



Prairie Wind

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Fall 2001

A GOOD FRIEND GONE

by *Nonin Chowaney*

Badger, the big, handsome Australian Shepherd who lived at Heartland Temple in Omaha for many years, died last month. He was seventeen years old.

For a dog Badger's size -- he weighed ninety-five pounds -- seventeen years is an exceptionally long life. Every veterinarian who treated him in his later years was amazed that a dog his size had lived past ten. Badger was exceptionally strong, however; he had a big heart, and it sustained him for seventeen years until it finally gave out the evening of June 12th. He was a good and loyal friend over many years, and I'll miss him.



Badger

We were in the middle of our annual, month-long Prairie Wind practice period at Deep Spring Temple near Pittsburgh, where Badger had been living for the past couple of years. He had moved to the area with Rev. Kyoki Roberts when she left Heartland Temple in Omaha in the Fall of 1998. Near suppertime on a day of relaxed practice, Badger's breathing became labored, and he was having a hard time getting comfortable. He would move from place to place, breathing heavily. It was very hot, and he'd just returned from a trip to Kyoki's parents' house in the back of the pickup truck. Kyoki and I thought he'd eventually settle down, but he didn't. After about an hour, I noticed that his tongue was getting pale, so we decided to take him to the vet.

Badger had slowed down considerably over the past few months. Long-standing heart problems, thyroid problems,

continued on page 6

Dharma Transmission—June 24, 2001

At the time of bowing formally to Shakyamuni Buddha's face, the fifty-one buddha ancestors and the Seven Buddhas are not present side by side or in one line, but it is face-to-face transmission among all the buddha ancestors at the same time. If you do not see in just one generation all the masters, you are not a disciple. If you do not see in just one generation all the disciples, you are not a master. Masters and disciples always see one another when transmitting and inheriting dharma. This is the realization of the way, face-to-face transmission of the ancestral source. Thus master and disciples bring forth the luminous face of the Tathagata

*Zen Master Dogen
Shobogenzo Menju*



Nonin Presenting Lineage Papers to Kyoki
Background — Rev. Doshō Port, Rev. Haju Murray, Susan Jion Postal, Sr. Marianne Palko



Chanting the Heart Sutra
Nonin, Rev. Teijo Munnich, Rev. Daien Bennage



Bow of Gratitude

DHARMA TRANSMISSION

by Ekai Korematsu

Rev. Ekai Korematsu is abbot of Jikisho-an in Victoria, Australia. Twelve years ago, he wrote an article for Minnesota Zen Center's newsletter when assisting with the preparations for Nonin's dharma transmission with Dainin Katagiri. It seems fitting to print the following excerpts from that article after Kyoki's dharma transmission with Nonin this past June.

For a Zen teacher to have their dharma practice succeed, continue to the next generation, generation after generation, is a prime responsibility.

Teachers plant seeds, and these seeds are their students. The seed grows by itself, and this seed might think that "I am a seed from the parent tree," of course. We have that kind of understanding, but there is also teacher acknowledging. That is a very important aspect of Zen tradition. If a teacher says, "this seed is a seed I planted, truly the same essence as mine," and this little seed coming up thinks, "I am a little different from this," then there is some reservation about it. It doesn't come together completely, and both are mutually comfortable accepting this. But this new seed is usually completely accepting of what the parent said, and in that way, they become one. So, there is a difference between the parent and the offspring, the next generation's child, but they are of the same essence.

There are three parts to the dharma transmission ceremony. The *menju* ceremony is the first part, or the foundation toward finishing the complete dharma transmission. This *menju*, or face-to-face meeting and prostration, is very important. The ceremony itself is an acknowledgment, a proof that the student and teacher met, and that actual *shiho*, transmission of dharma, took place. During the ceremony, the teacher says, "The dharma gate of face-to-face transmission from buddha to

buddha, ancestor to ancestor, is realized now." This is acknowledgment and confirmation that "truly this is my student; I planted him [or her] to grow." The student does full prostrations, so there is a clear distinction between teacher and student.

After *menju*, the student feels some sort of security, some sense of groundedness, because it is not just one's own confirmation, but the teacher admitting that "Yes, yes, you are my child." At the same time, the teacher feels their responsibility and wants the student to practice, to become clearer and clearer.

The second part of the dharma transmission ceremony is the Transmitting the Precepts Ceremony (*denkai*) and the third part is the Transmitting the Dharma Ceremony (*dempo*). These three taken together – *menju*, *denkai*, and *dempo* – constitute *shiho*, or, dharma transmission.

