

Even Fern Fronds and Persimmon Leaves Can Make A Meal

Spring is inaugurated as fern fronds spiral out of the ground. It is when they are still curled up that they are edible and, if lightly cooked, can be used as part of a delicious miso soup, as we made this past week. Eating fern fronds reminds me of the story Rev. Dai-En told me about a time when she was visiting our home temple, Kappa Dojo.

During her training in Japan there was an interval period between practice periods when she could leave her training monastery, the NiSodo. During that interval she went to see our teacher, Noda Daito Roshi. When she arrived she was surprised to find that Daito Roshi's wife, Jion, had made a delicious meal for all of them by using persimmon leaves, "fuki no to" (butter burr buds), and other very early spring greens in a tempura dish. In Japan it is not uncommon to find persimmon trees in the mountains and because Kappa Dojo was in the middle of a mountain range such trees were numerous. The fruit of the persimmon tree, of course, is commonly found in meals, but until that day she never knew that the leaves could be eaten as well.

It was at the time of year, mid spring, when the new persimmon leaves were unfolding from their branches. They were soft, tender, and perfect for cooking, as were the "butter burr buds", one of the first energy-giving edibles to rise up out of the snow. Jion made a wonderful feast with the vegetables that the Earth was offering at that time. This was well before it was popular to "buy local."

As she was departing from Kappa Dojo the next day she noticed that the leaves on the persimmon trees had already hardened and were no longer edible. She said she realized that there is a very narrow window in which they could be eaten. If she had come two days earlier or later she would have missed the persimmon leaf and butter burr bud tempura. She happened to come at just the right time, not too early, not too late.

The story of the persimmon leaf is one example among many that demonstrates the importance of awareness. There is a narrow window in which life blooms forth and in which opportunities arise. Lack of awareness of this window is truly living in poverty. Nothing stays around forever. This is the narrow edge upon which our life rests. Awareness of these brief windows of time, the impermanent nature of all things, is what feeds us, not only physically, but mentally and spiritually as well.

No matter what our station in life, whether we are financially well off or not, whether we come from the U.S. or Japan, whether we are a lawyer or a garbage collector, whether we are Christian or Jewish, our well being depends on the state of our awareness. We can create hells for ourselves when we become settled in our misery. If we are honest with ourselves, unresolved fear of the unknown is often at the bottom of why we so often settle for painful situations, whatever they may be.



Continued from “Even Fern Fronds...” Opportunities abound, however, when we extend our awareness beyond our habitual ways of viewing and doing. When, through our zazen practice, we become aware of and slowly begin to acknowledge the habits that lead us to suffer, then we also see that we don’t have to keep doing things based on habit. We don’t need to continue to suffer. There are other ways of being and doing that deliver us from suffering. Those who eat persimmon leaves and fern fronds can verify this. *Rev. Daishin McCabe*

NEW ZAFUS

Mount Equity Zendo is very grateful to Koen Hunter for the many zafus she sewed. Our original zafus are now twenty years old and are beginning to wear at the seams. Koen took it upon herself to make new zafus for us. - Gassho.

Gratitude to the following people for making offerings of food the month of April: Misho, Nanshin, Tomei, Choen, Eido, Myodo, Domon, Diane Hollis, Tokuen, Meigetsu, Shirley from Quaker Meeting, Jido, Tenryu, Brenna, Kathy Martin, Dendo, Rev. Jisen of ZCP, and all others we may have inadvertently missed. Our heartfelt gratitude.

Special Events

Day of Mindfulness - “Who is the mother of the Buddha?” Saturday, May 7th, 10am - 4pm

\$25 suggested donation, \$20 for Friends (bring a brown bag vegetarian lunch)

Introduction to Zen Meditation - Saturday, May 14th, 9:30am - 11:00am

\$10 suggested donation.

