



*Never  
Met With*



*A Tribute To  
Eido  
Shimano  
Roshi*

*On His  
70<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday*



*in hundreds of thousands of eons...*



*Never met with.*



## *The Virtue of a Pioneer*

Eido Roshi arrived in New York with a Buddha and a Keisaku. Everyone recognized the Buddha statue, but what was the long stick that he carried? To this day, some 40 years later, the question is still asked, "what is that stick?" The questioner may know that it is called a "Keisaku" but will still ask, "what is it for?" The Buddha that accompanied Roshi is in one of our altars, but the Keisaku broke a long time ago, and has been replaced again and again, by many others.

In 1985, I started making Keisaku for Dai Bosatsu Zendo. I shipped ten or so Keisaku to DBZ, and following a Sesshin, I wrote Roshi inquiring if "anyone had been enlightened by the Keisaku." He thanked me for the Keisaku, and said, "no one was enlightened by the Keisaku."

The image of Roshi arriving in New York with a long stick that tapered to a thin, wide end is associated in my mind with a curious episode in The Odyssey.

After a year of rest on the island of Circe, Odysseus wants to resume his journey home. Circe tells him that to journey safely home, he, Odysseus, must descend to Hades and seek the counsel of the seer Teiresias. Odysseus is told by Teiresias that when he returns home, he must make yet another journey. Odysseus must carry his oar and go far inland, to a place where people know nothing of the sea, and when someone mistakes his oar for a grain-winnowing fan, Odysseus is to plant the oar in the ground and return home. Only by following the course of Teiresias can Odysseus look forward to a peaceful life.

Why this strange prophecy that exacts a mysterious task?

To carry a Keisaku, to a place where people know nothing of Buddha-Dharma-- This is the special virtue of the pioneer.

Happy Birthday, Roshi.

*Jiro Fernando Afable*



Vertical Japanese calligraphy or signature.



*Z is for Zen:  
The Early Years*



**I**t's a late-summer day in 1967. My boyfriend and I have decided to get married. I've been sitting and studying Buddhism on my own for several years, and when I tentatively suggest a Buddhist ceremony to Lou, a Ph.D. candidate in western philosophy at Columbia, he surprisingly agrees. We go to the Buddhist temple on Riverside Drive, but a judo match is going on. Back in our apartment, I look under Z in the phone book. There it is. The Zen Studies Society, just a few blocks away from where we're living. In no time, we're at the door. A young monk answers the bell, and looks at us questioningly. Lou's hair is a wild blond Afro; mine is down my back and black. He's wearing a mod shirt with ruffled collar, puffed sleeves; I'm in a micro mini-skirt. We tell the monk, then known as Tai-San, that we would like to discuss having our wedding ceremony there. He invites us in. After some gentle questioning, he agrees, and we set a date. Fortunate karma, he says. Yasutani Roshi will be visiting, and both will conduct the ceremony. We thank Tai-San, and our eyes meet. I know: this is it. This is what I've been searching for.

1971. Litchfield, Connecticut. Sesshin at a Catholic retreat center run by the Daughters of Wisdom. I've dissolved in tears—it's my first sesshin, and the first of many that will bring up the deep grief of a painful childhood. Tai-San, evidently walking behind us with the keisaku,



He leans over, and whispers to me: "Are you all right?" I'm suffused with gratitude for this unexpected concern, and turn my head to face him, smiling with sudden happiness. I am all right.

Shobo-ji. Tai-San has asked the zendo officers to meet with him after zazen. His face is lit up. "We have found a country place!" As he tells us about it, I can feel my own heartbeat quicken. "What do you think?" he asks us. "I'm so excited!" I blurt out. It has no form, much less a name. I can feel it beckoning.

September 13, 1972. Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Rain. Soen Roshi and Eido-shi, as Tai-San is now called, lead us up the hill to the site of what will become the monastery. Spirit of place. Spirits are invoked, receive our fervent apologies for disturbing them, our request for their protection. Mist rises from the lake.

September 15, 1972. Shobo-ji. We sit in the zendo in a state of heightened awareness. Our teacher enters, dressed as a traveling monk. Four times, he is "checked" by a gate-keeper: Daiko Chuck Carpenter, two monks from Ryutaku-ji, Taizen Maezumi Roshi from Zen Center of Los Angeles—and then he goes to the altar, where Soen Roshi awaits him, the final checkpoint. "With what mind will you build Dai Bosatsu Zendo?" We all hang on the audible intake of breath, and then—



## Z is for Zen:

*Continued*

*"Shu jo mu ben sei gan do  
Bo no mu jin sei gan dan  
Ho mon mu ryo sei gan gaku  
Butsu do mu jo sei gan jo!"*

The traveling monk has inherited the Dharma of Nakagawa Soen, and a new life begins. Muishitsu Eido Tai Shimano Roshi takes up the iron yoke, and with grace, elegance, and unswerving dedication, he goes right on doing what he has been doing: cultivating the soil of this strange land.

1974. Everyone has been so worried about money. It seems we might not have sufficient funds to complete the construction of the new monastery, because of the international fuel crisis and escalating inflation. Peter M., Margot W., and I work on a brochure to help with fundraising. At no time does Eido Roshi betray the slightest doubt. He leads us into the fray with more vigor each day. At Rohatsu sesshin, we chant the Diamond Sutra for the first time. Its impact is inconceivable! At the end of sesshin Roshi tells us the temple name for Dai Bosatsu will be Kongo-ji, Diamond Temple. Wonderful!

1975. DBZ, Sun-Moon Cottage. Revising Eido Roshi's section of Namu Dai Bosa, "The Way to Dai Bosatsu." Roshi talking freely, openly, about his life; he speaks of his gratitude to Aiho-San, to Bill Johnstone, to all

who are helping to establish this beautiful place called Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Numerous deer watch us through the picture windows. New leaves open each minute of these May days.

Joraku-an. The book is complete. Roshi makes powdered tea for Shoro and me. On the full-moon night of May, Roshi gives a brilliant spontaneous talk in the Dharma Hall of the lodge as we all sit facing the lake. The moon is shy, as he puts it—hiding behind the clouds. Then, suddenly, the sky grows light; at the bottom of a cloud, a thin edge of bright silver begins to show. Roshi begins chanting, "Namu Dai Bosa..." The clouds move slightly, teasingly. We continue sitting. Then, suddenly, the moon appears in all its glory, a perfect sphere of light. Again "Namu Dai Bosa," this time softly, reverentially.

Joraku-an. Eido Roshi gives a wonderful teisho for Dr. D. T. Suzuki's memorial day. He tells us the story of a letter written to him by a reader of a magazine in Japan in which his article about Dai Bosatsu had appeared. The writer said that after striking the bonsho in his temple's bell tower, he went down and found an old man who said, "You must be tired from all your work, and from climbing up so high—thank you." The man handed him something wrapped in paper, which turned out to be some yen equivalent to three dollars. Enclosing this



## *Z is for Zen:*

### *Continued*

sum, the letter writer said, "Of course the amount is small, but this is the first time I have received a true donation, true charity, without the stink of giving-and-taking."

The temple he was writing from turns out to be the very one Eido Roshi often visited as a young boy, and he had frequently gone up to that bell tower and had struck the very same bonsho to which the old man had been listening. This is the first contribution to Dai Bosatsu from Japan.

July 18. Eido Roshi and Aiho-san move into their new apartment in the monastery and invite us all for chanting, followed by tea and delicious sushi. We bring cake and flowers. They stress the importance of Sangha togetherness, of harmonious relationships.

Yesterday evening Roshi gave a teisho on the koan from Hekigan-roku that begins with the quote from "On Believing in Mind." We must move out of the state in which we constantly discriminate, he tells us. When I look around, I see so much that is wrong I begin to feel like a lunatic. It takes all my strength to "refuse to make preferences." Just when I feel I have a taste of freedom from my judgmental, opinionated views, something happens and then, Pow—right back into the battlefield.

August 7. This evening we arrange the new zendo, Dharma hall, kitchen and dining room, bringing everything over from the



lodge, putting all the new cushions out—it looks so wonderful and feels so wonderful we can hardly believe it. At last! Roshi is overjoyed.

August 21. Under Eido Roshi's tireless leadership we have been cleaning and scouring. It's been a manic time of preparing things inside and out for Soen Roshi's arrival today. At evening zazen, we chant the Diamond Sutra, as we now do on the twenty-first of every month, Dai Bosatsu Day. Then we go to the Joraku-an for a welcoming sarei in the old Dharma hall. Just as tea is served Eido Roshi gets shocking news: Zenshin Richard Rudin has been badly hurt in a car accident in Cleveland. Zenshin, our beloved Dharma brother, a person unlike any I've ever met, always doing so much for everyone and expecting nothing for himself. We begin daily chanting for him, Nen! Nen! Eido Roshi's booming voice, as he stands before the altar: "I don't want to lose him!"

August 30. Our first seven-day sesshin in the completed monastery, with both roshis, 53 of us. Eido Roshi says that although both he and Soen Roshi

## *Z is for Zen:*

### *Continued*

have been trained in Rinzai Zen, here in this new zendo on this new continent we will establish neither Rinzai nor Soto Zen, but Dai Bosatsu Zen.

September 9. Eido Roshi goes to visit Zenshin in Cleveland. He is going to pull through!

