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Prairie Wind

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Heartland Temple and Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple*

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Fall 2013

Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple 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, OPW, is NZC's Head Priest. 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 authorized to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan. Rev. Chowaney is the founder of the Order of the Prairie Wind.

Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple is NZC's sister temple. ZCP also follows the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition established by Zen Master Dogen..

Rev. Kyoki Roberts, OPW, is ZCP's Head Priest and a founding member of the Order of the Prairie Wind. She is the senior ordained student of Rev. Nonin Chowaney and has trained at Hokyoji Monastery in Minnesota, San Francisco Zen Center and Green Gulch Farm in California, and Zuioji and Shogoji monasteries in Japan. Rev. Roberts received Dharma Transmission from Rev. Chowaney and was authorized to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan. She was appointed to serve as ZCP's Head Priest in 2001

Prairie Wind (© 2013 Nebraska Zen Center) is the newsletter for both **Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple**.

Cover : The Great Way is Without Difficulty; Just Avoid Picking and Choosing — Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

We **always** need material for *Prairie Wind*. Send us articles, drawings, poems, photos, etc. The deadline for publication in our **Winter** issue is **November 1st**.

Websites for **Nebraska Zen Center** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh** are at: www.prairiewindzen.org.

Nebraska Zen Center's e-mail address is: heartland@prairiewindzen.org.
Zen Center of Pittsburgh's e-mail address is: kyoki@prairiewindzen.org

A DIFFERENT VOICE

Usually, I write the lead article for each issue of Prairie Wind, but occasionally, I give up this space to another. I found the following article in the Winter edition of the Cedar Rapids [Iowa] Zen Center Newsletter, liked it, and am re-printing it here. Zuiko Redding is a Soto Zen priest and serves as Resident Teacher at CRZC. She and I trained together with Katagiri-roshi many years ago, and we both trained with the same masters in Japan. We are old friends.

Nonin Chowaney

DROPPING OFF BODY AND MIND

by Zuiko Redding

It's almost spring. It's still cold, though. The full moon was shining brightly in the night sky a few evenings ago and my face got very cold as I watched it. I thought of Tendō Nyojō's poem about plum blossoms and practice that ends with "a hard cold bites the nostrils."

Dōgen awakened at Tendō Nyojō's temple. A friend and I recently had a conversation about Dōgen's phrase "dropping off body and mind." Dōgen recounts that, one evening at zazen he dropped off body and mind when he heard the sound of Nyojō Zenji's slipper hitting the shoulder of another

monk. Our conversation began because a mutual friend used "sloughing off" to describe what happened to Dōgen that fateful night. "Sloughing" seemed a bit stilted and old-fashioned to me so I suggested "shedding."

I looked up "dropping off" — *datsuraku* (脱落) — in my trusty copy of the Nelson Japanese character dictionary. The first English word for *datsuraku* is "moult." *Datsuraku* is maybe not a one-time, never to be done again, throwing away.

The year of the snake is a good time to think about moulting, shedding. Snakes shed their skins. So do many other animals like cicadas and crabs. As time passes, the present skin becomes too small, too inflexible, not useful anymore and it's left behind. Birds grow new feathers as the seasons change. When spring comes, winter feathers drop off.

So it looks as if Dōgen wants us to shed body and mind as a snake sheds its skin or a bird moults. How can we practice with this? What is this body and mind that we shed?

It's pretty obvious that we don't get rid of our physical body and our usual mind. If we did that, we would no longer be helpful in the world. Dōgen certainly existed after he shed body and mind — he wrote *Shōbōgenzo*, founded a monastery

continued on page 4

Dropping Off Body and Mind

from page 3

and brought the practice of Soto Zen to Japan. He certainly had a body and mind in the usual sense and he used them enthusiastically in the service of all beings.

Shinjin datsuraku means to shed our constant concern with this small self, our concern with fame and gain, winning and losing, We shed the sense of self as separate from the rest of the universe and as something really important and special to us. When we stop obsessing over ourselves we become

When we drop off body and mind, we don't disappear. We become what we already are — the body-mind of the whole universe, beyond the small self we have shed.

open to all things, all beings. We have good cheer, acceptance and curiosity about everything without constant reference back to this self. We approach others with a desire to help, understanding that they are part of ourselves.