What does *shiho* mean? It is a full ordination. When we have our first ordination [priest ordination], we have a ceremony during which the head is shaved and the new priest receives a robe and bowls. That is the beginning of practicing as a priest. By doing continuous practice, you become more real. You become a priest. Wearing robes becomes more comfortable. At the same time, people around you become more comfortable with you wearing robes. That is a period of hard practice, just being able to wear a robe, to become comfortable with the forms you are taking up. It takes a great deal of practice. But those things, with continuous practice, become you.

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Abbot



Nebraska Zen Center is a Soto Zen Buddhist Temple established for Zen practice. The center follows the tradition established in Japan by Zen Master Eihei Dogen in the 13th century and transmitted in this century by two Masters, Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, founder of San Francisco Zen Center and author of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* and Rev. Dainin Katagiri, who assisted Rev. Suzuki in San Francisco and later founded Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis. Rev. Katagiri was instrumental in establishing Nebraska Zen Center in 1975.

Rev. Nonin Chowaney, an American Zen Master, is NZC's Head Priest and Teacher. He trained with Rev. Katagiri and was ordained by him. Rev. Chowaney also trained at Tassajara Zen Monastery in California and in Japan at Zuio-ji and Shogo-ji monasteries. He received formal Dharma Transmission from Rev. Katagiri and has been

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When you become comfortable with what

continued on page 9

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER — SANGHA NOTES

FALL PRACTICE PERIOD will begin with a two-day sesshin on **September 16th & 17th** and end with a one-day sitting on **December 8th**. Practice period is designed to provide structure for people who wish to intensify their practice and their sangha connections for a specific period of time. Practice period students commit to intensifying practice in three areas: (1) daily practice at home (sitting and devotional services), (2) regular involvement at the temple (e.g., specific morning or evening sittings, Sunday mornings, or work practice, and (3) attendance at special events (e.g., sesshins, study groups, or ryaku fusatsu).

If you're interested in participating in **Fall Practice Period**, make an appointment with **Nonin** and bring a list of your practice commitments in these three areas for the period specified. If you're unclear about anything, speak with Nonin and submit the list of your commitments afterwards. Practice period students will meet as a group with Nonin at the start of practice period, two or three times during the period, and at the end. Times for these meetings will be announced.



Sangha — Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

Nonin will be traveling to the following places this Fall: **Deep Spring Temple** near Pittsburgh on the weekend of **September 29th** to lead a **Sutra Study Retreat** on the **Diamond Sutra**; **Clouds in Water Zen Center** in St. Paul, Minnesota on the weekend of **October 13th** to lead a **Calligraphy Workshop**; **Empty Hand Zendo** in Rye, New York on the weekend of **October 22nd** and **Zen Buddhist Temple** in Ann Arbor, Michigan on the weekend of **November 17th** to lead **Study Groups in Zen and American Poetry**. **Sunday Dharma talks** at the temple in Omaha during Nonin's absences will be given by **senior students**.

Shindo Mike Gillespie will be returning to Omaha to teach the Fall semester at UNO and will be **residing at the temple**. We welcome him back!

SESSHIN

There will be two sesshins at NZC this Fall, a **Two-day sesshin** on **September 15th and 16th** and a **One-day sitting** on **Sunday, October 21st**. Fees: \$30 per day for members; \$40 for non-members. Lower rates may be arranged for those with limited income. Please call (402) 551-9035 or e-mail heartland@prairiewindzen.org to register.

DHARMA STUDY CLASS

Nonin will lead two **dharma study classes** at the temple this Fall. They will meet on **Saturday mornings from 10 am till noon**. The first will be on **November 3rd and 10th**. The second will be on **December 1st and 8th**. Both classes will focus on fascicles from **Zen Master Dogen's Shobogenzo**.

Classes are **free to members**. The fee for **non-members** is **\$20 per class**.