September 10. When we planted the garden I was fantasizing about eating fresh corn. Eido Roshi told me, "It won't have enough time to grow." With my usual willfulness, I prevailed; we planted quite a few rows. Last night, thick frost. Corn and tomatoes won't make it. How does Roshi know these things?

September 22. We do tangaryo at the entrance of the new monastery, chant the Diamond Sutra, and are officially accepted by Eido Roshi as residents.



October sesshin. Eido Roshi is jikijitsu whenever he isn't giving dokusan. He's set up a "mu" section for extra keisaku. Fierce vitality. The atmosphere is electric. A student goes berserk during the best teisho Roshi's ever given, and has to be subdued. Roshi is calm at first, then explodes. Next day, the storm has passed without a trace. He tells us the student can come back, because the Dharma connection has already been established, and is too precious to be cut off because of a single incident. What kindness, what ever-enduring patience!

Cleveland, November 2. Shoro and I visit Zenshin in the hospital. He is miraculously convalescing since Roshi's visit. He tells us that on two or three occasions he felt himself slipping away, but that something, some force stronger than death, kept him here. He could feel our intense Mind. As Eido Roshi has told us, modern medicine can only go so far; then there must be something else. This something is really something else!

Syracuse, 2002. For those early days, for all the days that followed, for your teachings of no-discriminating mind, for your amazing Nen, for the beginningless and endless MU of it all, I put my palms together in gratitude beyond gratitude, dear Roshi. May you be healthy and deeply content! May we be blessed by many many more years of your brilliant insight, your extraordinary concern for the Dharma, and your unstinting guidance! Happy Birthday!

*Roko Jido Sherry Chayat* ■■■



*Eido Roshi Sama,  
Happy Birthday!*

I have many significant memories from all the years I have known you (or have we known each other from "beginningless beginning"?), but they are either too personal or somewhat inappropriate.

However, one memory stands out that I would like to share.

It was very early in my days at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and it must have been a weekend workshop type of event. In those days we Westerners had an awful lot of delusions about Zen –actually we had no clue whatsoever of what Zen was really about (thank you Alan Watts, et al). Following a talk by Roshi one day that weekend, there was a question and answer period. After Roshi had responded to a number of questions, one individual seemed to challenge him to a "Dharma Battle." The "question" sounded like a line from one of the koan texts – I do not remember the actual words.

Roshi did not respond – he merely turned away, and I think after a moment he ended the session at that point with some final remarks totally unrelated to the "challenge."



At first I thought: "What! Is he not a real Zen Master? He cannot respond to a Dharma Challenge?" Then I felt Roshi's sadness. He did not turn away because he could not respond to the challenge; he turned away with immense sadness concerning the state of Dharma understanding here in the West, as demonstrated by this individual.

This was the moment I saw the bottomless dedication and resolve of my esteemed teacher. I felt for the first time that Zen is not an intellectual pursuit but involves the totality of our being – and I knew I was in the right place.



Roshi, words cannot express our gratitude for your dedicated work here in the West. We must show our appreciation in the only way you really want us to: Do our very best to wholeheartedly uphold, continue and broaden what you brought us – in other words:

BUDDHAM SARANAM GACCHAMI  
DHAMMAM SARANAM GACCHAMI  
SANGHAM SARANAM GACCHAMI

*Denko John Mortenson*



Thus



What stays with me about Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the '80s is not so much what he said, or even what he did—but what he did not do. For instance, I can still see him walking down the road from the monastery one day as I was splitting wood in the big woodshed. Presently I was setting them up and he was splitting, at a blow—at a blow—at a blow—at a blow—. . . without any rushing, or even the slightest hesitation. Meanwhile, my mind wandered back to my way of grasping after the ungraspable: trying to split "ironwood" (wood with grain so zigzag as to be unsplittable)—so I set up a piece of ironwood for him to split. "Next." And from then on, at a blow—at a blow—at a blow—. . . and when, after a few minutes, he handed the axe back to me, I had all this split wood around me to stack.

And then there was the time most everybody was learning to "play" the Dharma drum. Presently he was prevailed upon to demonstrate. His body quiet—as if he were "seamless" with the drum, almost allowing it to sound. The sticks striking the studs crisply, contrasting with the echoing boom, and yet the rhythm right on the money—therefore "quiet." It was almost frustrating: nothing else to watch, nothing else to hear—feeling as if deaf and blind.

One summer (or, I think, two) we had a "Buddhist-Christian Workshop." A Catholic friend of Eido Roshi's in the city, the friend's priest (a Jesuit with a kelly green chasuble) and some more of their congregation—came up to DBZ for a day or two. They wanted

to celebrate Mass, but we, not being Catholics couldn't fully participate. So a compromise was reached: Mass was celebrated at DBZ but not in DBZ—namely, in the courtyard. Eido Roshi chanted the Great Compassionate Dharani—as cantor, you might say. He chanted it slowly—without any rushing, or even the slightest hesitation. And completely stole the show. Well, maybe "stole" isn't the right word, because the priest seemed as delighted as I was. At the risk of sounding hyperbolic: My feeling is that the essence of compassion, therefore the essence of the Christian religion, was there in that chanting. So when my students in Florida chant "Namu Kara Tan Noh . . .," and I get the urge to put more "zip" into it, the thought comes, "Now, wait a minute. . . ." Once during morning meeting the caretaker of that time burst into the meeting room beside himself with fear. Listening to him, I felt sympathetic signs of fear in my own body and mind. Eido Roshi seemed rather offended by the caretaker's rudeness, which I saw as coming from excitement. It was only afterward, able to calmly turn it over in my mind, that I slowly came around to the certainty that Eido Roshi had not joined in the fear—not even slightly. Even as he was interacting with the caretaker. During some meeting, someone threw something—apparently not heavy—at Eido Roshi. A euphemism for this is "testing." He ducked, turned to see the source, and went on—not so much as if nothing had

*Thus: continued*



happened, but apparently including it as a (small) part of what was happening. The thrower had utterly failed to get a "rise."

All through the '80s I kept my mouth shut about that word "Tathagata"—pronounced in those days this way: "Tathagata"—with those "flat" a's my high-school Latin teacher used to hate: "Ta" as in tabby, "tha" as in thwap, "gat" as in Gatling gun, and "a" as in calf. I was not about to say anything about Sanskrit pronunciation. So imagine my surprise, returning to DBZ after two years in Buddhist Asia, to hear it as I'd longed to: "Tathagata"—with all the a's "ah"—to the delight of people from India, no doubt—to say nothing of Italians and Latinos. And most everybody was even getting the "th" right: as in "hot ham." And I'm still wondering: How?

Working at translating the Book of the Zen Grove (and the Zen Grove Handbook), I took an independent attitude: I wasn't about to ask for help I didn't need. But the disheartening thing was thinking about how little Eido Roshi seemed to be helping me. I tried to accept it as "the help of non-help," but . . . and then just recently I was looking over the index cards on which I'd put my translation of each phrase and the evidence it was based on, with all the sources—dictionaries, other books, whatever—shown with subscripts. And the evidence was plain and clear: there were too many subscripts pointing to Eido Roshi as the source to leave any doubt. I had been wrong: Somehow he'd repeatedly helped me in such

a way that the impression of being helped didn't register. He'd left no trace.

Well, these may look like so many isolated incidents, but I don't think so. Eido Roshi's students, if they stay with him, apparently all get the habit of, so to speak, cocking their ears as if to say, "Eh? Eh?"—as if listening to catch the inaudible and on the lookout for a glimpse of the invisible—maybe even developing the mind to tolerate the inconceivable!

*"The Master is far from verbally flaunting his skill; once the work is done, everyone says they did it. Naturally. Themselves."*

Dao de Jing, Chapter 17

*Zenrin Chido Robert E. Lewis*





## *Like Water to a Desert*

I first met Eido Roshi when he came to visit Soen Roshi in Japan in 1981. At that time, I was training briefly at Ryutakuji as an unsui. My first impression of Eido Roshi was that he was a man of great poise and dignity.

I next met Eido Roshi in 1994, when he came to Seattle and paid a visit to my ordination teacher, Genki Takabayashi Roshi. At a dinner we all shared together, I was moved by Eido Roshi's obvious strength, vigor and dedication to the Dharma. When Genki Roshi decided to retire and moved to Montana a few years ago, he asked Eido Roshi to take care of the continuation of my Zen training.

For the last seven years, it has been my great good fortune to train twice a year at sesshin with Eido Roshi and the Dai Bosatsu Sangha. I can not relay properly how important these years have been to my formation. I am ever so grateful for the opportunity to do sesshin with Eido Roshi, and I believe over time we are deeply cementing our Dharma relationship. Doing Dokusan with Eido Roshi, who has a complete grasp of the English language and American vernacular, is like resolving a well known picture into a refined pristine



focus where nuanced understandings to koans become perfectly clear and undisguised. Doing sesshin with Eido Roshi is like participating in symphony with a masterful conductor who can bring both sesshin and Dokusan practice to a powerful crescendo.

