

Mt. Equity Zendo Zephyr- August/ September 2012

News in Brief

The month of July brought many blessings including concluding our Sesshin with a picnic lunch and swim in the creek at Picture Rocks. We express our thanks to Cathy Emery who practiced together with us for three weeks in July. Cathy was able to balance her online work with the Zendo schedule. She was a delight and a helpful presence in many places especially the kitchen and garden.



Rev. Daishin led a Zazenkai at Red Rose Sangha in Lancaster. He has been doing this annually now for the past three years. A thank you to all at Red Rose for their hospitality and warm welcoming.

This September we are happy to announce the coming of **Rev. Taibun Terumoto** from Komazawa University graduate studies in Tokyo. Rev. Taibun will be with us from the 12th of September through the 2nd of October. He will be joining us for our September Sesshin as well as our visit to the Baltimore Dharma Group on September 22nd for a Zazenkai at the Quaker Homewood Friends Meeting House and for the **Day of Silence on September 29th**.

Abbess Dai-En leaves for the 90th Anniversary of Soto Zen in North America held at Zenshuji in Los Angeles on September 7th returning on the 10th, just before Rev. Taibun arrives.

Rev. Daishin leaves for the Soto Zen Buddhist Association bi-annual meetings on October 2nd returning on the 10th. This year's meetings will be held at Great Vow Zen Monastery near Portland, Oregon.

From October 10th we will be joined for three weeks by Rev. Barbara Ryoshun Lutz from Germany. Rev. Lutz met Abbess Dai-En during her recent duties at Jakkoji, near Hamburg, at the Mountain Seat Ceremony for

Tenryu Tenbreul Roshi. She will be joining us for October Sesshin as well as for the **Women's Stayover Retreat on October 27th - 28th**. Please come to join her.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday Abbess Dai-En has been invited to participate and give talks during a multi-faith event at Yogaville near Charlottesville, VA.

Lastly, for open attendance we will be commemorating the **Buddha's Enlightenment with a Silent Rohatsu Sesshin from December 1st - 8th**. More is said about this event below, but for now be sure to mark your calendars for this and other up-coming events. Also visit the [website](#) to see the changes in the events schedule.

Reflections on a Fracking-Protest Rally by Susan Gresens



Bhikku Bodhi speaking at the White House.

I have been watching myself the last several months to see how the energy of compassion rises within me: what stimuli move me outside of myself to reach out to others? The “Stop the Frack Attack” rally in Washington, D.C. was such an event for me, an experience of community in action. The previous day I had read the “Open Letter” about the fracking-threat to Mount Equity Zendo, and I was *very angry*! But anger is a toxin, how am I to deal with it?

The next afternoon I was on the west lawn of the Capitol with a crowd of people carrying signs and banners, meeting, greeting and sheltering from the sun under the trees. We were called to gather for the Interfaith Service preceding the main rally with inspiring speeches by Jewish, Native American, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian religious leaders. This was a good way to start, as it roused up strong positive energy. Early on, Bhikkhu Bodhi led us in a short meditation to help us return into ourselves, our bodies and our emotions, then to visit the silence within, of two kinds. First, the peaceful silence of the universal life-force, thriving and growing...then the other, a silence of a scorched and withered Earth stripped bare: the choice is ours.

of Dish, TX, and John Fenton, the rancher from WY. There was even an activist from Australia: people have been taking direct action against fracking sites there. Josh Fox was in and around everywhere throughout the event, urging us on. The diverse participants came from a wide range of states and I was impressed by the number of organizations they represented. During intermission while some lively bluegrass music played, a woman dancing with me commented “This is great, but I worry that we are just preaching to the choir. We need to get all our friends and neighbors out here too.”

The best news of the day was that a Pennsylvania Court had struck down “Act 13”, which had deprived communities of the ability to control or ban fracking within their borders: this was met with wild cheers! Finally, we all rolled out for the protest march up to the headquarters of two natural gas-drilling organizations. We filled the street for a couple of blocks as we chanted and raised our signs and banners along the way. I am glad I joined in the rally. Alone, it is easy to feel helpless, and anger over injustice easily arises. But I found a rejoicing in community for a common cause. Now I must find a way to follow through in the struggle to protect our families, our communities and our Earth.



Two photos taken by Susan Gresens.

“*Ho bo kore dojo*,” or “Right where you walk is your practice place.” We are cautioned always to take great care of our posture in zazen. This is no less important for kinhin (walking meditation). Paying such close attention to our posture has great benefit. With correct posture, thinking is clear because circulation of blood to the brain and other extremities is at its optimum. Dogen writes in his *Universal Instructions for Zazen*, “Dullness and distraction are completely struck aside.” When we sit properly we find we have more energy. However, when we are not sitting properly we easily fatigue. When the body is slumped, the mind and the vital force, or “Ki” energy is slumped. When slumped, slightly tucking the chin and raising the nape of the neck does wonders to the “Ki.” This subtle movement of the chin and neck should not be overlooked.



