

Mt. Equity Zendo Zephyr-

November 2010



“When Nanquan was about to pass away, the head monk asked, ‘Where will you go?’ Nanquan said, ‘Down the mountain to be a water buffalo.’”

“Beings are numberless, I vow to save them.”

As Buddhists we make the vow to save all sentient beings. Master Nanquan was prepared to descend his high position in the monastery and go to the muddy rice paddies as a hard working water buffalo to pull the plow that would cultivate the rice plants that would nourish the people. This was his mature understanding and contribution for saving all sentient beings. Similarly, in Pennsylvania, our version of water buffalos are our cows that nourish us with their milk.

This seems like an impossible vow. How can we do that? A better question to ask is, “what prevents us from saving all beings?” **Right View** is the first step on the Buddha’s Eight-Fold Path. **Right View** is the understanding that there is no separation between myself and all beings. There is no separation between me and the woods being cut down, or the drilling for gas in State Forest Land. There is no separation between me and the many creatures swimming in the Susquehanna River. Awareness of this non-separation is the first step towards Right View. Being aware, however, is not enough. We need to go further and ask, “How can I respond to this?” Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, is one who hears the cries of the world and does her utmost to respond. This is what it means to cultivate compassion and wisdom. To ask the question, “what can I do?” is the beginning of our practice of saving all beings. Then we act, seeing all others as myself.

Precepts given to four members of Baltimore Dharma Group



Ailish Hopper Meisner, Kris Misage, Christina Pham Linhoff, and Lu Pham of the Baltimore Dharma Group received the 5 precepts on October 17th at the end of our weekend Sesshin flanking NiOsho and Esho Gambert.

Anshoji Update

Thus far the Sangha has gathered around \$4,000.00 for our Anshoji fundraising project. Daishin plans to present this to Rev. Tokushin with Mihoko when he is in Japan this month prior to arriving for the International Ango.

Mindful Consumption

In the Spring semester at Bucknell University, Economics Professor and MEZ senior student Nanshin White taught a class on “Mindful Consumption.” As a project, the students created a website that lists farms, businesses, and CSA’s within 30 miles of Bucknell that offer sustainably grown organic foods. Identifying businesses that honor sustainable production is itself mindfulness practice. Supporting such businesses, besides the personal health benefits, brings economic prosperity to the region and greatly reduces the fossil fuel footprint. To view the newly launched website see: <http://www.bucknell.edu/x63842.xml>.

Big Smiles from Margaret Lundy at the Couples Retreat this past October.



Senior MEZ student, Daijun Brenner, offered our very first retreat geared towards creating mindful relationships. It was wonderful to share this practice for the first time with the partners of many of our members who have been coming for years. An attendance of eighteen people tells us that this is a topic of interest to many people in our local sangha and we hope to schedule another Couples Workshop like this in the future.

Thank You to the following Sangha members who made food offerings this month: Daijun and Alan Brenner, I’en and Ritsuen Reilly, Mimi Rice, Susan Gresens, Misho Indelicarto, Tenryu Vanommeslaeghe, Dendo Brocht, Annie Deighton, Donen McGraw, Kevin Gaughen for recycling our plastic containers and all secret elves.

Soto Zen Buddhist Association Conference

In his “Transmission of the Lamp” Zen Master Keizan Jokin (1264-1325 C.E.) expressed over and over again the primacy of Awakening to our True Nature. This Awakening is what is necessary in each of us if the Buddha Dharma is to truly flourish in our culture. It is with this theme that the Soto Zen Buddhist Association (SZBA) began its 4th National Conference from October 6th through 10th.

The conference was hosted at Great Vow Zen Monastery, a residential training monastery in Clatskanie, Oregon. Great Vow is a former elementary school nestled on 20 acres comprised of woods, meadow and creek, making it conducive to the atmosphere of learning and discussions that ensued over the five day period.