For any life, the greatest task is to burn off as much Shuku-go (karmic residue) as possible. I believe this is the greatest gift we can give to the world, as this combustion frees us to be naturally clear and compassionate in our thoughts and actions. The genuine Rinzaï Zen practice that Eido Roshi has fostered at Dai Bosatsu is like a furnace designed to burn through the many layers of karmic hindrance that we all carry. All of us who have had the good fortune to train at DBZ are strongly challenged to do our bone crunching best, and no finer demonstration of this sincere dedication can be found than in Eido Roshi's own example to us. This training offers a us an inexhaustible path to face the

*Like Water to a Desert*  
*Continued*

inconceivable and shifts the dedicated practitioner from a narrow self-centered view to a collective or universal principle view, a view that arises from true insight into the nature of reality. The training offered at DBZ is like water to a desert. We who have the opportunity to train with Eido Roshi could not be more fortunate.

On Independence Day, 2001, my wife (Josen Carolyn Stevens) and I attended the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of DBZ, representing our temple, DaiBaiZan ChoBoZenJi, which Eido Roshi kindly refers to as "DBZ West." As anyone in attendance will recall, Eido Roshi was beaming as he greeted the over two hundred guests from around the world. During the ceremony the national anthems of both the United States and Japan were played, along with what Eido Roshi refers to as his international anthem,



"To Dream the Impossible Dream." Eido Roshi continues to do his part to see that his dream to establish authentic Rinzai Zen training in the West comes to fruition. It is our collective job to assist him in every way we can.

Eido Roshi, on occasion of your 70th birthday, I wish by this letter to publicly acknowledge my deep appreciation and gratitude for directly manifesting for us all the subtle profound truth of the ancient Zen masters. Thank you so much for your direction and encouragement in this lifetime. Though the geographical distance between us is sometimes great, you are never far from my heart. You will always be my guide. What you continue to give to the Dharma is phenomenal, inspiring and a great blessing to us all.

With deep gassho,

*Genjo Marinello* ■■■

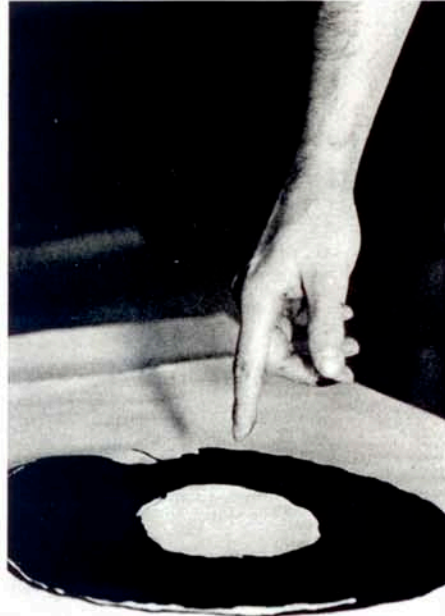


## *A Few Words*

Once during dokusan, I said to Eido Roshi that "MU" was the humming sound I heard in my inner ear, the sound of my own head. There was a brief pause. Roshi was about to speak, but I continued talking. Roshi then shouted, "All you hear is yourself!" I was speechless. He rang the bell and I didn't return for nine years.

During these years I thought of Eido Roshi often, and of that meeting. I never forgot his words. Later I came to realize that I did, in fact, hear myself more than anyone or anything: all I could hear was myself! Unexpectedly, I understood Eido Roshi's shout not just as a correction, but as a very direct teaching. His shout pointed me clearly to my self-centered ways.

Eido Roshi's teaching is always clear and direct, and often subtle. It always runs deep. I am convinced Roshi is unaware of the many things he does that change the lives of his students, of the impact he makes in any given moment. It always runs deep.



I am convinced Roshi is unaware of the many things he does that change the lives of his students, of the impact he makes in any given moment. In hindsight, I realize he had the me to shout, where I didn't have the faith in myself to hear anything other than my own humming.

Thank you for being you.

Happy Birthday!

*Dai-in William Georgiadis* ■

## *A Delivery*



One day, I was sitting at my desk in the furniture store that I managed on the Upper East Side. In walked Eido Roshi and Aiho-San! I had glimpsed Roshi a few times on my occasional outings to the New York Zendo, yet we had never met face-to-face, never spoken.

I rose and went to greet him, putting my hands together in gassho. When he saw that, Roshi had a bright-eyed look of surprise. I silently followed him as he roamed the shop. At one point, he brought out a measuring tape and began to measure a desk top. The cockiness in me couldn't help crowing out, "A tenth of an inch's difference, and heaven and earth are set apart." He just glared at me and grunted.

When the time came for Roshi to make his purchase, I remember I made an error on the order and had to start again. He roared out something like, "Thus he needs more zazen!"

I was, of course, astonished to see an in-the-flesh Zen Master buying new furniture. But I cannot adequately describe my utter shock when I saw this Japanese Roshi pull out an

American Express card to pay. And, if I remember correctly, it was gold!



Anyway, when the day came for the furniture to be delivered, I ran over to Roshi's and Aiho-san's apartment a few blocks away. Aiho-san happily received us, and was so cheerful.

To myself I mused, "A Zen Master has an apartment in the city? And on the Upper East Side?" Again my innocent nose-in-a-book notions were flipped upside-down, just like the desk we had to reassemble. Still, I have to say, when I walked into the living room and saw—yes—a TV set, it was just too much!

Well, Roshi, after all, I guess you are a regular American guy with an express taste for things gold and fresh.

Thanks for opening The Door to DBZ!

Love,

*Kinzan C. Pallm* ■



## *Accepting his Karma*

I'm looking at the cover photograph on the Journal of The Zen Studies Society, Fall 1989 issue: a youthful Eido Roshi and Aiho, during an early stage of their lifelong service and devotion to Dharma. Seeing the young monk and his wife, reflecting on the passage of time and circumstance, I am grateful for the good fortune that has allowed me to know and do zazen with these fine people who manifest such a passion for the salvation of all beings.

Now Eido Roshi's life has spanned 70 years. A friend mentioned once that he considered Eido Roshi's job, the work of a Zen master, about the hardest one there is, and I readily agreed.

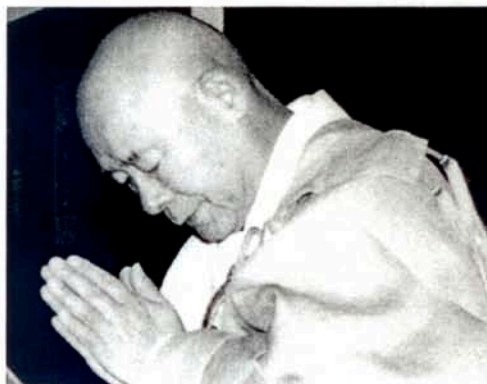
My first sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo was Golden Wind in 1980; and there have been many since. At the close of one sesshin, one of the officers expressed particular admiration for Eido Roshi's acceptance of his

karma, and this idea has stayed with me. Truly, it must really be something to realize, again and again, that one's life is wrapped up with those of all the patriarchs, bound tightly to unyielding traditions. Accepting his karma, Eido Roshi has unfailingly responded to those ancient inner commands that have committed all his wisdom and energy to providing, for thousands of Zen students over so many years, the profound touch of spiritual awakening.

Reviewing some of Eido Roshi's teishos, and my own written notes made during sesshin, I marvel at the graceful yet insistent guiding wisdom permeating the sesshin experience. In one simple phrase, Eido Roshi provides both insight and inspiration. In another, he quickly dispels the ego's arrogance, restoring the awe and humility that foster effective zazen. Outside sesshin,



*Accepting his Karma:  
continued*



life situations are regularly eased and energized by reference to his words ("what is real is not rational, and what is rational is not real"... "we do all of it and we do none of it"), his example, and his transmission of dynamic zazen practice.

In my heart's vision I cherish the moment of entry into the dokusan room, encountering Eido Roshi's deep, compassionate presence. Tender gratitude flows as I see him rising from his center-aisle cushion at the end of a lengthy Diamond Sutra chanting, walking slowly toward his zendo seat by the altar. How many times, over how many years? We are so fortunate to have shared, to some degree, his journey, his "impossible dream."

Eido Roshi once said, "before kensho, zazen is a discipline; after kensho, it is a religion." At Dai Bosatsu, he has provided an impeccable setting in which discipline, to a degree

not experienced by many, can generate the awakenings that lead to radiant flowering of the bodhisattva spirit. Eido Roshi's faithful adherence to this way, and his own bright bodhisattva spirit, have animated a life worthy of the highest admiration.

Thank you, Eido Roshi, for creating and sustaining the magnificent environment of Dai Bosatsu, and for leading the way.

Thank you for ceaselessly being there for all of us as we gradually discover just how near the Truth is. Thank you for innumerable blessings enjoyed in my life, and in the lives of so many others, as the result of your commitment.

I wish you the very Happiest and Most Meaningful of Birthdays!

*Banjo Thomas Nash* ■■■





## *Drawing Out the Unknown*

Since I was such a lazy person (and still am), I wanted to be able to read the calligraphy, which are all Zen words, in the tea room during my classes in Japanese tea ceremony. And that's the reason I started going to the New York Zendo. I thought the best way to study what the hanging scrolls are telling us was to ask a professional. Before that, I had always read a book about tea room scrolls on my way to the tea school, trying to guess which scroll would be hung on that day.

For me, starting to practice Zen was not because I had a crisis or a traumatic experience. I thought I knew myself. I

knew how weak my will was, how dependent and indulgent I was. That's why I tried to be strict with myself, be hard. It was all based on a slight inferiority complex.

