardens.

Ginger and Soy Sauce were used in abundance and the dressing on the salad was a tangy, citrus flavor. The home-baked bread was richly flavorful and the most exciting flavor was in the mouths of the Zen students. It is the result of compiling a cook book of their recipes which will be available shortly.

Following the festive lunch, the 20 students and guests listened to a talk on "Zen in America" given by Rev. Eido Tai Shimano, Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zen and author of "Zen in America".

Rev. Shimano welcomed everyone and said that he had decided, after thinking over the talk of Rev. Tai, that the presentation of aspects of Zen Buddhism is, he should speak of what America is, so that Zen in America may be better understood.

"There are five points which make up America," he began, "and some of you may agree and some of you disagree, but let me tell you what I feel America is."

"First, America is democratic, then, pragmatic, individualistic, and perhaps most important, and finally, our optimism. This is what I think America is."

"And in democracy I believe the root is equality; everyone is equal, regardless of race, age, sex, old, etc. In Zen Buddhism, one of the most essential points is that all beings, all of us, are equal, of an equal nature, and this is very democratic. Zen is democratic. There is no

discrimination."

"And pragmatic? Yes I think so. Zen is not a theory, but a practice."

"Individualistic?" Well, whether we like it or not, once we start to practice, there is no other way. But to be individual, my body cannot be run over, your body, your pain cannot be carried by me.

"Maternalistic, yes. Whatever we gain, whatever we realize, is gained in company."

"Optimistic, yes. We all know we are Enlightened, if not now, then in the near future."

"It seems that America is, and should be, the most appropriate place, and people, to practice this Zen tradition."

Rev. Shimano explained that the "rowing of Zen in American soil started in 1960" and sprang from the traditional Zen dojos, such as private quarters and private baths, have been incorporated into the four interconnected buildings which will contain all the facilities required for traditional Zen living.

Because it will be a self-contained community, there is a training hall, a lecture hall, a dining room, and a working shop. Rev. D.T. Suzuki during the time he was teaching at Columbia University.

Shortly thereafter, under the leadership of Rev. Tai Shimano, the New York Zen was established and the ever increasing number of students practicing there provided a sufficient base to look a mountain retreat.

This Zen Buddhist monastery for lay people is in its 14th month of construction and the 100 acres of land and the construction, thus far, have all

been paid for in order to complete their task, an additional \$500,000. must be raised.

Rev. Shimano guided the guests through the new construction and explained certain aspects of the lecture hall, library, kitchen and dining room as well as the many differences between the student quarters for permanent and transient participants.

In addition to the classical Zen training, Rev. Shimano has a unique understanding of the American mind and temperament, so deviations from the traditional Zen training, such as private quarters and private baths, have been incorporated into the four interconnected buildings which will contain all the facilities required for traditional Zen living.

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During the first stages of the exterior design will arrive from Japan shortly, so construction will continue until the 13 traditional buildings and the temple structures are installed.

During the winter months, the Zen group will be busy engaged with the many things to be done on the interior, in preparation for the winter opening of the International Dai Bosatsu Zen on July 4, 1976.

"Zen Buddhism is not something exotic, it is something common, it is something that we can relate to, it is something that all religions, all teachings, all traditions and it does not intend to convert anyone to become a Zen practitioner."

There are Christian Sisters in our Zen, there are Jews, Hindu, some Buddhists and perhaps an atheist, and we are not afraid to practice and discriminate, but practice simplicity and humility, will surely give us a chance to confront and overcome the social and unavoidable human and social problems that we face."

"We have many people in the world today," concluded Rev. Shimano, "but we need enough room to move. So this place, the International Dai Bosatsu Zen, is, in a way, a training center, in which to produce a wonderful human being."

From the responses to our previous articles and comments from the public inside and outside our area, it would appear that over the past few decades, the intellectual introduction to Zen in the West has been made, and interest and this mountain retreat for laymen, being built in these majestic Catskill Mountains, will draw the interest of interested people from all over the world, of every faith, to participate in the Zen way of life, through daily practice and experience, for generation after



GREAT CARE IS BEING TAKEN WITH EVERY DETAIL from the oak flooring to the traditional carving shingled roofs which soar high above Beecher Lake. Combining traditional Japanese architecture and modern American technology, the International Dai Bosatsu Zen is in its 14th month of construction.