

Mt. Equity Zendo Zephyr-

October 2011



“Enso” or circle, drawn using a wilted iris by Abbess Dai-En.

Abbess Dai-En to Japan

On October 2nd Abbess NiOsho, Nanshin White, and Koen Hunter left for a one week trip to Japan. They will join in the celebration of the moving of one of Soto Zen’s main temples, Sojiji, from the Nodo Peninsula to it’s present location in Yokohama, near Tokyo. Nanshin reported that they had met Fujita Issho Sensei and Shunko Sakai Sensei in the hotel in Tokyo. They will meet NiOsho’s root teacher, Noda Daito Roshi, at Sojiji. NiOsho plans to take Nanshin and Koen on a sight-seeing tour of some of the notable Buddhist temples in Kyoto.

On the 9th of October Nanshin and Koen will return to the U.S. and NiOsho will be staying on for the next five weeks with a plan to volunteer in the Tohoku region of Japan, the area most affected by the recent earthquakes and tsunami. For those wishing to make a donation toward her efforts, MEZ has set up an account through Pay Pal designated for Japan Earthquake relief. NiOsho will funnel those donations to places she sees would most benefit. To make a tax deductible donation, please visit our website at: www.mtequity.org. For those who have already made a donation to these efforts please know that acknowledgement through the mail is presently underway. Thank you all so much for your efforts, concern and support of this important work.

Sacred Grains (from an article recently submitted to the Williamsport Sun Gazette by Daishin)

Like most everyone in America, I eat a lot of bread. I love bread and things made with flour. Every Wednesday I make sourdough pancakes from scratch using different flour types. Only within the past couple of years, however, did I discover wheat berries. I began planting them in our garden at Mount Equity Zendo as a cover crop so that the soil does not erode over the Winter. Then I take the mature wheat and use it as a cover for the garden soil. This helps to keep in the moisture so the soil around the tomatoes or carrots doesn't dry out on hot Summer days. Last Summer my father was visiting and showed me how to remove the wheat berries from the mature wheat by banging them on the wheel barrow. The berries in their hulls come out and gathered in one corner of the metal barrow. I used them for planting in beds that were fallow.

Out of curiosity I looked on the internet to see if I could find a small mill to take these berries and grind them into flour. Sure enough, such a thing as a small mill does exist. While I have not yet purchased the mill, the process of working with wheat berries in this way has taught me that these little seeds are the foundation of our civilization. Where would we be without them? We would have no flour nor would we have all the things that flour makes: bread, cookies, pretzels, apple pie, pizza....

Yet how many people know about let alone appreciate the source of so much of our food? Growing up in a suburb or city, who has ever even laid eyes on this precious grain? I feel so fortunate and privileged to hold these little spheres..

Wheat is not simply the foundation of our culture, it has deep spiritual meaning for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The Catholic mass celebrates the divine in wheat every Sunday. Jews eat matzo- a wheat derived food - as part of the celebration of Seder. In the Sufi branch of Islam prayers are said during the bread making process to imbue bread with spiritual power.

The Buddha quite possibly never saw a wheat berry in his 80 year life. In India, where he lived some 2500 years ago the main grain was and still is rice. Yet, in the same way that the Western spiritual traditions make bread sacred, Buddhism also recognizes the sacred element of rice. Rice is not only blessed during meals, but the robe of any Buddhist monk is patterned after rice fields. When I put on my Buddha robe I remember the meaning my teacher taught me of why the robe is patterned in such a way: "May I never go hungry for spiritual nourishment." We need physical food, but we also need spiritual food. As the Bible says, "A person cannot live by bread alone, but on every word that God speaks (Matt 4:4)." All religions teach about humanity's yearning to eat spiritual food. The material world by itself cannot satisfy all our needs.

When we look deeply into the present moment to see where things came from and how things came to be the way they are we find there is nothing that is not related in some way to something else. Without rain, sun, healthy soil, the farmer, and much, much more, how can we have bread or rice to eat? When we look deeply into our food, the whole Universe is in each mouthful. What food is not sacred?

Special Up-Coming Events

October 8th, Saturday, 10am - 4pm **Full Day of Mindfulness**

October 10th, Monday, 7- 8:30pm **Intro to Soto Zen**

October 14th - 16th, **Sesshin**

November 5th, Saturday, 9:30 - 11:00 am **Intro to Soto Zen**

November 5th, Saturday, 1:30 - 4:30pm **Changing our Relationship with Negative Emotions**, led by Senior Student, Jido Lindauer

November 6th, Sunday 10am - 4pm **Zen Calligraphy Workshop with Meditation**

November 18th - 20th **Sesshin**

Registration for Events:

daishin@mtequity.org

or

(570) 546-2784

Weekly Practice Schedule

Tuesday Evening 7 - 9:15pm

Thursday Morning 6:30 - 8:00am (includes Breakfast with oriyoki bowls - phone before coming)

Thursday Evening 7 - 8:30pm

Gratitude to the following people for making offerings of food and related items the month of September: Misho, Candie Adams, Kate Wyer, Shudo, Dendo, Annie Deighton, Nanshin, Tomei, Eileen Georg, Jan Hambridge, Daijun, Yayoi Ishizaka, Daijun, Koen, Keien, Tokuen and all others we may have inadvertently missed. Our heartfelt gratitude.