It was Roshi who gave me confidence; the confidence I could have never had by myself. He gave me an opportunity to act as a translator for Sogen Yamakawa Roshi when he gives his teishos at DBZ.. I always thought being a translator was a hard job that I could never do. I am "bilingual," but my English is a bit awkward. That's why it was beyond my imagination to translate a teisho live! But who can say no to Roshi? Unbelievably, he



*Drawing Out the  
Unknown: continued*

liked my translation. The confidence Roshi gave me allowed me to step forward in my life. Nobody can imagine how huge that step was.

Because I thought I was hard, it was a total surprise when I was given the Dharma name "Saiun," Colorful Cloud. I expected to be given a sturdy name, like something from Zen masters' names or Zen words. But I was named from nature! Saiun sounds so soft, but Roshi told me he felt this was it. Do I look like that? Am I soft like that? A 180-degree opposite point of view about myself (or was my view always upside down?). I realized that actually I didn't know myself at all!



He always draws out the unknown Atsumi from me and I sincerely appreciate it. I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of Atsumi will come about next. Until then, may I have a chat with you, Roshi, who is like, and I am grateful for, "yokocho no goinkyō," a respected, experienced, knowledgeable and friendly wise old man in your neighborhood?

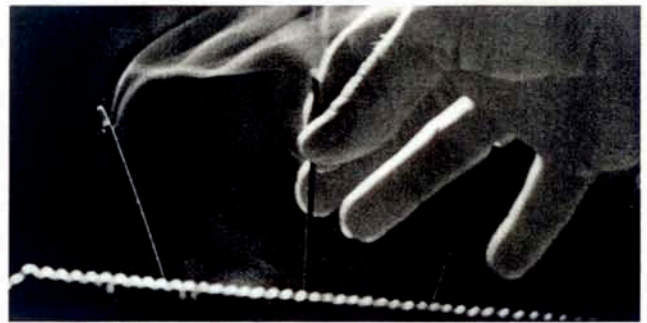
Happy birthday, Roshi!

Otanjobi omedeto gozaimasu.

Gassho,

*Saiun Atsumi Hara* ■

*For All Your Gifts,  
Thank You*



**H**appy Birthday Roshi! Seventy years, what a milestone! How fortunate we all are that your life has run the course that leads to today, how fortunate we are to share parts of it with you, right now.

I saw you the first time about five years ago at Iemoto's tea demonstration at Columbia University. I was a self-centered man filled with much cynicism, arrogance and not an ounce of gratitude (the list is actually somewhat longer!) Being inexorably drawn, a week later I ended up at your Japanese Dharma class. Of course I didn't know it was in Japanese until I met Aiho-san at the front door of Shobo-ji. She was kind enough to let me attend even with my broken Japanese. But that's where it started. There were words, some of which I understood, and an underlying feeling, some of which I got. Sincerity, compassion, strength, wisdom—all arrayed out in front, for all to see.

Your words and your voice, what you say, how you say it and when you say it. They are the tools you so kindly give us to improve and to survive. All of your students know what I mean. Sometimes they are like the wash of orchestral music, sometimes they are like an arrow shot deep into the center. But they linger and they change our lives: Be grateful, choose what is difficult, be tender-hearted, you can't

escape your karma, life is fleeting, breathe from the hara, and of course sit, sit, sit. Your words and voice somehow work around the clock and quietly combine with our own efforts to slowly peel apart some of the incredible façade we all build up and call ourselves.

There are so many other gifts that you have given me. My beautiful wedding to the lovely and talented Saiun. Helping me so profoundly in my hospice work. The great times we have had over tea, the heartfelt laughs we have had. Your gentle smile. The beautiful translations that allowed the words of Dogen to enter my life. You once said we should be filled with gratitude and have our hearts say "Welcome" to whatever comes into our lives. Among so many of your life-affirming tools I hear, feel and use this one often.

And so we are all "well come," all who have met you and have you in our lives. For this and for so much more I am indeed truly grateful. For this great teacher. For this bright Rinzai lineage. For this beautiful Dharma dream. For this life. For this breath. For this moment. For these seventy years. Otanjobi omedeto gozaimasu! Thank you Roshi! Nen, Nen!

Gassho

*Banko Randy Phillips*



## Kindness

When I first started coming to Shobo-ji, I was extremely shy and withdrawn. Whenever I walked, I kept my head down, looking at the ground. My bearing reflected my depressed state. One day, as I was slowly walking up the stairs, my head down as usual, deep in thought, I felt someone put an arm around me. I was startled to discover it was Eido Roshi himself. He was smiling, and said some kind words. I don't remember the words, but I never forgot the feeling I got from them.

Fourteen years later, after a long absence, I returned to the practice of Zen and this gesture of Roshi was instrumental in my taking Jukai and officially becoming his student.

While doing kessei at DBZ I stayed up late, often "hanging out" at the lounge, and got up early with everyone. Consequently, I was pretty tired most of the time. I tried to make up for lost sleep during zazen.



One day, in the midst of a sit, as I was dozing in the zendo, Roshi walked in through the kinhin corridor, made his way slowly to the altar and picked up the keisaku.

I opened my eyes and saw an imposing presence directly in front of me. At that point, Hosen later told me, this thought crossed his mind: "Daishin is dead meat!" Roshi bowed to me, I to him, and then he proceeded to administer four lightning-fast strikes on each shoulder that resounded throughout the zendo.

Later on I realized that Roshi had been told by his doctor to avoid using his arm, as he had just been hurt in a car accident.

*Daishin Pawel Wojtasik* ■

## *Seeing the Teaching*



I will always remember a funny story that happened years ago. One day Roshi and I were in the meeting room at DBZ together. There was a fly buzzing around, hitting the screen in its futile attempt to fly out the window.

Roshi took off his glasses, got up and opened the screen to direct the noisy insect out, to no avail. No matter how many times Roshi tried with his hand to direct the fly to the opening, the poor creature would fly somplace else.

This went on for several minutes, and was rather comic. Finally Roshi sat down in frustration. In that instant, it flew out the window! both laughed and he said, "Well, Seigan, after all there's got to be some teaching in all this!"

I will never forget that example of the way Eido Roshi always sees the teaching in ordinary life. Thank you, Roshi, and Happy 70th Birthday.

*Seigan Edwin Glassing*





## *Start Again*

I arrived for Fall Kessei 1998 in the way that many students do. Not on wings of glory, but rather on the heels of a difficult period of my life. Spring of 1998 had almost taken me out of this incarnation. I had been hospitalized for my emotional and mental troubles. And then I arrived at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. I had been there several times since 1990, but never did sesshin. I met Roshi, and received my first marching orders. As hard as I try to let go of attachments, this teaching has been with me and has followed me to this day, even becoming the subject of my first Dharma Talk at New York

Zendo. I told Roshi that I had lost everything—the job, the woman, the friends, the sanity, everything. He said something that many other people had said, but for the first time I heard it: "You are going to be all right!" I accepted his answer for approximately three seconds, and then started ranting about how that did not change the fact that everything was gone. He made a sweeping motion with his arms, his long robes making a thunderous flapping sound. I was a deer in headlights. He stared me down and said, "Start again." Then he sent me away with a smile. I did what he said to the best of my ability all during Fall



*Start Again: continued*



Kessei, and then again during Spring Kessei. Every situation at DBZ was an invitation to investigate life anew, without any pre-conceived notions about anything. After all, everything was gone, right? Why not live that way? And I have done so ever since, with varying degrees of success, with varying levels of understanding and Nen. My emotional problems seemed to vanish within three weeks, and I have been a different man ever since.

I find it most helpful that I have held onto this teaching at this time of my life and our lives. On September 6, 2001, I gave a Dharma Talk at New York Zendo, a talk entitled "Start Again." It renewed my desire to have each breath be the beginningless beginning and the endless end. Five days later, starting again seemed to be the only way to make sense of the strange new world dawning. I am so grateful to Rōshi for this and all the other teachings I have had the good fortune to receive. I wish him the happiest of birthdays and many more to come.

*Hosen Stephen Dansiger* ■

## Tai-san's "Try"



It was February of 1966 when I first met the Zen monk named Tai-san. I was 22 years old and he was 34. Although I now know that he was very young, at that time I only saw him as a timeless living Buddha, and this is still my view.

The atmosphere that Tai-san created in the old zendo on the west side was so very alive yet still, awake and crisp yet gentle. I have not experienced anything quite like it since! Once in a while he would rise from his seat and, while we were facing the wall he would silently walk in back of us.



Only the soft rustle of his robe let us know that he was on the move. We all wondered, where would he stop tonight? Would he say something? What might he do? As a 1960's New York girl, I knew absolutely nothing about self-discipline or making a sincere effort. To Tai-san my zazen must have appeared rather ineffectual. One night as he was soundlessly padding around the zendo he stopped in back of me. He stayed there for a long time and somehow, instead of making me nervous, his presence put me at ease. Finally, very very slowly, he bent down to my ear and he whispered, "Madeline, try." When he moved on, I pondered this, and discovered that I didn't even know how to try. For the next several weeks this "Try" became my zazen. It was through this "Try" that I was able to begin to learn to sit. Thus it was that Tai-san's "Try" became my first koan and the very turning word of my entire practice of zazen. Truly and without exaggeration, it was Tai-san's "Try" that set the course for the rest of my life.