OTHER FALL EVENTS

Sep 2	World Peace Ceremony Group Discussion
5	Ryaku Fusatsu
Oct 3	Ryaku Fusatsu
7	World Peace Ceremony Group Discussion
Nov 4	World Peace Ceremony Group Discussion
7	Ryaku Fusatsu



ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH – SANGHA NOTES

ZCP FALL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 9 - Family Day
- 28-30 - Diamond Sutra Study Retreat with Nonin Chowaney*
- 29 - Dogen's Memorial Day

OCTOBER

- 2 - Ryaku Fusatsu (Precepts Service)
- 7 - World Peace Ceremony
- 13 - Beginner's Retreat (9 am-5pm)*
- 14 - Sangha Meeting
- 21 - Bodhidharma Day
- 26-28 - Two-day Sesshin (Fri pm-Sun pm)*

NOVEMBER

- 1 - Ryaku Fusatsu
- 4 - World Peace Ceremony
- 16-18 - Communication Workshop*
- 21-23 - ZCP Closed
- 30 - Ryaku Fusatsu

*please register in advance for these events

The **Order of the Prairie Wind** held its annual **month-long retreat** during June at **ZCP/Deep Spring Temple**. **Nonin, Kyoki, Eido Espe, Margaret Coughlan,** and **Keith Hale** were here for the entire month. Other ZCP sangha members joined for shorter periods.

Many thanks to all of the above for their practice and for their work around the temple. We were able to completely **insulate the attic** and the **crawl space below** the building — known as “the Hole — with the help of **Scott Leonard, Bob Kirchner, Patricia Carpenter, Brion Hardink** and **Daniel Koffman**, our summer work volunteer. **Patricia, Gary Crouth, Jane Harter,** and **Pam Bram** re-glazed the windows and prepared them for painting.

Many thanks to **Leslie Hospodar** for donating our new outside bell, which enhanced practice during the retreat.

Special thanks and **many bows** to **Kevin Coughlan**, who sponsored “Monk’s Day Out,” a trip to the new ballpark to see the Pirates play!



Dharma Study Group during Prairie Wind Retreat

We celebrated the completion of **Kyoki's Dharma Transmission** with a ceremony on **June 24th**. About sixty attended — guest teachers, sangha members, family, and friends. Guest teachers were **Rev. Daien Bennage**, from Mt. Equity Zendo in Muncy, Pennsylvania; **Rev. Haju Murray**, from Zen Buddhist Temple — Ann Arbor; **Susan Jion Postal**, from Empty Hand Zendo in Rye, New York; **Rev. Dosho Port** — Nonin's dharma brother — from Clouds in Water Zen Center in St. Paul, Minnesota; and **Rev. Teijo Munnich** — Nonin's dharma sister from Zen Center of Asheville, in North Carolina. **Special thanks** to **Teijo** for coming early to help Nonin complete the week long dharma transmission procedure.

ZCP DAILY SCHEDULE

Monday - Zen Center Closed

Tuesday - Saturday

5:30 a. m. - Zazen

6:45 a. m. - Morning Service

6:00 -

7:15 p.m. - Zazen

Sunday

9:00 a. m. - Zazen Instruction

10:00 a. m. - Zazen

10:40 a. m. - Work Practice

11:30 a. m. - Service/Lecture

12:30 p. m. - Tea

Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple is located at **124 Willow Ridge Rd, Sewickley, PA 15143**
tel: (412) 741-1262, e-mail: kyoki@prairiewindzen.org, website: www.prairiewindzen.org

A Good Friend Gone

from page 1

and severe arthritis in nearly every joint had taken their toll. His medications took up a whole windowsill in Kyoki's room! But he still came to the zendo for every period of zazen, walking heavily and breathing hard during hot weather, and he still chugged up the stairs to the second floor Buddha hall whenever the bell signaled that a service was about to begin. He was a dedicated monk, and he refused to quit!

He also continued to go on long walks with us, but he had begun to lag behind and slowly labor up the hills. He still maintained order among the other dogs, however. He was the alpha dog right until the end, and all the other dogs knew it: Sammy, my vigorous three-year-old yellow lab/husky mix; Li'l Red, Kyoki's other Australian Shepherd; and Barry and Laurie, Kyoki's parents' German Shepherds, both of whom were much bigger than Badger. Badger had a regal bearing that commanded respect, from both dogs and humans, and he never hesitated to set straight those who usurped his authority, violated his domain, or threatened his humans. If Sammy started yapping at Li'l Red, or vigorously running around in circles trying to get Barry to play with him, Badger would perk up his ears, puff out his chest, stretch to full height, and straighten out the miscreant with a well-placed shoulder bump and couple of barks. He had disciplined Sammy in this way the day before as we walked the hills in Sewickley Borough Park.

