

# THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY

MOUNTAIN MONASTERY

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May 21, 1984

Dear Friend,

Please be patient in reading this long letter concerning matters related to my late Master, Soen Roshi.

First, I would like to invite you to come to Dai Bosatsu Zendo on the 4th of July to join with us in the ceremony, at 2 P.M., of burying the ashes of Soen Roshi and Nyogen Senzaki.

When Soen Roshi was visiting Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the summer of 1982, one day he and I, together with Mr. Yoshida, a Japanese stonecutter, took a walk in the cemetery, Sangha Meadow. At one point, we stopped and looked at Beecher Lake and the Monastery beyond. Soen Roshi said, "This is a good place for eternal rest." I said, "In fact, I have been thinking of this very spot to bury part of your ashes if by chance you die before me." Suddenly he took my right hand in his two hands, knelt on the ground, held my hand tightly, and said, "Thank you!"

That very day, he wrote Namu Dai Bosa in Chinese characters and asked me to write it in English letters. Mr. Yoshida carved it in stone. We had no idea that this particular piece would be used for the memorial stupa of Soen Roshi.

On March 11th of this year, suddenly Soen Roshi passed away. On April 11th, I went to Ryutaku-ji for his funeral service. His five Dharma heirs (all of them Japanese) were invited and attended, along with many others.

After the funeral, we decided that Soen Roshi's ashes would be divided into two parts. On June 11th, one part will be buried beside Hakuin and Torei at Ryutaku-ji. The other part will come to America to honor his work in America. They will be buried in Sangha Meadow at Dai Bosatsu Zendo at the exact spot where he knelt.

Nyogen Senzaki passed away in 1958; half of his ashes were buried in Los Angeles. The other half went to Japan, and Soen Roshi brought them to New York in 1968. These ashes have been enshrined on the altar in the Dharma Hall of Dai Bosatsu Zendo ever since its founding. These two pioneer teachers' ashes will be buried side by side on the 4th of July.

Once I wrote,

Needless to say, without Soyen Shaku's visits to America, D.T. Suzuki's enormous effort, Nyogen Senzaki's half-century-long struggle, Soen Roshi's wisdom, Yasutani Roshi's tireless teaching, and our anonymous donors' great generosity, Dai Bosatsu Zendo would never have been born. But these distinguished people could not by themselves have made this birth possible. The greatest significance of International Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji is that it has been established through the combined effort and ceaseless concern of all known and unknown teachers and students, brothers and sisters. . . . The transmission of the Dharma was very much aided by their dedication.

Though it is impossible to specify a single founder of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, at this point I feel it is most proper if we consider Soen Roshi as the founder and Nyogen Senzaki as the "karmic" founder.

I want to invite you to participate in the creation of a memorial—called the Founders Fund—to carry on their work for the Dharma in America. It has three purposes, at least:

- (A) To erect a memorial stupa in Sangha Meadow at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.
- (B) To publish the Soen Roku.
- (C) To send promising Dharma students to Japan for further study.

The last thing I want to ask you is to write—in the form of anecdotes—any personal encounters you have had with Soen Roshi and send them to me. I am in the process of editing the Soen Roku: The Sayings and Doings of Master Soen—which will consist of his teishos in English, the Record of his Pilgrimage to North America, and your experiences with him.

In 1986, Dai Bosatsu Zendo will be 10 years old, and we are planning to have a special sesshin ending on the 4th of July. The Soen Roku must be ready by that time, so please send me your writing by the end of this year.

Thank you for your patience. Please help us in whatever way you can. Do let us know if you can come on the 4th of July; we—all the Dharma students at Dai Bosatsu Zendo—look forward to seeing you.

Gassho,



Muishitsu Eido

P.S. Please send materials addressed to me, at the Zen Studies Society, 223 East 67th Street, New York, NY 10021. Checks should be payable to the Zen Studies Society Founders Fund; but if you prefer to use a wire transfer, payable to:

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