Included in the conference were lectures about Zen Master Keizan from Prof. William Bodiford of UCLA, Shohaku Okumura Roshi of Sanshin Zen Community in Bloomington, IN, and Rev. Kenzen Yamamoto Roshi of Soto Zen’s root temple in Japan, Sojiji- the temple most often associated with Zen Master Keizan.

Forty full members and twenty-eight associate members came from all across the United States as well as Canada and Columbia to participate in the conference. Ten full members took part for the first time in the Dharma Heritage Ceremony. This ritual is a way of acknowledging the common bonds of Soto Zen teachers as well as recently transmitted teachers within Soto Zen lineages and of inspiring a deepening commitment to transmit the practice of the Awakened Way to the heart-minds of North Americans.

Explored was Master Keizan’s role in encouraging the widespread growth of Buddhism throughout all levels of Japanese society. By adapting the Dharma to the minds of ordinary people, by promoting women’s practice, and by emphasizing Awakening in his dharma talks and writings to his monks, Keizan and his successors have made the Dharma accessible not only to the Japanese of the 14th century but also to the present generation of Dharma teachers and their students in the West.

Following lectures on Keizan, discussions ensued on adopting an SZBA Ethics Statement, refining the standards for training Soto Zen priests, and including the women ancestral teachers in Soto liturgy and ritual. In addition to this was a lecture by Lekshe Julia King Tamang on using “social media” as a tool for developing the Buddha Dharma in our sanghas.

In his *Transmission of the Light* Old Master Keizan tells of the story of a monk who was reborn a mushroom as punishment because he received alms without having an Awakened Mind. “How sad that his Enlightenment-seeking Eye was not clear and bright!” admonishes Master Keizan. Regardless of what we may become in the future, Zen always directs us back to the present moment and how we are living right now. It is attention to the present moment that creates our future and it is the miracle of this moment that we awaken to over and over again.

Upaya

A Workshop for Handling Family Conflicts Skillfully

"There is always the potential to create an environment of blame- or one which is conducive to loving kindness"
Pema Chodron



Sunday November 7th, 10am-4pm

Family relationships are a vital part of our lives. Elizabeth Barrett Browning starts one of her famous sonnets with "*How shall I love thee? Let me count the ways.*" Can we enfold this line in our Zen practice? We offer bows for the well being of family and friends when they are needed. Can we count the things we love about those close to our hearts? And count the ways we would like to try to love those living close to us? **We will learn upaya, or skillful means, for how to communicate more meaningfully with loved ones.** MEZ senior student and mediator, Tokuen Gray, will teach us how to bring compassion and skillful means to our relationships. We will practice listening for understanding, how to express feelings so that they can be heard, identifying our own and the other's needs and finding mutuality. The format will include instruction, discussion, silent reflection, participative exercises, and mindful eating (please bring a vegetarian brown bag lunch for yourself).

Suggested donation \$20 (\$15 MEZ friend)

To reserve space: (570) 546-2784

or email: dai-en@mtequity.org

web: www.mtequity.org

Earth Friendly Tip #1

Put nothing on your lawn.

Homeowners that use chemical fertilizers and pesticides to treat their lawns may not realize that much of the phosphates and nitrates in their lawn spray gets washed into the small streams near their homes. These streams carry runoff down the Susquehanna and into the Chesapeake Bay. There may not be a lot of pesticides or fertilizer on your lawn, but when you add up all that your neighbors and farmers put down, it adds up so much so that the Bay, even after 25 years of legislation designed to limit the amount of pollution that goes into it, has been greatly compromised. Phosphates and nitrates cause algae blooms which block sunlight to underwater vegetation and diminish the oxygen needed for fish. Presently there are numerous oxygen-depleted dead zones in the Bay which, in turn cause economic hardships on industries dependent on clean water. It is estimated that the value of a healthy Chesapeake to our economy is over \$1 trillion. Take time to reflect on the connection between personal actions and the larger economy. To learn more about the Chesapeake Bay visit <http://www.cbf.org/Page.aspx?pid=433> Sometimes doing nothing to your lawn is the best thing you can do.