It was a half-hour drive to the veterinarian's -- plenty of time to think. One of the early sutras says that the dharma is "good in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end," and as we drove, I thought of Badger. His dharma (truth) was good in the beginning, when he was a young, vigorous cow dog on Kyoki's farm in Nebraska -- herding cattle, jumping four-foot fences, and running off coyotes trying to get at the chickens. It was good in the middle, when he became a monk and lived at the temple in Omaha -- greeting every-

one who came to the door, protecting Kyoki and me, accompanying us on our walks, and disciplining and training Li'l Red, a younger dog, to be a good Australian Shepherd. It was also good in the end, when he was an elder at Deep Spring Temple -- determinedly climbing up the stairs for morning service, laboriously hauling himself off the floor to check out everyone who came to the door, and chugging up the hills like the "little engine who could" during our walks. He was completely what he was, at all times, uncomplainingly living his life and doing his best. He was a good example for us all.

Badger had been a part of my life for over ten years, and even though he'd slowed down considerably, he'd always been so big and strong that it was hard for me to consider, as we drove to the vet that June evening, that he might not make it. I thought of the time Kyoki and I were walking through a back alley in our neighborhood when two big dogs, a St. Bernard and a German Shepherd, bounded up to a chain link fence as we walked by their back yard and jumped up snarling and barking with their front paws on top of the fence. Kyoki was nearest them and Badger calmly moved between Kyoki and the snarling dogs and stayed there as we walked past their yard. He wasn't being aggressive, but he was clearly saying, "to get to her, you'll have to go through me." There were two of them, and they both had at least fifty pounds on him. I knew then that he would die before he let anything happen to Kyoki.

However, impermanence is a condition of all existence, and whether I wanted to consider it or not, when I reached back to pet Badger as we pulled into the vet's parking lot, I didn't feel the big and strong mature dog I'd been reminiscing about. I felt a weak and suffering old dog struggling to breathe, and I felt myself beginning to cry.

LINCOLN ZEN GROUP

A group affiliated with NZC meets weekly on **Sunday evenings, 7:00 p.m.** at the **Lincoln Women's Club, 407 South 14th St.** in Lincoln, NE. Zazen instruction is available for newcomers. For further information, call **Kido Albert Lickei** at **(402) 466-7597** (e-mail: Albert.Lickei@alltel.com) or **Seishin Larry Pelter** at **(402) 483-1755** (e-mail: lpelter@alltel.net).

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA

A group affiliated with NZC meets bi-weekly at the **Nebraska State Penitentiary** in Lincoln, NE. For further information, call **(402) 551-9035**, e-mail heartland@prairiewindzen.org, or write **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE, 68131-1363**.

LCC ZEN GROUP

A group affiliated with NZC meets weekly at **Lincoln Correctional Center** in Lincoln, NE. For further information, call **(402) 551-9035**, e-mail heartland@prairiewindzen.org, or write **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE, 68131-1363**.

We had to help Badger out of the car when we reached the vet, but he gamely walked in on his own. When we got to the counter, however, he plopped down exhausted on the floor. Kyoki and I had to carry him into the examining room. We

A Good Friend Gone

from page 6

lifted him onto the table rather than let him lie on the floor, and Kyoki and I petted and talked to him as we waited for the vet. We told him that everything was okay, to just relax, that we'd take care of him.

This was hard for all of us, especially for Kyoki. She had raised Badger from a pup and had trained him to herd cattle. He had been a big part of her life for seventeen years, from her days as a hog and cow farmer in outstate Nebraska, through her Zen training at the temple in Omaha, and into her teaching career at Deep Spring Temple. I knew how she felt about that old dog.

The vet came quickly, and it didn't take long for him to determine what the problem was. Badger's heart wasn't pumping enough blood through his system; the heavy breathing was a desperate attempt to get enough oxygen. His big heart was finally giving out. There was nothing that could be done.

Kyoki's eyes filled with tears as we discussed what to do. We decided to take him home, so he could die quietly and naturally in familiar surroundings near those who loved him. The vet suggested we give him a sedative to calm him down and ease his breathing, so we did. It began to take effect quite soon, and Kyoki and I had to carry Badger out to the car. She rode in the back with him, and I drove home.

I, like most people, entered Zen practice to find relief from suffering and pain. I thought that if I practiced hard, I would "get enlightened" and live in bliss from then on. How silly. I have come to realize that the only way to successfully negotiate suffering and pain is to go into and through it, not around it. An old Zen story deals with this issue:

A Zen Master's oldest disciple had died, the one who had been with him the

longest and whom he had designated his successor. At the funeral, while giving the eulogy, the Master broke down and cried.