A snake can only shed its skin if the time is right, only if it is mature enough. A bird moults only when the season is right. When it's time to shed, to moult, the snake must help by wriggling out of it and the bird must help by grooming its feathers. This shedding is a partnership with the universe.

As for us, maturity comes with practice, and we must be patient. It's not

totally under our control — this process. However, we must help it along. If we don't create the conditions by letting go of thoughts, it surely won't happen.

When we shed body and mind, we might think that we become naked, but this is not the case. We have a beautiful, supple new skin, the skin that is the vast, changing universe. Rather than becoming a nothing, a doormat, we become everything. This body and mind become important in a different way — they are crucial as dynamically functioning parts

of the universe.

It's much more helpful than the one we just shed. It's supple, vibrant and fresh and it gives us new life. We move freely. It can gradually lose its flexibility and life and we may need to shed again. This is not good or bad — it's just how things are. It has beauty in itself. Once I found a Japanese cicada's old skin on a bridge rail in Kumamoto. The veins on the wings were the color of 24-carat gold as the sun glistened on them. I have seldom seen something so beautiful. The cicada had moved on, though, and left it for others to enjoy.

We may really admire the golden tracery

Dropping Off Body and Mind

from page 4

on our wings, but when the time comes to drop them off, we just wriggle out. Then, as my friend put it, we are clothed in a new, ever-changing skin .

When we drop off body and mind, we don't disappear. We become what we already are — the body-mind of the whole universe, beyond the small self we have shed. We are impermanence, cause-and-effect and non-self going forward. Through this — us — universal existence verifies and carries out universal existence.

This doesn't last. We return to our habit of thinking that there's something here to call a self, something important, worthy of defending, something to manipulate and make better. Not only that — this self can manipulate the world for our fame and success. Then the process happens again.

I wish I could stay forever in *shinjin datsuraku*. When I by chance cease my obsession with my personal, though non-existent self, the world — I — function completely and peacefully as the universe. Life is wholesome and joyous. When my obsession rules me and my body and mind have grown again, my effect on the life around me is not good.



Body and Mind Dropped Off
(*shinjin datsuraku*)

Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER SANGHA NOTES

FALL PRACTICE PERIOD begins with a **Two-day Sesshin** on **September 14th and 15th**. Practice Period provides structure for intensifying one's practice and sangha connections for a specific period of time 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 morning practice, or work practice, and **(3) attendance a special events** (e.g., sesshins, study groups, or precept ceremonies) Practice Period students will also keep a **practice journal** and will **meet with Nonin as a group** two or three times during the period, which will end with Rohatsu Sesshin (Dec. 1-7).



Jose Correa, Nonin, and Pam Griffin after **Lay Initiation** in March. Jose's dharma name is **Seizan** (Quiet Mountain) and Pam's is **Shoju** (Bright Pearl). **Congratulations to you both!**

More photos on page 11

Except for some details here and there and wall work on the interior of the garage, both sides of our **temple remodeling project are finished** and all the interior spaces are now being used. We've also begun to paint the trim on the entire building. **Many thanks to all who have helped out!**

Also, **many thanks** to those who've been doing temple jobs this Spring and Summer. We've been able to keep the temple clean and bright, especially the practice areas, due to the work of sangha members. Special thanks go to **Shoju Pam Griffin**, who once again this Spring and Summer has put in a lot of time on the gardens and grounds. Thanks also to **Sean Bradley**, who's helped Shoju Pam on a couple of the large projects.

Former sangha member **Eisai Elizabeth Muia** was here for a visit early this Summer. Sangha members gathered at Upstream Brewing Company for a re-connecting lunch. **It was great to see you, Elizabeth!**

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER FALL EVENTS

SESSHIN

There will be two sesshins at NZC this Fall: A **Two-day Sesshin** on **September 14th and 15th** and a **One-day Sesshin** on **October 12th**. Fees: \$40 per day for members; \$50 for non-members. Lower rates are available for those with limited income. **E-mail** us at heartland@prairiewindzen.org or call **402-551-9035** to register.

DHARMA STUDY CLASS

Nonin will lead a **Dharma Study Class** at the temple this Fall. It will meet on four successive **Saturday mornings** from **10 a.m. till noon**, on **October 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th**. We'll be examining the dharma as presented in contemporary poetry in English. The class is free to sangha members. The fee for others is \$15 per class.