*Madeline Schreiber* ■





## *the gift of gratitude*

About fifteen years ago, as a new student at the Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji, I recall being told by another student, "Wait till you meet a Roshi. They're different."

"How?" I asked.

"Oh, they're just more...you know...More!"

My imagination went wild. Did they glow? Fly? Were they somehow magical? What power did they wield? In what way more?

When I first met Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the Fall of 1990, he was definitely More. His presence filled the monastery, the forest, the silent little valley where Beecher Lake sleeps. It was more than just the spirit of the place. I had heard the stories, of course: how he was a direct heir of the legendary Soen Nakagawa Roshi; how ferocious he was in upholding the Rinzai Zen tradition; how he struggled victoriously with philanthropists, architects, bureaucrats, builders and any number of other uncomprehending individuals to build a monastery and plant the seeds of the Dharma; how he had exquisite taste in the arts; how he was a scholar and linguist; how he had struggled with the sometimes insurmountable-seeming cultural barriers between East and West. But to me he was more, though it took me a while



discern in what way. In terms of physical stature, I was much larger than he was, but I always felt (and still feel!) like a small boy next to the scale of his Dharma presence. But he was more in a much different way too. I don't mean his voice roaring, "MORE!" from the dokusan room as some poor benighted student hoarsely shouted "Mu!" for him. The more I mean has another quality.

All who have known Eido Roshi have their own favorite anecdotes: about his uncommon generosity (certainly we at Hoen-ji have received this); his tireless hours in dokusan; his meticulous actualization of the traditions (who else would have been attentive to detail enough to have the Jisha tell a new student...me...how to fold his hands correctly during kinhin in the midst of a large sesshin with many other bumbling new students?); his huge energy (that seems like anger to some) when the focus in the zendo begins to slip. When I think of Roshi and how he is more More! two small occasions come to mind.

The first occurred after the middle day of my third or fourth Rohatsu at DBZ. It is the day of Sosan, compulsory dokusan. It is no longer than other days, but

*the gift of gratitude: continued*

it is somehow more intense and Roshi sees absolutely everyone. Its special nature is emphasized by the lantern, the Dharma Lamp, burning next to the kansho bell, monitored on this day by the Shikaryo instead of the Inji. At the close of the day, late in the evening, Roshi and the Shikaryo come into the zendo, walk the length and breadth of it, pause, bow, and leave. This particular time, while Roshi stood there, I could feel the exhaustion in the zendo. Everyone had been trying so hard, sitting with great earnestness and determination. There stood Roshi in the silence. He was tired too. Instead of my wishing he'd bow and leave so the long sitting would end, as I usually might, I looked up suddenly, startled. He was glancing at each of us. Out of him poured this profound compassion and (and this is the more) gratitude...toward us! It was palpable, his gratitude that we too struggled to live the Dharma, struggled to overcome, however ineptly, our own innumerable barriers to sit with him and share this endless tradition. Love and gratitude, unconditional, no thing and no one left out. With this gift to us he bowed and left the zendo.

The other little story is related and took place, as so many do I suppose, in dokusan. One time I found myself speechless with gratitude before him. I couldn't hold back the tears nor find the words.



He simply smiled, sensing what I could not say, and quoted this waka from my namesake, the 12th-century poet-monk Saigyō:

*Whatever it is  
I cannot understand it,  
but gratitude overwhelms me  
and my eyes fill with tears.*

Sometime later I wrote this poem in grateful response:

Saigyō's Waka

*Look, I open my hand for you.  
It is only my hand  
and it is empty.  
I do not know what It is or why,  
but my hand is one of the reasons  
I cry so easily these days.*

So, if anyone asks how a Roshi is different, I would say this Roshi, the Venerable Eido T. Shimano, celebrating his 70th year, has brought us the profound gift of gratitude and revealed its mystery: the more you give the more you receive. That is the More I was talking about and I will remain forever deeply grateful.

Happy Birthday Roshi!

*Saigyō Terry Keenan* ■■■

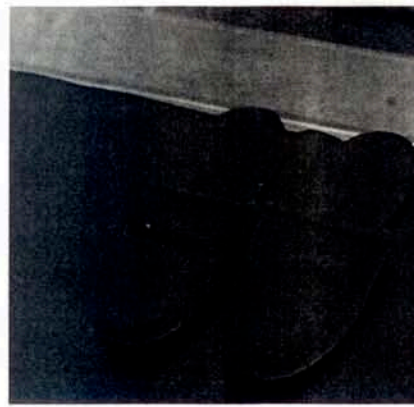


## *The Obelisk or the Dead Bear*

One night during the Five-Day Summer Sesshin of 2000, I walked out to Sangha Meadow. At the entrance I got very excited as the full moon appeared to be perched directly on the obelisk. "There it is!" I thought. "The finger pointing at the moon! I wonder if this means my third eye has opened!"

After mu-ing a few times, I walked back to the zendo, took off my sneakers and had my second mystical insight of the evening. Nothing brings you back to earth like a trip to the shoe room on a muggy day, I thought. Could mere feet smell this bad, or am I missing a dead bear in here?

I mention this incident for two reasons: 1) I hope the resident monks will honor Eido Roshi's 70th birthday by boiling their boots; and 2) it is a good metaphor for my experience with dokusan. You never know if it's going to be the obelisk or the dead bear. "Relinquish the bullshit!" Roshi once commanded after a presentation of mu that I was sure deserved an obelisk. Just when you think you're ready for



some serious Dharma combat, there's always more bullshit to relinquish, like Hercules cleaning the Augean stables.

Roshi once said during a teisho that Americans have no patience and always want to be comfortable. I think this is a cultural misapprehension. Americans prolong life by pursuing instant gratification. For example, when I quit drinking fourteen years ago, I added up the number of hours I'd spent sleeping, watching television, getting drunk and recovering from hangovers, and subtracted that figure from the number of hours I'd been alive. I discovered that I wasn't even going to be born for another eight years. And yes, if I ever get the koan about where I was before my parents were born, I'll nail it in one dokusan. I can see the moon on the obelisk now.

Anyway, I want to wish Roshi a happy 70th Birthday. I hope I have cleared up any misunderstandings he might have about American culture and look forward to relinquishing even more of my bullshit during his next 70 years.

*Daiden* ■



## Traceless Traces

### Introduction

Zen tradition values a life that leaves no traces. Yet, if one were truly traceless in the conventional sense, then one would eventually pass on unnoticed and unremembered. If previous generations were traceless in this conventional sense, then there would be no lineage, no tradition, no sangha, no teachers, and no students. Thus, traceless is not to be understood in the conventional sense. "Leave no traces" is better understood to mean that one leaves nothing that distracts, delays or endangers the passage of those who follow - traceless traces. In Zen, the traceless traces of the teacher are most clearly found in the student's heart, practice, and activity. While buildings, writings and personal artifacts may be retained and cherished, in the end it is the student who reveals the traceless traces of the teacher.

I met the man thirty years ago. My wife, Sandra, was taking a university course in Japanese religions, and he had been invited by the teacher, Prof. Richard Pilgrim, to speak to the class about Zen. I had read a bit about Zen, and so I decided to sit in on the class. I don't remember what he said, but I still remember his warmth and presence. Later in the day, he instructed a large number of university students in Zen meditation. After the public instruction, I drove him to his next destination for an end-of-the-week social gathering sponsored by the chaplain's office. We exchanged small talk about my Japanese car, the class, and his return trip the next day. At the social gathering, I sat with the others as we all engaged in easy conversation about nothing in particular. Later, I drove him to Professor Pilgrim's home where he spent the night. Eido Shimano Roshi had stepped across my path and looked in my direction.



I never lived with Eido Roshi on a daily basis. I never lived at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, and I never received monastic training. With mysterious good fortune, I did find my way to sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo on a regular basis. I waited in the dokusan line with others until I could no longer hear Roshi's bell. As time passed, we would find ourselves at a common event, as when we both spoke at the "Centennial Celebration of Zen In America" at Syracuse University in 1993, hosted by the Zen Center of Syracuse. We would talk a bit, attend a social gathering, or perhaps be seated at the same dinner table. As time passed, there were other meetings, sometimes with others and sometimes alone. We spoke about a number of matters, some general and some personal. We ate together, and we celebrated together. In all, such times have been few, glimpses at the most. Would we recognize each other in the dark?

And so, what follows are recollections from moments along a busy highway, footnotes buried somewhere in a longer, deeper volume. Eavesdropping while nodding in the zendo.