Later, a visiting monk said: 'Life and death have no beginning and no end. Why do you cry?'

The Master said: 'He was my oldest and closest disciple; if I don't cry now, when am I supposed to?'

Zen practice trains us to enter each moment of our life and experience it fully, without aversion or greed. In other words,

In moments of grief and loss — the death of a friend, a lover's leaving, a child's going away to college — feelings run deep and true. We have to accept and honor them before we can be-

we accept the circumstances of our life and live them fully, willing to let go into the next moment as things change, as they always will. In moments of grief and loss — the death of a friend, a lover's leaving, a child's going away to college — feelings run deep and true. We have to accept and honor them before we can begin to move on. This is our karmic life.

My karmic life as I drove back from the vet's was a sad mixture of grief and reminiscence. I thought of the time many years ago when a stray dog had treed Lola, the temple cat. Badger ran over to the base of the tree, chased the dog away, and stood nearby while Lola climbed down. She walked over to him, and they touched noses before they went their separate ways.

I also thought of the time a big Black Labrador Retriever attacked Li'l Red up in the park near the temple in Omaha. Red was on

his back yelping in terror when Badger came from nowhere, rammed the bigger dog with his shoulder, bowled him over, and tore fur out of him until Kyoki and the Lab's owner pulled them apart.

When Kyoki was training in Japan for two years in the mid-nineties, Badger and I were inseparable. We not only lived together at the temple in Omaha but also took daily walks together through the neighborhood, out on the prairie, and through the Loess hills in neighboring Iowa. We went on camping trips together in Western Nebraska and he went with me when I visited my friends. We became best buddies during those years.

Every night when I went to bed, Badger would tuck me in. He'd jump up next to me and lay down for a bit until I turned out the light.

Now, he lay in the back seat of the car, still struggling for breath.

When we got back to the temple, we carried Badger up to Kyoki's room and laid him on the floor. His

breathing was still heavy, and he kept shifting his body, trying to get comfortable. We set up a fan so he'd be a little cooler, and gradually, his breathing calmed down. He finally laid down on his side.

The others participating in practice period — Eido, Margaret, Keith, and Gary — came up to check on things, and we filled them in on what had happened at the vet's. Eventually, everyone drifted away to bed, and at around nine-thirty, I did too. I left my tee-shirt near Badger, so my smell would be nearby, and I asked Kyoki to come and get me if there was any change in his condition. We were both un-realistically hoping that he'd get past this crisis and recover, so we could have him in our lives a bit longer.

I didn't sleep much. Shortly after midnight, Kyoki came to my room and told me that Badger was dying. By the time I

continued on page

A Good Friend Gone

from page 7

put on some clothes and got to her room, he had quietly taken his last breath.

We petted and talked to him for a while, telling him what a great dog he'd been, what a good friend and companion. We told him how much we'd miss him. I encouraged him to not stay here too long, to continue on his journey, and I told him that although we loved him and would miss him, we would be all right.

Then, Kyoki and I put on our robes and did a deathbed service, one of the many ceremonies we have in Soto Zen to help up through times like these. We lit Kyoki's altar, offered incense, and chanted the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, the sutra on the death of the Buddha. Toward the end of this scripture, as Shakyamuni Buddha is dying, he calls Ananda, his attendant, who had been weeping in the next room, and says:

Have I not already told you many times that it is the nature of all things, even those most near and dear to us, to pass away and that we must leave them, divide ourselves from them, sever ourselves from them. Everything born must die; all beings carry within them the seeds of dissolution. For a long time, Ananda, you have been very close to me. You have been kind, good, and loving, in thought, word, and deed; that has never varied and is beyond measure. You have done well, Ananda. Put forth great effort, and you too, will soon be free.

Kyoki and I had great difficulty getting through these words. Tears are welling up now as I type them. Badger was kind, good, and loving. He truly did well. He brought great joy to our lives, and because of that, his passing was a time of great sadness.

After the deathbed service, we sat with our old friend for a while. I told him that he'd done as well as a dog that any dog could do. There was no need for him to

come back as another one. I told him that I hoped I lived long enough for him to come back to me as a young man or woman in a few years so that I could ordain him a priest. Then, we took one of Kyoki's old rakus and placed it around his neck. I went to my room to find something of mine to leave with him, but I didn't have much with me. I came across a red Nebraska tee-shirt and took it to Kyoki's room, folded it, and placed it under Badger's head. It was not only a fitting link to me but also to the years he'd spent out on the farm chasing cows. Now, he had something with him from both his careers, cow dog and monk! We moved him in front of Kyoki's altar, and I gathered a bouquet of flowers from the other temple altars and laid them across his shoulder. We sat quietly with him for a time, and then we went to bed.