OTHER FALL EVENTS

Sep 1 World Peace Ceremony
Group Discussion
18 Precepts Ceremony
Oct 6 World Peace Ceremony
Group Discussion
16 Precepts Ceremony

Nov 3 World Peace Ceremony
Group Discussion
13 Precepts Ceremony

The temple will be closed over Thanksgiving from Wed. evening, the 20, through Sat. evening, the 23rd.

WEEKLY ZENDO SCHEDULE — NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER

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
10:10 - 11:00 — Dharma Talk

Evening

Tuesday — Wednesday

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

Thursday

6:00 - 8:30 — Classes as scheduled

Friday

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

We are closed on Monday.

If you are new to the temple, you must have zazen instruction before joining us. Please arrive by 8:30 on Sunday morning for instruction.

ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH SANGHA NOTES

If you want to receive monthly schedule updates and last-minute changes to events. Join our e-mail list. Go to <http://www.prairiewindzen.org/zcp/list.htm> and register. Or, e-mail ZCP at kyoki@prairiewindzen.org. You will also receive our monthly e-Newsletter.

Many Thanks to Myozan Keegan from Empty Hand Zendo for beginning Summer with us by leading June Sesshin. It was a delight to sit quietly with him for three days. After sesshin, sangha members worked exceptionally hard to create a patio outside Judy's apartment. Deep bows to all who helped.

Jigetsu Kaethejean Bleicher supervised garden plantings and temple clean-up before the July wedding of Chelsea Attwood and Jyoshin Bryan Ritti. Eishin Paige Ritti was the flower girl. Bryan and Paige were ZCP residents in 2007-8.



Kyoki had her third leg nerve surgery In July and recuperated on a vacation with her son Joe and his family, taking a driving trip through the West to the West Coast and eventually to Disneyland. Our condolences to them on the death of Joe's father and Kyoki's ex-husband, Chuck Eliason.

Our condolences also to Taikan Doug Gouge on the death of his mother, Laura.

Jisen continues to lead groups in mid-town Pittsburgh and in the North Hills. See <http://citydharma.wordpress.com/> for details.

Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple, 124 Willow Ridge Road,
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website: www.prairiewindzen.org

ZCP SPRING / SUMMER EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

1 — World Peace Ceremony
19 — Precept Renewal
27-29 - Sesshin w/ Myozan Dennis Keegan*

OCTOBER

6 — World Peace Ceremony
17 — Precepts Renewal

NOVEMBER

3 — World Peace Ceremony
17 — Precepts Ceremony
27-30 - ZCP Closed

DECEMBER

1-7 — Rohatsu Sesshin*
1 — World Peace Ceremony, 9 a.m.
8 — Buddha's Enlightenment Day
23-26 — ZCP Closed
31 — New Year's Eve, festivities begin 6 p.m.

*Please register for this event

ZCP DAILY SCHEDULE

Closed Mondays

Tuesday — 7-7:40 a.m. DST
6-7:15 p.m. DST
Wednesday — 5:30-7:15 a.m. DST
6:00-7:15 p.m. DST & FMH
Thursday — 5:30-7:15 a.m. DST
6:00-7:15 p.m. DST
Friday — 5:30-7:15 a.m. DST
6:00-7:15 p.m. DST
Saturday — 5:30-7:15 a.m. DST
Sunday — 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. DST

DST — Deep Spring Temple, Bell Acres
FMH — Friends Meeting House, Oakland

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA NOTES

by Zenryu Vicki Grunwald

Our precepts include instructions about not taking what is not given, or not stealing. Instead, we are encouraged to cultivate generosity and giving to counter the first poison, greed. At first glance, it seems, therefore, that giving is good and receiving is bad. But when you receive, you allow another person to give and cultivate generosity.

Sometimes receiving is hard. The low end of an inmate salary is \$1.21 per day. No, this is not a typo. Some jobs pay \$1.21 per hour, and really good jobs can pay over \$3.00 per hour. When prisoners are put on Work Detail, the program that prepares them for Work Release, the salaries lean to the higher side of that range. It's not until they get to Work Release that they get a job in the community and hopefully make a living wage.