The Spiritual Dimension of Water-An Interfaith Dialogue

On October 13th Mt. Equity Zendo participated in its first public Interfaith Dialogue which was held at Lycoming College. A panel of seven, consisting of area clergy and Professors, each offered their traditions unique position on water. Included was an informative power point presentation by Biology Prof. Mel Zimmerman describing where our potable water comes from and the present threats to its purity. Prof. Hughes discussed Islamic Law and the rights of all people to have access to water. Big businesses, he contended, are chiefly responsible for infringing on these rights. Rabbi Rappeport spoke of finding the balance between our right to use God's creation as we wish and our responsibility to be stewards of creation. Rev. Bernstine talked about the importance of water in the Gospels and skillfully demonstrated that the present cost of a half liter bottle of water presently far exceeds the cost of its equivalent in gasoline. Sister Gilvary explained Catholic Social Teaching that when resources like water become scarce it is the poor that suffer first. Water governance and management is a question of justice and responsibility. Lastly, Abbess Dai-En shared practices and teachings within the Zen tradition that promote developing attention to the preciousness of water. She told the story of a monk who spilled a drop of water out of a bucket he was carrying. His master, seeing his mindlessness said, "Pick it up!" To help him never forget the importance of every drop of water he was named "I-teki" meaning "one drop."

Following the presentations were questions from the audience. While most everyone agreed that it's important to respect and conserve our water, many expressed their concerns as to how to do that. In addition to personal conservation efforts, Prof. Johnson recommended several things such as knowing who to vote for and writing to congressmen asking them to endorse Acts that protect our resources.

We've just scratched the surface on this issue and hope to do another dialogue in the near future.

November

[sign up for events here](#)

Sunday	Monday	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Evening Zazen 7:15-9:30	3	4 Evening Zazen 7-8:30	5	6
7 Upaya Workshop w/ Tokuen Gray 10am-4pm	8	9 Evening Zazen 7:15-9:30	10	11 Evening Zazen 7-8:30	12	12
14	15	16 Evening Zazen 7:15-9:30	17	18 Evening Zazen 7-8:30	19 Sesshin begins 7:00pm	20 Sesshin
21	22	23 Evening Zazen 7:15-9:30	24	25 Thanksgiving No Zazen	26	27
28	29	30 Evening Zazen 7:15-9:30	1	2 Evening Zazen 7-8:30	3	4

Next Year's Basic Calendar-Special Events TBA

2011 Mt. Equity Zendo Events Calendar Programs subject to change

Sesshin start Fri. 7:30pm. Late entry: Sa. 9am. End:3pm.

January Silent Sesshin - 1/21 ~ 23 (only Jan. wknd. event)

February Nirvana Sesshin - 2/18 ~ 20

Jesus & Buddha Class: 2/24, 3/3,10,17,24th 7pm-8:30pm

March Sesshin - 3/18~3/20

April Sesshin - 4/15 ~ 4/17 MEZ's 20th Anniversary

May Sesshin - 5/20 ~ 5/22

June Long Summer Sesshin - 6/18 ~ 6/25

July Sesshin - 7/22 ~ 7/24

August Obon Sesshin 8/19 ~ 8/21 "Candles on the River"

September Sesshin - 9/16 ~ 9/18

October Sesshin - 10/14 ~ 10/16

November Sesshin - 11/18 ~ 11/20

Dec. Perseverance (One Day) Sesshin -12/10 (9~10 overnite ok)

Year End Sesshin - Dec.12/30 ~ January 1st noon, 2012

Half Days of Mindfulness - 1st Saturday 1:30~4:30pm

2nd Sat. in July (9th)...(none in May but in April 2nd and 30th)

Full Days of Mindfulness-1st Sun.10am~4pm

(May 1st Buddha's B'day Bash 11:am ~ 2:30pm

Bring friends, backyard flowers, and a potluck!)

July Day of Mindfulness - Sun., July 10th