The next morning, instead of our regular morning service, we did a memorial service for our dear friend. Kyoki, Eido, Margaret, Gary, Patricia, Keith, and I all crowded into Kyoki's room. We lit the altar, offered incense, and chanted "The Great Compassionate Dharani." After chanting, we individually spoke to Badger. Kyoki thanked him for being her protector all these years, and for helping her get settled into her new temple home. I told him that I would never forget him; that he taught me how great a dog could be, and that he'd always live in my heart. Margaret said that he'd been a part of her practice life since she began coming to the temple and tearfully told him that her practice life just wouldn't be the same without him. Everyone had something heartfelt to say.

After service, we returned to our regular routine; we did our morning cleaning and prepared for breakfast.

After breakfast, Kyoki and I discussed how we should proceed, and we decided to have the funeral and burial later on that morning. It had been very hot the past few days, and today looked like more of the same. Traditionally, we preserve a body

for three days and then cremate it, but that would be difficult with the heat. Also, Kyoki wanted to bury Badger rather than cremate him. So, we walked the temple grounds looking for an appropriate spot for a cemetery. Badger's grave would be the beginning of it.

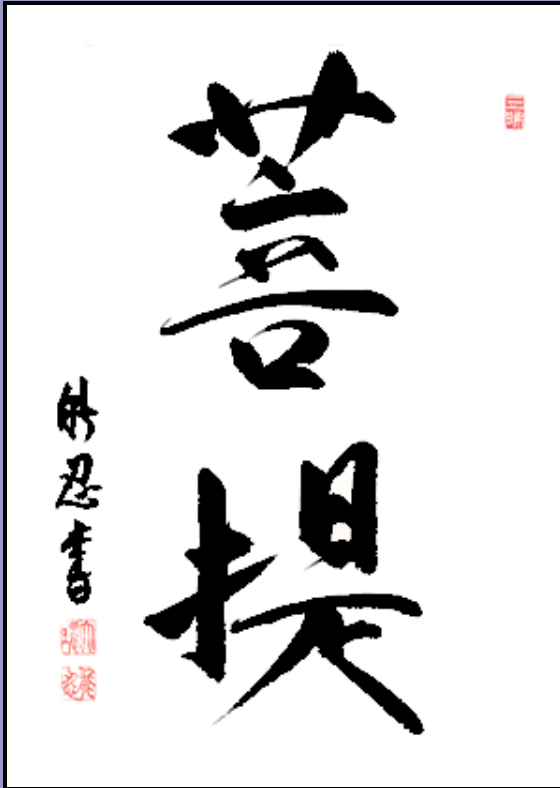
We picked a nice spot on the downward slope of the hill behind the temple, near enough to be a part of things, but far enough away so as not to interfere with future expansion. It is near a well-established birch grove and has a magnificent view of the Big Sewickley Creek Valley.

Then, Eido and I carried Badger into the Buddha Hall and laid him on top of a clean white sheet on a low table in front of the altar. I brushed him and picked some burrs out of his coat, remnants of our last walk two days before. He still wore Kyoki's rakusu and his head rested on my tee-shirt. We would bury him with these things. Eido left to begin digging the grave with Bob and Patricia – we would all soon join them there to finish up – while the rest of us prepared various things for the service.

We have in Soto Zen a specific memorial and burial service for animals that gives shape to our grief and provides a container to hold it. Kyoki led the service, and I led the chanting. We recited "The Life Span of the Thus Come One," the pivotal chapter of the Lotus Sutra. Many years ago Kyoki and I started calling Badger "Best Boy," and Kyoki now formally gave it to him as his Buddhist name. We then spoke to him again, as we had during our memorial service early that morning. I remember thanking him for his companionship and for his love. When my tears cleared, I chanted an *eko*, a dedication or merit transfer that ends all of our services. The one for this service reads:

From the beginning there is no birth and death,

continued on page 10



Enlightenment (Bodhi)

Calligraphy For Sale

Nonin's calligraphy is now for sale.

All are originals signed and stamped by him and are written on high quality paper, either watercolor or printmaking paper or archival matboard.