I have written about how excited inmates are when they are to be able to go into the community after being locked up for many years. They are also excited that I visit them at the Community Correctional Center which houses inmates at Work Detail and Work Release custody levels. Invariably, they wish to express their gratitude by buying me a soda, which costs 60 cents. Truthfully, I don't like soda that much, but I do enjoy a diet Dr. Pepper every once

in a while. However, the soda machine in the prison common room doesn't have Dr. Pepper. How can I possibly allow someone to spend up to half their hourly wage on something that I don't even like that much? Of course, I do get thirsty during the visits and a soda would be nice. It has taken several visits to become comfortable with receiving a soda. It's not about who makes more money or that I don't expect

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA

The **White Lotus Sangha**, a group affiliated with NZC, meets on Friday evenings in four Nebraska prisons, **Nebraska State Penitentiary** and **Lincoln Correctional Center** in Lincoln, **Tecumseh State Correctional Institute** in Tecumseh, and **Omaha Correctional Center** in Omaha. For further information, see **the Religious Coordinator** at either of the above institutions, e-mail heartland@prairiewindzen.org, call (402) 551-9035, or write **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE, 68131-1363**.

anything in return for the volunteer work I do. It's about me sitting there and graciously accepting the soda.

Several months back I was visiting an inmate who really needed me to sit and listen, so we were having an extended visit. Having just come from the state peniten-

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LAY INITIATION



Bowing to Buddha



Chanting the Robe Verse



Adjusting the Rakusu



Receiving the Precepts

Friendship and Herons

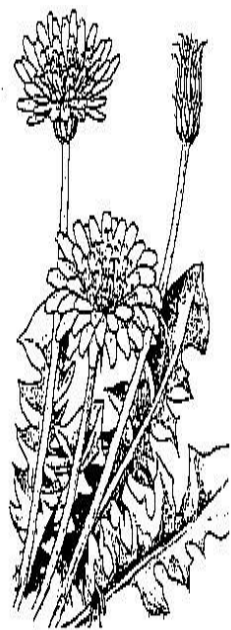
*In memory of Ed Foote
May 2000*

*He was my friend Don's dad.
We had only met a few times.
Our smiles connected two vastly
different lives; him being a bit older,
but we both saw the Dodgers play,
remembering Gil Hodges came up
as a catcher and Dick Williams as
a skinny fleet outfield prospect.*

*He took me on his motor boat
out on Lower Saranac Lake through
the locks into Middle Saranac.
We worked them ourselves, me
A big kid at sixty three fulfilling
A boyhood dream of sorts.*

*We went through the inlet
between the lakes as a heron
was feeding in the marsh grasses.
We offended him, I guess; he flew
away and alit on a snag up apiece.
On the way back, we intruded again.
Both times we were give the gift
Of his slow rise and graceful flight.*

Marvin Blaustein



SANGHA MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER / ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH

Membership

While no one needs to formally join either temple to share in our practices, we invite you to become a member of either Nebraska Zen Center or Zen Center of Pittsburgh. Members are people who feel that Zen Buddhism is an important part of their lives and who wish to express that feeling by joining a community of practitioners.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please speak with the appropriate person at either temple after Sunday services.

Financial Support

Buddhist communities have always relied on the generosity of their supporters. For income, we depend on those who believe in the good of what we do and wish to nourish it.

No one is refused temple membership due to an inability to pay. We do, however, encourage members to commit to our financial support through monthly pledges. We also encourage members to exhibit this support through participation in work projects.

The amount of your pledge is your personal decision. We ask you to support the temple at a level appropriate to your means. For those who participate regularly, we suggest a monthly pledge that reflects one hour of your earnings per week, or four hours per month. Because we are non-profit religious corporations, all donations are tax deductible.

TENDING THE OX ZENDO

A group affiliated with NZC meets weekly on Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm at Branched Oak Farm, 17015 NW 70th St, Raymond, NE 68428-4041. For further information, e-mail or call Kanho Doug Dittman at dougd@windstream.net (402-783-2124). Zazen Instruction is available for newcomers if arranged in advance.