Moreover, when we walk with correct posture we are more present with what surrounds us and our feet are happy to be making contact with the earth. The zazen posture is not stiff, but relaxed. We allow gravity to assist the up-right spine. There should be a sense of effortlessness. Abbess Dai-En often speaks of developing our posture in zazen as similar to carving a sculpture with a butter knife. This is not something that we do with one sitting, but involves continuous practice over a long period of time. Extended one - three day retreats greatly assist in developing the kind of spine that is optimum for our vital force.

With regard to the spine, we have much to learn from other cultures in how to walk and hold the body. Look at photos of villagers carrying baskets on their head. They can do that because their spine is in proper alignment in relation to gravity. We can do it too if we train ourselves. Try placing a book on your head while doing zazen. Notice what you need to do to keep the book in place without it falling to the ground. This simple practice keeps us mindful of the importance of posture. A happy life and good posture go hand-in-hand.

Ethics Committee Formation Results

We wish to extend our thanks to Meigetsu Robishaw and Jakusho Belgraden for stepping forward to assist Tokuen as we move to create our own Ethics Statement for Mount Equity Zendo.

Gratitude to the following people for making offerings of food and related items the months of July and August: Rev. Kyoki Roberts, Rev. Jisen Coghlan, Dustin Misosky, Rick Lohmeyer, Nanshin, Kevin Gaughen, Gyokuen, Koen, Misho, Tomei, Tara Moberg, Eileen Georg, Michel Lau, Meigetsu, Valerie Saint-Amand, Cathy Emery, Fred Strickland, Susan Gresens, Daijun, Jido, I'en, Hiro Sato, Doko, Dendo, Khado, Tokuen, Itay, Sally Chan, Jason Castonguay, Susan Faeder, and all others we may have inadvertently missed. Our heartfelt gratitude.

Special/Upcoming Events

Half Day of Zen, Sunday, 1:30 - 4:30 pm

October 7th, Mindful Consumption with Nanshin White

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

September 2nd, The Zen of Breathing,

*Nov. 4th "The Daily Rhythm of Life & Death" with Tokuen Gray
from a series of teachings at Seattle Soto Zen*

Calligraphy Workshop, October 13th, 1:30 - 3:00pm

Sesshin Schedule

Early Fall Sesshin, September 14th - 16th

October Sesshin, October 19th - 21st

Thanksgiving Sesshin, November 16th - 18th

Rohatsu Silent Sesshin, December 1st - 8th (note that partial attendance is acceptable)

**Women's Stayover "Taking Zen Home" October 27th - 28th
(Saturday 1pm - Sunday 11am)**

Alexander Technique with Rev. Jisen Coghlan, Nov. 19th

**Mount Equity Zendo will be closed for the month of January,
2013**

4 Week Yoga Class at MEZ

Thursday, September 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

5:45 - 6:45pm

Limited to first 10 participants.

Email daishin@mtequity.org to sign up.

Registration for Special Events:

dai-en@mtequity.org or (570)
546-2784

Note that Sesshin requires prior approval by the Abbess for new people. Partial attendance is also permitted.



MEZ Board Members

**Tokuen Gray - President
Nanshin White - Vice President
Jido Lindauer - Secretary
Misho Indelicarto - Treasurer
Tomei Knapp - Assistant Treasurer**

Rohatsu Sesshin Daily Schedule

5am - wake up	10:55 - work	5:00 - Body Practice
5:30 - zazen	12:00pm - Lunch	6:00 - Repast
6:05 - kinhin (walking meditation)	1:40 - zazen	7:30 - zazen
6:15 - zazen	2:15 - kinhin	8:00 - kinhin
6:55 - 33 Bows	2:25 - zazen	8:15 - zazen
8:00 - Breakfast	3:00 - Tea	8:45 - kinhin
9:30 - zazen	3:30pm - Dharma Talk	9:00 - zazen
10:05 - kinhin	4:15 - Break	9:30 - End
10:15 - zazen	4:30 - zazen	10:00 - Lights Out

Partial Plan A - For Newer Participants

Partial Plan B - For those ready for deeper practice, add to Plan A

Partial Plan C - Come for Zazen in the morning and or evening entering and leaving during walking meditation or after a sitting.

Plan D - Attend any number of full days that are possible for your schedule.

We will be joined by Rev. Jisen Coghlan who will be giving a Dharma Talk. In addition to NiOsho and Daishin's Dharma Talks, Senior Students Nanshin, Daijun, and Tokuen will also be offering Dharma Talks.



Splashing around in the creek at Picture Rocks after July Sesshin. May all future generations be able to enjoy swimming in our waters.

“Solitude has its valued role in many cultures and spiritual traditions, but that solitude is in the context of social life, not a substitute for it.” --Rita Gross