Flowers on the Water - Sunday May 15th, 9:00am at the [Hiawatha State Park](#) (click)

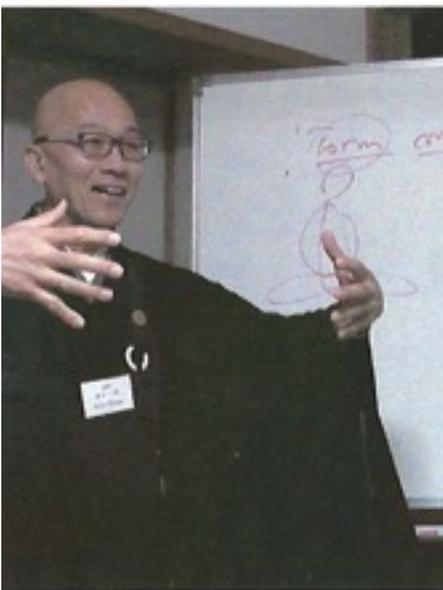
(see flyer below)

Half Day of Mindfulness - Saturday June 4th, 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Full Day of Mindfulness - Sunday June 5th, 10am - 4pm

Long Summer Sesshin with Fujita Issho - June 18th - 25th

Local sangha are welcome to come for Tea, Zazen, and/or the Dharma Talks as your schedule permits. See the typical Sesshin Schedule below for possible entrance points.



Pictured left is **Fujita Issho Sensei** teaching at Shogoji. His dynamic teaching style and original thinking about zazen is very engaging. He plans to *walk his tight rope* to demonstrate the parallels between balance in mid-air and balance in zazen. Practitioners will have the chance to experience this for themselves.

We will also be joined by **Rev. Taihaku Gretchen Priest** and her Sangha from Shao Shan Temple in Vermont. In addition to training at San Francisco Zen Center, Rev. Taihaku trained in Japan at Hokyoji, the temple of Jakuen Zenji who was the Chinese Dharma brother of Zen Master Dogen. We look forward for opportunities to network with a Sangha beyond our own.

All communities and congregations

are invited to participate in a

Flowers on the Water Ceremony

along the length of the rivers and streams of our

Susquehanna River Watershed

Each person offers two flowers to the water, from bridge, boat, bottom or bank:

One in gratitude

One in commitment to protect our resource

Sunday May 15, 2011 from dawn to noon

Visit the [Flowers on the Water](#) Facebook page to send news of your location and group, and share photos and videos.

Visit www.artandawareness.com for more resources.

For information contact: nanso@dejazzd.com or daishin@mtequity.org

“We all live downstream.”

Extending Our Hearts and Minds

Japan Earthquake Relief

Donations to the Japan Red Cross and to Soto Zen Temples and congregations affected worst by the March 11th Earthquake continue to be badly needed:

**Japan Earthquake Disaster Fund
Soto Zen Buddhism North American
Office**

**123 S. Hewitt Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012**

Indicate “Japan Earthquake Relief” in the memo.

For ongoing updated information on Japan see <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/> .

Children’s Picture Book Fund

We have recently heard that two elementary schools in the disaster area are in need of picture books. We are working on the details of that and will give more information when available.

Holocaust Remembrance Week- May 1st - 8th

On May 1st Abbess Dai-En and Rev. Daishin were invited to Ohev Sholom, the synagogue in Williamsport, for an interfaith remembrance of the 6 million Jews that died in the holocaust between 1933 and 1945.

May we never forget the violence humans are capable of - no matter what their country or religion of origin, and may we also never forget our ability to stand up and speak out against discrimination in all its forms.

To All Those Suffering

We have had several losses in our extended Sangha recently. Please keep in mind the following people:

The Reilly Family - Ritsuen’s father passed away mid April, as did their neighbor, a follower of Tibetan Buddhism, Jane Winemiller. Their cat, Dove, whom they have been nursing along for the past few months also passed away.

In Japan, recently, there was a memorial service for Moriyama Daigyo Roshi. He was in the area during the recent tsunami last he was seen. He is the teacher of Joshin Sensei in France and the grandfather teacher of Rev. Jokei Lambert who practiced at MEZ in 2000.

Sesshin Schedule

5am - wake up	10:55 - work	5:00 - Body Practice
5:30 - zazen	12:00pm - Lunch	6:00 - Repast
6:05 - kinhin	1:40 - zazen	7:30 - zazen
6:15 - zazen	2:15 - kinhin	8:00 - kinhin
6:55 - service	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

New Address for Sending Donations

In an effort to better organize our mail we have opened a post office box designated for all donations, whether they be for Friends, Sesshin, Day of Mindfulness or other events. The usual donation box will still be available on the altar, but for those of you who wish to mail donations to MEZ, please send them to the following address:

Mount Equity Zendo
P.O. Box 202
Montoursville, PA 17754

“The bodhisattva will always maintain a motherly mind, consecrated to the constant protection, education and maturing of conscious beings, inviting and guiding them along the path of all-embracing love.” - The Mother of the Buddhas