ORDINATION

by Nonin Chowaney

In Soto Zen Buddhism, we have what was traditionally called in Japanese, *shukke tokudo*, which literally means "leave home to accomplish the way," or today, "priest ordination." In other words, the historical Soto Zen ordination and Theravadan ("original" Buddhism) ordination both were similar, which meant that the person, male or female, gave up lay life to become a celibate monk or nun, if we use today's English terms. The ethical guidelines for both traditions differed, however.

Also in Soto Zen Buddhism, we have *zaike tokudo*, which means "stay home and accomplish the way," or "lay ordination," in today's terms.

In Theravada Buddhism, "leaving home" meant, and still means, either connecting in community with a group of like-minded practitioners, which they did in India at first during the rainy season, or living as wanderers. Both existed on alms from lay sympathizers. Not only did Theravada followers practice this way but also Mahayana followers.

When Mahayana Buddhism (of which Soto Zen is a branch) came to China, begging was not allowed, so the monks and nuns gathered in monastic communities and supported themselves by farming and gardening. Later, begging was established, but

the communities remained.

Today, things are both the same and different. In Soto Zen Buddhism, priest ordination is still called *shukke tokudo* in Japan, but because of political reasons in 19th century Japan, Soto Zen monks (and others) were encouraged or, in some instances, forced to marry by the Meiji emperor and much of the land under control of



Nonin's Priest Ordination with Katagiri-roshi

monastic and temple groups became the property of the state. Some monks did marry and some didn't, which is the situation today.

Now, what labels we use can be confusing. I consider a Zen Buddhist (including Soto) monk or a nun [I'd like to coin the word "nunk."] an ordained person who either lives in a monastery or a small temple under a strict set of rules, including celibacy, or as a wanderer, and survives on donations. I consider a priest one who still lives under a set of rules, not as

Ordination

from previous page

strict as those for monks or nuns, but who may marry and/or hold a job outside the priesthood and who is still connected to either a monastery, temple, or another practice place and who practices the different aspects of, say, Soto Zen Buddhism as either a student (novice priest) or a teacher (transmitted priest). These practices are, but not limited to: zazen, kinhin, devotional practices (chanting, bowing, ritual, and ceremony), art practice, work practice, study (either academic or otherwise), ethical practices, private interviews with either the teacher or in the case of a teacher, one's students, and, in the case of a teacher, giving talks, leading groups, or performing other teacher functions. The level at which one does these practices varies from person to person.

I'm not intimately aware of Theravadan practices, but today, in Soto Zen Buddhism in the West, a person practices under the guidance of a transmitted teacher for a length of time, which varies from person to person. For me, it was five years, and during that time one forms the intention to be priest-ordained and approaches the teacher with a request for ordination. If the request is granted, one then goes through a novice period, which can include continuing to practice under the teacher's guidance, monastic training, academic study, and daily dharma practice as outlined above.

Different Zen Buddhist traditions follow different procedures and different Zen Buddhist teachers require different forms of practice during the novice period, which for me, included all of the above practices, including eight years of monastic training in the US and in Japan. This novice period ends when one becomes a full priest, or goes through dharma transmission, which means that a priest, or monk or nun may practice independently and guide others in the same way or through the same process that the person's teacher did with them.

What I have presented here is only a blueprint of how it has been and is in traditional Soto Zen Buddhism based on my understanding and on my own practice life. Different Zen Buddhist schools have different procedure, requirements, and practices, as do other Buddhist schools in general.



CALLIGRAPHY FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE



Mu (nothing)

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

There are **over fifty items for sale**, one and two-character pieces, longer phrases, and specialty items. All are **signed and stamped originals** and are written on high-quality paper, either Canson watercolor paper, Rives BFK, or archival matboard.

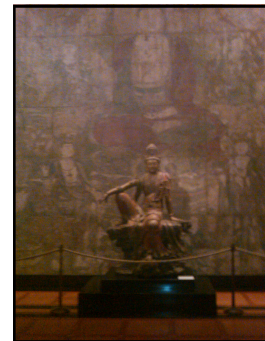
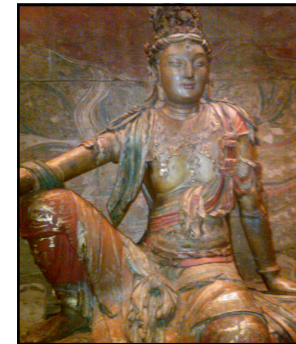
Nonin also accepts **commissions** to write temple names, individual dharma names, and specific characters or Zen phrases. **For further information**, contact him directly at the following e-mail address: heartland@prairiewindzen.org.