"...This book is more than a book.  
For your zazen practice."  
—while socializing on Friday afternoon  
after a public meeting—

The first time I met Eido Roshi, he was giving a talk at Syracuse University to a class in Japanese religions. After the Friday class he spent some time at an afternoon gathering at a university social center that was run by the chaplain's office. Wine and cheese were served freely, music played in the background, and students and faculty dropped in to mark the end of the week. Roshi sat in his robes, while the rest of us sat

## *Traceless Traces: continued*

around in a variety of rags and bags. Everyone wanted a go with "the Japanese Zen Master." This was the kind of opportunity one read about in books, and everyone wanted a chance to "play with the swords." The wine certainly helped. I would guess that he found the scene somewhat "far out" in the vernacular of the day, but he kept up a friendly presence in the face of the thundering herd. He had a Daily Sutra Book with him, and at one point—who knows why—he offered it to me. My turn with the swords had come, and I commented that it was "only a book," inferring that it didn't have much use in "real" Zen practice. He smiled, took out his pen, and wrote in the cover, "Book is only a book, says Bob, but this book is more than a book. For your zazen practice." He handed it to me, and I became the owner of Roshi's Daily Sutra Book. Later I learned that Daily Sutra Books come and go by the carton, but for me the book had been his, and now it was mine. "For your zazen practice," he said, and without realizing it I had received my first instruction.

**"I only lost my temper  
three times this sesshin."**

—overheard after sesshin—

We are all young once, for however long it takes to pass, and while the spark remains hot and fast, the flame waxes and then finally wanes. When Eido Roshi was a young man, he had energy to burn and sometimes he burned it. He could be quick to anger when provoked, yet just as quick to free himself from any angry attachments and hangover. So it came as little surprise when, after one sesshin, I overheard him say, "I only lost my temper three times this sesshin!" He was enthusiastic, and a bright smile radiated from his

face. I felt relieved of a great burden, the kind of relief that one feels when the burden has gone unnoticed until the moment of its lifting. Roshi has never claimed to be perfect, nor has he expected perfection from others. His comment taught that freedom does not require some sort of superhuman existence. Perhaps even I could be imperfect and still be able to smile and enjoy a happy moment. Finally and most thankfully, my teacher did not have to be perfect. Perhaps in this last realization, I was somehow able to relieve Roshi of some small portion of that heavy burden.

**"Do not be deceived by the practice of others.  
Follow your own path straight ahead."**

—sesshin closing remarks—

Contrary to rumor, sesshin does eventually end. The hour finally comes for the last sitting and the closing ceremony. Then, at the sound of the final bell, all rise and leave the zendo. Happy voices and laughter soon replace silence as smiling faces line the monastery's hallways. During the last sitting at one sesshin, Eido Roshi offered a closing instruction. "Do not be deceived by the practice of others. Follow your own path straight ahead." His call to self-truth rings once and echoes endlessly. Certainly, do not be deceived! Good advice for all. But, what about his phrase, "...by the practice of others..."? No one wishes to be





### *Traceless Traces: continued*

deceived by error, but the authentic practice and example of others must surely be helpful. No! Roshi's words cut through the hopeless hope that the path of others can somehow substitute for one's own path. Only by dropping everything can one drop anything. Everything dropping away. "Follow your own path, straight ahead." Everyone has his or her own path, that "secret source of action" sometimes called Buddha Nature. Even as it curves along beside the stream of life, the path is always "straight ahead." An old passage comes to mind: "Though I walk through the valley of death, I fear no evil." The bell rings, the last sitting is over.

#### **"Zazen takes tremendous energy."**

—at a wedding reception and party in the dining room—

One night, after a week of sesshin routine and discipline, the scene before my eyes was most unusual. There had been a wedding on the last day of sesshin, and now the reception and party were in full swing in the dining room. Rock 'n roll music blared from large speakers, a jolly Japanese monk steadily made the rounds pouring hot sake into any and all cups, and dancing bodies whirled to the beat of the music. I sat beside Eido Roshi, and we shared some funny comments about the contrasting images on the "dance floor." I asked him, "Where is all this energy in the East?" "Zazen takes tremendous energy," Roshi replied. Then, without pausing, he pushed me out onto the floor and, with much laughing, exhorted me to start dancing. When he considered it appropriate, Roshi could be a

wonderful addition to any party. Shortly thereafter, he went to bed. The dancing and hot sake lasted till past midnight. This tremendous energy! Who can say that Zen practice is just quiet meditation?

#### **"Eckhart sees something."**

—in the meeting room over coffee—

I was in the meeting room one morning, preparing instant coffee for Eido Roshi. I had just opened the jar, and in the process I had sent powdered coffee flying all over. While cleaning up the coffee, it occurred to me that an interesting conversational topic might hopefully distract attention from my fumbling efforts with the coffee jar. I asked Roshi what he thought about Meister Eckhart, the 13th-century Christian mystic. As he watched me clean up the coffee, he replied, "Eckhart sees something." On another occasion, I gave him a copy of Eckhart's sermon on the Biblical verse, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." On that occasion, he made several notes with his brush pen in the margin of the copy. Roshi had studied Western religions, and he has always been sensitively aware of those points of contact between Eastern and Western religious traditions. Over the years he has maintained an ecumenical dimension to his Zen teaching that has allowed many Westerners to learn from Zen practice without distracting religious

## *Traceless Traces: continued*

debate. While loyal to his own experience and tradition, Roshi has always insisted that Zen spans geography, nations, and particular religious traditions. It can even be found in the clumsy fingers of a self-conscious student.

**"They watch me once and then claim me as their teacher. Then they call themselves teachers."**

—responding to my request to attend Roshi while he is doing calligraphy—

With time and diligent effort, Eido Roshi has mastered the Japanese art of calligraphy. His brushwork can be found in numerous volumes, personal and public collections, and throughout the monastery at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Having been interested in the way of calligraphy, I repeatedly asked Roshi to allow me to attend him if he happened to be doing any calligraphy during sesshin. This is an unusual request in an unusual context, and I have never failed to notice his focused look in response to my request. Once I pressed him about my request, and he responded, "People watch me once and then claim me as their [calligraphy] teacher. Then they call themselves teachers." I noticed a tone of exasperation in his reply, not so much with me as with the American tendency to master everything too quickly, with little attention to tradition and subtlety. Roshi has always believed in "coming up through the ranks." Regardless of one's talent, motivation, and energy, some things can only be learned in time, by being there day after day. The student's willingness to undergo a diligent apprenticeship is necessary in order to cultivate the correct attitude of mind, apart from any



specific skill. While I have continued to express my intention to "only attend," I have not yet been invited to do so. Perhaps next sesshin.

**"You above all people should remember the importance of thinking."**

—while leaving dokusan—

People who are new to Zen practice frequently say that they want to get rid of their ego or stop their minds from constantly thinking. With enough Zen stories, shouts, blows from the stick, and demands to "Speak!" it is easy to develop a negative attitude towards old-fashioned thinking. During one sesshin, having demonstrated during dokusan my version of non-thinking to the point of absurdity, I was mercifully dismissed by the sound of Eido Roshi's bell. As I left the room, he eyed me carefully and said, "You above all people should remember the importance of thinking." As a psychologist, an expert in the science of human behavior and thinking, I had done a lot of thinking. Yet, I had become deceived into attempting to stop my thinking. Surely, with thinking banished, insight would appear with no effort at all. Now, in the most esoteric of settings, Roshi reaffirmed the importance of thinking. I recall the many times he has introduced a topic with the words, "I was thinking in the

## *Traceless Traces: continued*

zendo..." Thinking ebbs and flows like all of life, and non-attachment to thinking is perhaps the best meaning of no-thought. Non-attachment to thinking! Now, there's something to think about.

**"Sit as if this line is the edge of the universe."**

—instruction during dokusan—

After several days, the routine of sesshin begins to blend into itself, distinctions fade, and one moves along silently to the sounds of the bell and clappers. Sitting follows sitting and one can easily fade into a motionless inertia. And so, I found myself sitting in front of Eido Roshi without much to say. I had been "just sitting" and said so. Now, if one can "just sit" with full understanding of the subtlety within those two words, then there really is nothing else to do. But my "just sitting" clearly lacked any subtlety. For several eternities Roshi looked at me. Then, he took his kaisaku and slowly drew an imaginary line in the surface of the rug, running right across the front of my knees. "Sit as if this line is the edge of the universe," he said. I looked down at the imaginary line running in front of my outstretch knees, and I felt my skin crawl in a most unexpected manner. I returned to the zendo, but there was no more "just sitting." With the simplest of gestures, he had completely re-oriented my whole perspective.

**"You stink all the time."**

—after a particularly aimless dokusan meeting—

The teacher-student relationship in Zen training is one of the most unique interpersonal relationships that I have ever encountered. In order to convey the heart of

Zen, the relationship must develop aspects of intimacy and authenticity rarely encountered elsewhere in life. The therapist-patient relationship in long-term psychotherapy may be the only Western parallel. I had been working on a koan and in dokusan after dokusan, and I had only succeeded in wandering further and further from the heart of the matter. After one exasperating meeting, I commented that my effort that day "really stank." Eido Roshi laughed and said, "You stink all the time." Then, Roshi rang his bell, and as I departed both of us couldn't stop laughing. Now, his comment could be taken as insensitive criticism, perhaps even damaging. However, for me it was an acknowledgement of the trust and confidence that we had cultivated with each other. We could talk candidly without worrying about being "politically correct." Over the years I have been continually impressed by Roshi's willingness to become completely involved with his students' practice. Although I have always been a "distant student," I have never felt any rationing of his efforts on my behalf. He has returned trust with trust, and he has never retreated from exposing his own Truth for the benefit of my practice.





## *Traceless Traces: continued*

"Now, miscellaneous distractions drop away."