We sell and ship them unframed. Each piece can be mounted and framed using traditional methods by any good framer.

The calligraphy can be viewed and purchased through our website, at www.prairiewindzen.org. Click on the **Nebraska Zen Center** website and go to Nonin's **calligraphy pages**.

Dharma Transmission

from page 3

you are wearing and what you feel, comfortable with the reality of a priest's life, then created reality becomes true reality. So that period of time is the maturing of

only for your practice, but also for others', leading a practice group. Your responsibility and your practice become broader. The head monk (*shuso*) ceremony comes at the end of this, and is like a second, or intermediate ordination.

Your responsibility as a priest is to succeed at a teacher's work. Teacher's lineage means a teacher's work, a teacher's effort, true intentions, and serving others.

Dharma transmission is a milestone in a priest's life; it means that you are truly practicing not only for yourself but also for others, for the next generation.

Even without knowing one word or understanding half a phrase, the teacher sees the student within himself, and the student lowers the top of his head; this is correct face-to-face transmission

[Nonin was head monk and did the *shuso* ceremony at Tassajara Zen Monastery in California. Kyoki did both at Shogoji Monastery in Japan – ed.]

the initial training.

Then, a priest does head monk training, during which you take responsibility not

After the *shuso* experience, when the teacher feels ready, dharma transmission occurs. This is complete ordination. At this time, you receive the teacher's confirmation and become a lineage holder.



A Good Friend Gone

from page 8

*Because of karma you assumed an animal body,
Discard this body quickly and enter into
the world of purity
Desire the pure crown of buddhahood
and realize the mind of the bodhisattva
quickly.*

When the service was over, Eido and I wrapped Badger in the sheet, using it as a shroud. Bob and Eido then carried our friend down the stairs to the back door, from where we would begin our slow procession to the grave.

I led the procession, walking slowly and ringing the *inkin*, the small hand-held bell, every few steps. Kyoki was service leader, so she came next. Then came Bob and Eido, carrying Badger. The rest of the sangha came after him. Kyoki had had asked Margaret to ring a cowbell during the procession, and the first time she did, all the tears that had been welling up in me that morning burst out. The bell was calling the old cow dog home. I still can't think of that moment without crying.

We laid Badger in the ground, and Kyoki called Li'l Red over, so he would know where Badger was. The little dog climbed down into the grave and sniffed the shroud-wrapped body. He then hopped out, ran about twenty yards, and flopped down in the grass, facing away from the grave. Clearly, this moment was as disturbing and difficult for him as Shakyamuni Buddha's death was for Ananda.

Then, we all took turns covering Badger with earth. As we did, we chanted two sutras, the "Verse of Homage To Buddha's Relics (*Shariraimon*)" and "The Great Compassionate Dharani." This is the "Verse of Homage to Buddha's Relics:"

*With wholehearted reverence we bow
to the relics of the true body
Of the Tathagata Shakyamuni,
who is fully endowed with myriad
virtues;
To the Dharma Body, which is the fun-*

*damental ground; and to his stupa,
which is the whole universe.
With deep respect we venerate the one
who manifested a body for our sake.
Through the sustaining power of the
Buddha, which enters us even as we
enter it,
We verify awakening.
By means of the Buddha's spiritual
power
We benefit living beings,
arouse the thought of awakening,
Cultivate bodhisattva practice,
and together enter perfect peace,
The knowledge of the equality of all
things.
Now let us reverently bow.*

We made a nice grave. Kyoki found some rocks to line it with and placed a large one upright to serve as a headstone. We left an incense burner, so when people came to show their respects, they could offer incense. When I did so that evening, I noticed that someone had spread flower petals over the grave. It was beautiful.

Some years ago, Lola – our Omaha temple cat – died. Over the years, she had developed the habit of jumping up into my lap whenever I sat down in the chair in my room. Sometimes, I just wanted to sit quietly by myself or to read, so I'd push her away onto the floor. After she died, I missed her so. I thought how wonderful it would be if she were there to jump up on my lap, and I regretted having pushed her away so often.

As Badger got older, I decided that I wanted no regrets after he died, so I welcomed him every time he came to me. I rubbed the spot between his eyes, scratched behind his ears, and talked to him a bit. When he still lived in Omaha, I made sure we got out for walks often, and I frequently took him with me when I ran errands with the car. Whenever I visited Deep Spring Temple after he moved away, I made it a point to spend a little quiet time with him every day, brushing him or massaging the arthritic joints that caused him

so much pain as he aged.