We sell and ship the calligraphy unframed. **Each piece can be mounted and framed by a good framer using traditional methods.**

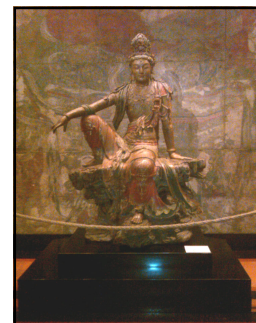
All profits from website calligraphy sales go directly to Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple.

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art — Kansas City, Missouri

The Nelson-Atkins Museum has one of the best collections of Asian art outside of Asia, and an especially fine collection of Buddhist art, mostly from China. Twenty Heartland Temple sangha members car-pooled to the museum this past July. We spent a good part of our time in the Chinese Temple room, which contains an original wood structure from China. Inside the structure is a wall mural, in front of which sits one of the most famous Kwan yin (Avalokitesvara) statues in the world. Here are some photos of that room.



Sangha Members in front of Kwan Yin



Joe & Dallas Marshall Viewing Ceramic Arhat

Song of Ryokan

from page 18

Ever since I learned what I know about the life of Hakuyu,
I have some means at least to sustain myself in the world.
Master your breath, so you may be tense with inner spirit.
No ills then, can break into your heart from the outside.

Chinese poems #103 (202) and #104 (204) Page 72 in Yuasa

III

True, all the seasons have moonlit nights,
But here's the best night to see the moon.
The hills never so aloft, the streams never so clear,
In the infinite blue of autumn sky flies a disk of light.
Neither light nor gloom is graced with a life of its own.
The moon and the earth are one, and myself one with them.
The boundless sky above, and autumn chill on my skin,
I stroll about low hills, leaning upon my priceless cane.
Quiet night has held firm the flitting dust of the world.
The bright moon alone pours streams of rays all about me.
I mind it not if another like-minded is also admiring it,
Or if the moon deigns to look on others as well as on me.
Each year as autumn comes the moon will shine as before,
And the world will watch it, will face it, till eternity.
Sermons at Mt. Ryozen, lectures in the Vale of Sokei,
Were teachings so precious, the audience needed the moon.
My meditation under the moon lasts till the ripest night.
The steam has hushed its cry, dew lies thick everywhere.
Who, among the moon-viewers tonight, will have the prize?
Who will reflect the purest moon in the lake of his mind?
Surely you all know of that riverside moon-viewing of long ago,
When Fugen alone, the rest lagging, ran beyond the flesh,
And of Yakkyo who, moon-inspired cracked a laugh on a hilltop?
Their reputation rose high, when the feats were reported,
But over a thousand years intervene between now and then.
People have watched for naught the vicissitudes of the moon.
I am, nonetheless, swayed in my thoughts by the ancients.
Tonight, I keep a bright vigil, my robes soaked in tears.

Chinese Poem #51 (84) Page 56 in Yuasa

IV

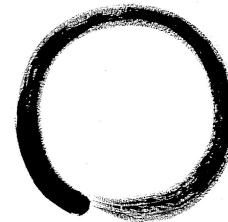
It once grew in the heavenly country far away in the west,
No one knows how many years since its coming to the world.

LAY ENTRUSTMENT

On Sunday, September 22nd, at 10:00, Nonin will lead a Lay Entrustment Ceremony for Kanho Doug Dittman. It will be held at 10:00. All are invited to attend.

On that morning, we will have our regular Sunday schedule till the end of 9:00 a.m. sitting at 9:25. Then, we will prepare for the ceremony, by which Kanho Doug will be authorized by Nonin as a Lay Soto Zen Buddhist teacher.

Doug has been a student of Nonin's and a Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland temple member for many years. He has established Tending the Ox Zendo on his Branched Oak Farm in Raymond, Nebraska, north of Lincoln and maintains a regular practice schedule there. Tending the Ox Zendo is affiliated with Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple and will remain so, but Doug will function as the resident teacher there.