—late Thursday night during sesshin,  
after vigorous training—

I was attending sesshin for the first time. The monastery had not been completed, and so we sat on the second floor of the old nineteenth-century house down by the lake. The layout consisted of the main zendo and a bedroom converted to a smaller zendo off to one side. My spot was in the small zendo. One night, Eido Roshi began walking through the zendos with the keisaku. We called it "invisible walking," because he was so soft and silent that you couldn't tell when he was behind you. He had signaled that the whole sangha should begin MU'ing together, softly and consistently. When he finally passed behind me, my voice cracked, and my MU fell flat. He immediately stuck me with the keisaku. Then in a whirlwind, he struck everyone in the small room several times. Our voices quickly rose to loud shouts until Roshi silenced everyone with a clap of his hands. He abruptly sat down on the floor in our small room and said, "Now, miscellaneous distractions drop away." He was right.

I was as sharply focused as I was capable of being. Some who hear this story take exception to Roshi's activity. I have never done so. He was insightfully correct, and for me, that night's lesson has never faded. I have heard Roshi's stories of his own training as a young monk. He expected much of himself, and he has never shrunk from expecting the same effort from his students. Since that night, Roshi's direct demonstration of distractions, effort, and the deeper capacities of the mind have remained a guiding resource within everything that I do.



"You cannot claim to understand Zen until you can wring the tears from the sleeves of your robes. Sit amongst the trees."

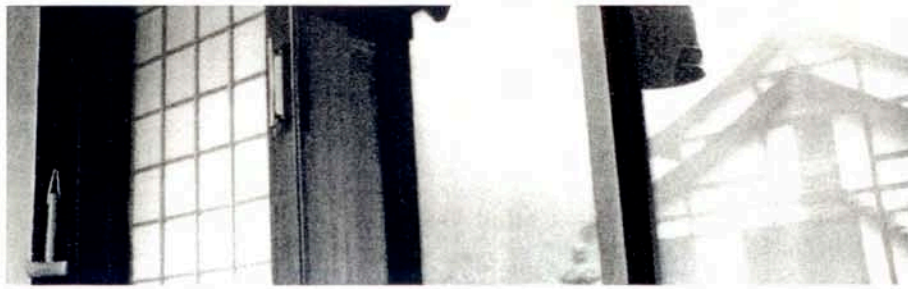
—after a tearful episode in dokusan—

Zen students are forever passing through the vale of tears. The tears may be associated with one's life story, but just as often they flow without apparent reason. Whatever their source and meaning, tears are a constant companion of the Zen student. I had been wrestling with my resentments, and I eventually came to dokusan with tears that soon enough turned to sobbing. "You cannot claim to understand Zen until you can wring the tears from the sleeves of your robes," said Eido Roshi. He understood something about life and human nature that eluded me, even though I am a psychologist. He then asked if there was anything that I did not resent, and I replied that I did not resent trees. "Sit amongst the trees," he said, and I felt his consoling hands rubbing my back. So, at the next rest break, I went outside and sat down amongst the trees, leaning my sore back against a silent listener. I cried steadily for the better part of an hour. When it was time to return to the zendo, I was softer, less antagonistic, more willing. "Sit amongst the trees." They have lost all their leaves yet utter no complaints.

*Nikyu Robert Strickland* ■■■



## *The Wall*



Not all I've learned from Eido Roshi has been from teisho or dokusan. Often it has been from a chance incident or casual remark that jolted my mind to attention. An Example:

Shinrei at 4:30 a.m. (a barbaric waking time in my view) then morning service, chanting, meditation and breakfast. Promptly followed by morning meeting when the daily lesson is read while we are to sit tall on our cushions continuing our breathing practice. All this before 9 a.m.! I was quite tired one morning and leaned on the wall.

Roshi said, with a foxy sly glitter in hi eye, "If you lean on that wall and don't develop your own spine, you'll have to carry that wall around with you wherever you go."

As if by magic, a torrent of all the things I had ever "leaned on" flooded my mind. Alcohol, drugs, chocolate, men, clothes with the right labels, my pretensions and posturing, my Vogue covers, fame, my illnesses and illusions, my fears. All the things I had leaned on, hid behind, in order to avoid responsibility, avoid pain, avoid taking my full part in life.

When I first came to the Zen Studies Society, 1974, there was a prayer in the Sutra book that frightened me deeply; I hope I recall it correctly:

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but be fearless in facing them. Let me not pray for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it. Let me not seek allies on life's battlefield, but to look to my own strength. Let me not pray in fear in anxious fear to be saved, but for the patience to gain my own freedom.

Today that prayer has been answered. I am no longer that fear-ridden girl carry her wall everywhere, defensively hiding behind it, but fully participating in my very delightful life. I am my own woman, not dependent on anything, not afraid of anything.

I am very grateful to Eido Roshi for his compassionate teaching, and bringing zazen, the path to freedom for all of us.

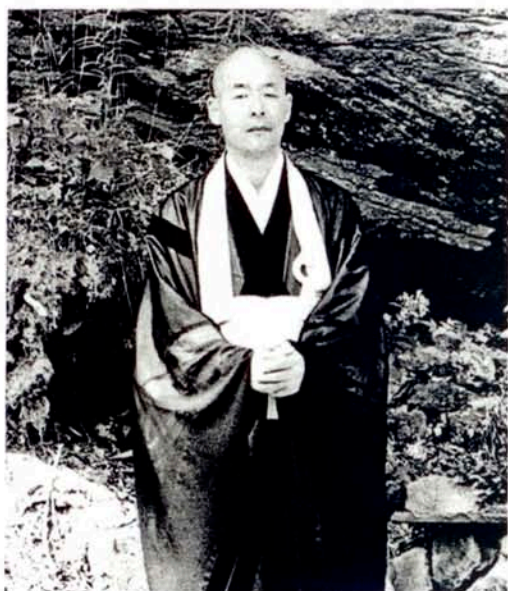
My thanks to you Eido Roshi... more than I can express.

*Boun Nancy Berg* ■

*Many  
Happy Birthdays*



Recently while investigating the contents of a cabinet in my home, I happened on a trove of travel documents from sangha trips some of us took with Roshi years ago. The rest of the day was shot: half-dressed, half-fed, I pawed over cracked maps, dog-eared brochures, photographs, badly-penned notes, and even some coherent accounts of those wonderful ventures. Memories. Roshi, usually black-robed, gliding in the fore tinkling a little bell-even amid the throngs of the Ginza. Black sleeves rushing past my nose to connect a watermelon with the head of a recalcitrant student. (Dinner party, tatami maker's home, Uji.) Black sleeves flapping, incense swirling on the windy heights of the Sun Yatsen memorial. (Nanjing). Black sleeves spilling over fallen leaves beneath the Bodhi Tree, Bodhi Gaya.



One of the "coherent accounts" I came across was from the pen of Rodo, then the resident at Shoboji. Although seriously travel worn from the three weeks on the temple-circuit, we had started sesshin at Ryutakuji. Roshi had left us there on our own. And Rodo went over the wall. "As soon as I hit the main road, a bus came.... I purchased a ticket for Tokyo on the bullet train and went to the platform... [where] I turned around and though I was hallucinating. Coming up the escalator was Eido Roshi smiling...Oh no!... [Roshi] said that this is exactly what was meant to happen...[We] rode on the train to Tokyo together... I agreed I would return to Ryutakuji and finish sesshin. We decided to meet at Mishima station and return together. We would sit the following day..."

Stern Roshi, kind Roshi,  
merry Roshi, decisive Roshi.  
Many happy birthdays  
to you.

*Jikei Jean Bankier*



## *On Roshi's Birthday*

When honoring Roshi at this particular time, I think especially of his ability to teach.

Teaching is a complex art. But the "teaching" of spiritual understanding requires quotation marks at least. This isn't an intellectual discipline. Rather, it's a reminder to "the student" of what is there. Reminding, and reminding.

Among the many qualities needed to teach ably, and to be effective as a Remind, are at least two Zen virtues most of us find in short supply: patience is one; and another is the ability to submerge our own egos occasionally for certain disinterested purposes.

It's sometimes possible to develop patience if you also have a couple of kinds of faith: --faith that Something will prevent you from shaking a stick, excepty ritually, in the face of a 20-year-long student who says, "God knows, Roshi, I haven't the faintest idea what I'm doing";

--faith that, as you roll your eyes heavenward, Something will provide you with yet another upaya, a skillfull means, another device, another striking phrase, another way to animate the student; --and, faith that Something does inevitably work in the student, revealing and clarifying. "Sooner or later, we are all monks



and nuns." Patience also includes another kind of faith: that the teacher will accept in due time, the difficult truth found in the sutras and scripture, that the laborer, devoted and anxious though he may be, must stand apart from the fruits of his labor.

This is an occasion, however, on which to assure our particular laborer that there certainly are fruits, some not immediately seen. Failures are not failures-"that is only the name that we give to them." What seems to be spurts and flares of brilliance that he watches dies out in his students, do not die out, but continue to sputter along under the fallen leaves, gathering new energy.

And we want to assure him that, in an expanded mandala, there will be another teacher, or two or three, and Canada geese, and symphonies of Ho and Mu. If Zen in America does continue for another fifty years, it will be the fruit of steadfast and animating teaching, of scholarship of cultural inclusion, of patience, and of an absence of ego from significant, absolutely relative moments.