Now that he's gone, I have no regrets. Every time I visited Pittsburgh the past two years, I took him aside as I was leaving, got down on my knees, looked him in the eyes and said, "You stay alive till I get back, you hear?" And he did.

I'd had a feeling for months that he would die this past June, when Kyoki and I were both there, practicing the dharma together in the way we did when Badger lived with us in Omaha. I was with him on his last walk and for his last car ride, two things he loved to do as much as anything, and I was fortunate and grateful to have been there when he died.

He'll be with me always. I can see him now, looking up at me with his deep brown eyes and bounding across the hills of the mind.



THE TRAINING OF THE ZEN MONK — *the Jisha*

by *Badger* — as told to *Kyoki Roberts*

During rohatsu sesshin a few years back, Badger was especially attentive to Nonin, prompting him to remark that Badger was the “best Jisha [abbot’s attendant] I ever had.” Kyoki Roberts was asked to interview Badger to insure that his understanding of the Jisha practice was recorded for posterity.

The Jisha should sleep in the hall or on the landing near the West window to protect the temple. If the Master is feeling poorly, sleeping by his bed is appropriate.

In the morning, the Jisha should rise early and see to his ablutions so that he will be ready to greet the Master when he rises.

During zazen, the Jisha is to wait patiently in the buddha hall, just outside the zendo. He is not to poke his nose into the zendo. During morning service, he should be attentive and sit behind the Master, to his right. He risks the Master’s wrath if he should move around.

During meals, he should remain near the Master at all times and not interfere with the servers. Should the master or other monks drop any food it is his job to clean it up immediately.

The Jisha’s job during morning cleaning is to get the newspaper, immediately after morning service (during sesshin, immediately after breakfast). The newspaper is to be placed in the kitchen. The Tenzo should remember to always offer the Jisha a biscuit at this time, for the Jisha has been working very hard. If the Master is rising late, the Tenzo will prepare coffee at the appropriate time, and the Jisha will carry the newspaper “Sports” section to the Master. The other sections are to be left for the other monks to read.

During the day, it is essential that the Jisha take every opportunity to nap because he never knows when he might be on duty. Being always available can be a difficult task. The Master’s bowing mat in the Buddha hall makes a good central location for taking naps.

Should visitors come to the temple, it is the Jisha’s duty to first announce their arrival and then go to the door to greet them.

At unspecified times during the day, the Master needs to perform the practice of petting. It is the Jisha’s duty to present himself for this practice *frequently*.

Towards late afternoon, it is the Jisha’s duty to see that the Master has his constitutional. Every effort must be made to see that the Master, at a minimum, walks around the neighborhood for twenty to thirty minutes every day. Car rides and

wait in the buddha hall. Of course, when he does wait there, he needs to make sure that he is not in the way of those doing walking meditation. By all means make sure to not sprawl when sleeping, so no one will step on his ears!

The Jisha shall eat his daily meal after evening zazen. At this time, the Master is preparing for bed. After eating, the Jisha should present himself at the head of the bed for a “good night” pet. At this time, he should try not to burp in the Master’s face.



Badger and Nonin

walks in the country of an hour or more about four times a week are highly recommended. Of course, the Jisha will share any meals the Master should take when out of the temple but should *never* eat before it is offered.

In the evening, it is common for the Master and Jisha to have a light meal of cheese and crackers in the community room before evening zazen. It should not be necessary to say that the Jisha should only take what is offered.

During evening zazen, the Jisha may wait outdoors, or, if it is too cold, may again

From the editor:

We **always** need material. Send us articles, drawings, poems, photos, cartoons, letters, etc. The deadline for publication in our Winter issue is **November 15th**.

NZC’s Website Address is:
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WEEKLY ZENDO SCHEDULE

Morning

Tuesday — Sunday

- 6:00 - 7:00 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as Needed)
- 7:00 - 7:30 — Service
- 7:30 - 7:45 — Cleaning

Sunday Only

- 8:30 — Zazen Instruction
- 9:00 - 9:25 — Sitting Meditation
- 9:25 - 9:35 — Walking Meditation
- 9:35 - 10:00 — Sitting Meditation
- 10:00 - 10:10 — Service

Evening

Tuesday — Wednesday

- 7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as needed)

Thursday

- 7:00 - 8:30 — Zazen Instruction
(by appointment; call 551-9035)
- Classes as scheduled

Friday

- 7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as needed)

We are closed on Monday