Meditation Workshop at Nebraska Zen Center

A three-hour workshop in Zen Meditation for the beginner, including instruction in **sitting and walking meditation that harmonizes body, mind, and breath.**

Taught by **Rev. Nonin Chowaney**, abbot of Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, at 3625 Lafayette Ave, Omaha, NE 68131 on **Saturday November 9th**, from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. Fee: \$20

For further info or to register, either e-mail heartland@prairiewind.zen. org or call 402-551-9035.

Song of Ryokan

from page 20

Its white petals are wrapped in a profusion of shiny dews.
Its rare-green leaves spread everywhere in the round lake.
Chaste is its scent wafted over the fence by a quiet wind.
Arrestingly calm, its whole poise as it rises above water.
The sun has already hid itself behind the hills before me
But I cannot move a step for the charm of the lotus plant.

Now I sing the glory of the bamboo trees around my house.
Several thousands stand together, forming a placid shade.
Young shoots run wild, blocking the roads here and there.
Old branches stretch all the way, cutting across the sky.
Frosty winters have armed them with a spiritual strength.
Rising mists wrap them with the veil of profound mystery.
In their healthy beauty they even rank with pine and oak.
Although they do not vie in grandeur with peach and plum.
Their trunks are upright and their knots are far between.
Their hearts are void of stuffing and their roots sturdy.
Bamboo trees, I admire you for your honesty and strength.
Be my friends, and stand about my retreat until eternity.

Chinese Poems #53 (88) and 54 (89) Page 57 in Yuasa

V

Ancient sages left their works behind, not to let us know
About themselves, but to help us understand our own stamp.
Had we wisdom deep enough to know ourselves, single-handed,
No benefits would result from the works of ancient saints.
A wise person learns the mystery of existence in a flash
And climbs in a leap beyond the world of hollow phenomena,
Whereas a foolish person holds willfully to facts and details,
To drown in subtle differences of words and lines,
And being envious of others in their supreme achievements,
Wastes the mind night and day in efforts to exceed.
Truth, if you cleave to it as truth, turns into falsehood.
Falsehood, when you see it as such, becomes at once truth.
Truth and falsehood are the mated edges of a double sword.
None alive can separate with certainty one from the other.
Alas, too many people drift with the skiff to fathom the sea.
From time immemorial they are cause of endless deception.

Sweet saintliness is to be sought as a work of your heart.
The rightful path lies not amid things of constant change.

Song of Ryokan

from previous page

This plainest truth must be implanted time and time again,
Lest you should fall a witless victim to deceiving voices.
If you turn your shafts northward, hoping to travel south,
Alas, how can you ever arrive at your desired destination?

Chinese poems #98 (181) and #99 (185) Pages 70,71 in Yuasa

VI

In its innocence, the heart is like water pure and bright.
Boundless it presents itself to the sight of its beholder.
Should a proud desire rise, however, to disturb its peace,
Millions of wicked thoughts and pictures will bog it down.
If you take these fancies to be real enough to engage you,
You will be led farther and farther away from tranquility.
How sore it is to see a person crazed about earthly thoughts,
A heart bound closely by the cords of the ten temptations.

To hear the words of truth, you must wash your ears clean.
You will not, otherwise, stand true to what you will hear.
You will ask what it is I mean by washing your ears clean.
It means to rid yourself of all you have heard beforehand.
If only one word of your previous learning remains within,
You will fail to embrace the words when they come to you.
Resembling what you know, a plain lie may seem acceptable,
And a simple truth, strange to your ears, may sound false.
How often, alas, we have our judgments made in our hearts,
When truth lies outside, in a place beyond our conception.
Let us not commit such folly as to steep a stone in water,
To hide it for a moment knowing it will show in due time.

Chinese poem #101 (196) Pages 71, 72 in Yuasa

Ed. note: The above is a prose chanting version of poems by the Japanese monk Ryokan, the quintessential Zen Buddhist monk/poet. This version is part of the morning liturgy at Ryoko-an / Olympia Zen Center in Washington state. Some of our favorite collections of Ryokan's poetry are:

***One Robe; One Bowl*, trans John Stevens
Dewdrops on a Lotus Leaf, trans. John Stevens
Great Fool, Zen Master Ryokan, trans. Abe and Haskell**