For all this, we bow gratefully to Roshi's Something, and celebrate seventy years of its activity.

*Myoshin Lorette Zirker* ■



## *Transformation*

**I**t was a Wednesday evening 7 years ago that I walked into Shoboji. Roshi was giving a Teisho and he talked about pine trees, greenness, isness. I had no idea what he was saying. But when I walked out of Shoboji I felt light as a butterfly, floating down East 67th Street. I had no idea what happened to me. All tension just melted away and a feeling of peace filled me. From that moment I knew that my life had changed forever.

I bow deeply to Roshi who had the courage and strength to bring Zen practice to New York City. He brought this simple yet profound teaching to us where we are now a part of his long lineage. What a privilege!

Shoboji and DBZ are an oasis where I sit. I am so grateful to the sangha, the monks, nuns and older students who are the exemplars of the practice who help to encourage and strengthen my practice.

This is a slow unfolding practice where This Mind reveals itself in subtle ways. The confused, angry, critical little self gradually slips away and life becomes richer, a clearer perspective emerges in everyday life. But you must be diligent and persistent in your practice for this to happen. And happen it will!

Each morning and each evening I bow deeply to Roshi in deep gratitude for this practice. It is difficult to articulate the inner transformation that slowly occurs but I say again and again,

Roshi, Gassho, Gassho, Gassho.

*Koge Eileen Danville* ■





## *One Fateful Evening in Cleveland, Ohio*

I've often thought how much I would love to write, or talk, about the multitude of humorous moments experienced while in the company of Eido Roshi during my four years at DBZ – what a hilarious dharma talk or essay that would make. But I think I will save the comedy for another time and, on this occasion, the celebration of Roshi's 70th birthday, retell the story of how we met, an event in my life with monumental consequences.

The year was 1987. I had just graduated from engineering school and returned to Cleveland to work as a project engineer for the State of Ohio. After years of being on an unfulfilled spiritual quest, was thrilled to have discovered Buddhism in October of that year. The Cleveland Buddhist Temple had been like a magnet, pulling me towards it each time I drove by . . . and so I finally stopped in one evening. I picked up a book on Buddhism, and the first line I read was a statement from Shakyamuni Buddha: "Do not believe anything you hear, not even from myself. All the answers are within you!" Excited by this line, since I had continuously rejected the typical



religions' instructions of "have faith" and "just accept," I bought and completed the book and was amazed to discover that here was everything I had always believed but for which I had never known there were words!

Needless to say, I was excited about my "new discovery" – Buddhism. So when Eido Roshi arrived two months later to give a mini-sesshin at Cleveland Buddhist Temple with Rev. Ogui, I fantasized of the many questions to ask him, yet "knew" I would not have the opportunity.

The closing event of the weekend was a dinner at Shinano's Restaurant for all the sesshin participants. Towards the end of the dinner, Eido Roshi asked that we go around the table and introduce ourselves. When it was my turn, Roshi stopped me and asked me to repeat an answer to a question he had asked the sesshin participants the previous day. "I don't remember," I said, "I think I've had too much plum wine tonight." He laughed. I laughed. And the introductions continued around the room.

*One Fateful Evening  
in Cleveland, Ohio: continued*

I had been the only person Roshi interrupted during the introductions. Had that not happened, I never would have had the nerve to approach him after dinner. But the incident gave me that little spark of confidence, and I went up and inquired if I could ask him some questions about Buddhism and about his monastery. He said "Of course," in his kindly way. We spoke for about one hour that night. I did not know Eido Roshi before this. I knew nothing about DBZ – it could have been in an ancient barn without plumbing or electricity for all I knew. But at the end of that hour, based on my love of Buddhism and the warmth and kindness of this charismatic Zen Master, I committed to quit my job (which was truly a "dream job"), sell my house, move to a monastery in "who-knows-where-ville" the next Spring, stay for four years and become ordained as a Zen Buddhist nun.

What an experience! What an adventure!  
What a jam-packed, life-changing roller coaster ride of joy, tears, happiness, sadness, discipline-gaining, hard work, great fun, spiritual growth, friendship-to-last-a-lifetime-making days.



And through it all, and ever since, I have never ceased to be in awe, Roshi, of your deep love of dharma and your commitment to transmitting Zen to the lucky students at DBZ and elsewhere around the world. Your dharma energy seems to INCREASE with age and at the rate you're going, and if we're all lucky, you'll still be teaching us Zen when your one hundred years old!

Happy 70th birthday, Roshi. Thank you for all you do! I'm so very happy to be your student!

*Renji Ellen Darby* ■

August, 2002



## *Some thoughts on Roshi's birthday*

I can only go back to the beginning of my journey into Zen, when I came up to DBZ with my husband for Roshi's 65th birthday celebration. I could barely consider myself a student. I hadn't been sitting long, read less, had never been to sesshin. Golden Wind had just ended, and I remember looking at the elaborate piles of zafus and support cushions at each student's place in the zendo, wondering at the hell it must be to sit for a week. Nonetheless it felt natural to be there.

After dinner, the monks and students enacted a very funny parody of the story of Roshi's arrival in America, recounting his trials and tribulations teaching Zen practice to a bunch of apparent bumpkins. I was also introduced to Roshi's rendition of "The Impossible Dream".

I now know this story well, but at the time it was new to me. Beyond the laughter that night, I marvelled at Roshi's energy and determination, and, when he and Aiho-san got up and



sang together, I realized the hardships they must have had to endure as strangers in a strange land to make his "Impossible Dream" possible for us all.

Roshi, I am so grateful you came here, and even more grateful you stayed.

Thank you.

*Jiho Ann Gaffney* ■





Roshi,

When it's raining, or freezing, or boiling hot, or I'm tired or too busy to go to the zendo and sit, I try and remember that there was a time during my lifetime when there was no zendo in New York. I was born almost as far away from here as you were, so what were the odds of me meeting you?

History will, of course, record that a great Zen Master came to America and built a zendo in the city and an exquisite monastery in the Catskills where true dharma continues. What history will not record is that I met you and I became your student and my life changed. I can only think of the encouragement you have given me and the endless patience and kindness you have shown me in the time I have been your student.

The gratitude that can be told is not the eternal gratitude.

*Genju Joe Gaffney.* ■■■



## *The cushion*



The first time I came to DBZ I was overwhelmed by the golden fall leaves reflected in the lake, the beauty and serenity of the Zendo and the warmth and dedication of the residents. But there was no Roshi, only a cushion in the center of the Zendo to indicate his existence. This empty cushion appeared at Shobo-Ji too, and for months all I saw of Roshi was this mysterious cushion.

And when he finally materialized to give Teisho I found that pretty mystifying too, even when he wasn't talking about koans. Once he said simply ...It's okay. Your health, your finances, your relationships...it's all okay. It's Okaaaay..... he said. I felt this okay resonate through all the molecules in the room. I didn't feel okay, and my life was not what I wanted it to be. But yet, I knew that this was the truth. For the first time I was hearing the truth, nothing more, nothing less. All I needed to do was practice: sit, do sesshin and I could see for myself.

And so I did, and he encouraged me with kindness and compassion. A few years later he used a shout and a bit of sarcasm to push me along when I dawdled. There was never a time

when I did not feel the effort he was making on my behalf. And never a time when I did not appreciate it... (well, almost never).

A few years have passed, and I find, unexpectedly, that I am okay. My job, my health, my relationships are all okay. Everything's fine just as it is.

And this would not have happened without you, Roshi. Your words and your silence, your kindness and sternness, and your help and encouragement, all these were necessary for this change to occur.

You left home to bring this teaching, this practice to us. Without knowing us you brought it in faith—faith that we would be here to receive it. You believed we would be worth your great effort, and I am so grateful that you did. Words cannot express my thanks.

I am so glad that this is the place you chose for your cushion, the place you choose to sit and that I can sit here with you.

Happy, Happy Birthday Roshi

*Genno Linda King* ■



## *The Gift*

When he delivers his Teishos and Dharma talks he addresses the group yet I feel he is speaking directly to me. When he singles out an individual (for praise or criticism) it is as though he's called my name. When he straightens a cushion that didn't seem to need straightening I pay close attention -- what did I not see? When he sings *The Impossible Dream* I cry every time. When someone else sings it, I watch Roshi. When he sits in the Zendo my back is straighter, my breath is deeper, my zazen is stronger.

In an unpredictable world where one should, in Roshi's words, 'expect nothing,' I've come to expect and depend on his predictability. His reliability, his dedication, his unceasing Samu. His steadfastness. And then with a word, a gesture, a laugh he will surprise me -- yet even that is consistent with his nature. It is only I who am ever off-balance. It seems his job is to right me. And this he does with impeccable grace whenever I let him. There is no force, no bribery, no luring, no promises even. Just an opportunity to look into the mirror, which is

Roshi, to be led back toward my own true nature. Because he cares that I get there, I care. It is never about him even as this couldn't happen without him.

Because he had the courage to come to this country, I have more courage to live my dreams. Because of his faith in zazen, I've come to believe. Because he is who he is, I can be who I am. Like a parent he has given me life. Unlike a parent he is not attached to what I do with it. Because of that I am free.

Roshi, this is your birthday,  
and you are the gift. Thank you.

*Myochi Nancy O'Hara* ■■■

