

# EUGENE ZENDO

FEBRUARY 2002

BUDDHA EYE DHARMA ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2



## Ain't no cure for the land use blues... or is there?

The land use woes of our three affiliated Sanghas seem to be turning around.

Dharma Rain Zen Center had a very successful hearing concerning their house in Portland and even had some of the prior restrictions that had been set on the Zendo removed.

Zen Community of Oregon had some opposition to their proposed seminary and retreat facility in Clatskanie by some (not all or most) of the local churches, but things are looking hopeful. The Oregonian included an encouraging editorial on January 26<sup>th</sup> that read, "We can't do much about religious intolerance in places like Kandahar or Kabul, but great American communities like Clatskanie are blessed with the power to put a swift stop to it." Wow!

Here in Eugene, things are moving forward with the purchase of the house on Garfield street.

It is hard to say what will happen, but we may be turning a corner... another corner... what is a corner anyway?



## Zafu Retreat Went Great!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Zafu making weekend. We sewed 24 zafus and were able to stuff 18. We sent five to our friends at the Eugene Aikikai for their Zazenkai. Ejo is going to send one to his teacher and his dharma brother in Japan, and the rest are for sale. If you would like to buy one or know someone who does, they are available in the library for \$30.

We tweaked the DRZC design a little bit to create the Eugene Zendo Zafu! We plan to have a lot more sewing in the future. Don't worry if you missed out on this one. You will have plenty of opportunities.

Enlightenment and clarity of the mind occur only in response to the sustained effort of study and practice. Endeavoring in the way ripens the conditions of your practice. It is not that the sound of the bamboo is sharp or the colors of the blossoms is vivid. Although the sound of the bamboo is wondrous, it is heard at the moment when it's hit by a pebble. Although the color of the blossoms is beautiful, they do not open by themselves but unfold in the light of springtime. Studying the way is like this. You attain the way when conditions come together. Although you have your own capacity, you practice the way with the combined strength of the community. So you should practice and search with one mind with others.

-Dogen Zengii

## Announcements

- Sack lunches are needed to support a Cross Country Interfaith Pilgrimage on Saturday February 9<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Win at 344-4943 if you are able to make some lunches or otherwise help out.
- The Spring Practice Period will run from February 19<sup>th</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup>. We will have a full schedule of classes and retreats during this period. Please see enclosed schedule.
- Please sign up for a new practice position to start with the Spring Practice Period.
- A group to discuss the current international conflict in light of Buddhist practice has been meeting on a regular basis. Meetings are held at Thelma Soderquist's house the last Monday of each month, 7:00 PM. Please contact Thelma (344-4222) with questions. Thelma's address is 2577 Nixon St.
- Ejo is looking for someone to start helping with this newsletter. If you are interested in participating in any way, please contact Ejo.

## What the Buddha Didn't Teach

Meeting in our small group concerning the "War on Terrorism" and social involvement has been an important lesson for me as I struggle living in this world as it is, fluctuating between the poles of outrage and despair. People's candid expressions have helped me clarify several issues related to basic questions I keep asking – "What is my role amidst this difficulty." "How to do we respond?"

As far as I know, Buddhism does not teach that we are insignificant or that our actions don't matter. As easy as it is to see ourselves as inconsequential is a seemingly large complex world, this is a conditioned idea. In the Buddhadharma we are jewels in India's net, the whole world is contained in this body, all our actions carry karma based on our mind's direction, and in each moment, there is a choice. What may be insignificant, though a prime motivator, is our *idea* of ourselves. To release these ideas is to become all things. No separation. We hear this, but can we live this? Our sense of helplessness only feeds our cultural karma of self-negation, a state that is not the same as the no-self of the Buddha dharma. A long time ago, I ran across a quote from Nelson Mandela goes something like this: "Our deepest fear is not that we are insignificant, but that we are immeasurable beyond belief." He wrote that in jail. I think he was right.

In my immobilized state, I realize that I also assume "Inaction avoids error. " What sutra says this? We vow to cease from *evil* action, not *all* action. There is karma in action; there is karma in *inaction*. Having experienced the negative effects of social activism in the past, I think I can avoid these pitfalls by not acting. In a recent dharma talk, Kyogen sensei used the phrase : "reaching is not overcome by not-reaching." That is, we overcome the difficulties associated with action by acting, not by not-acting. As the world goes on with or without us, we think waiting can give us the illusion of safety, remaining untainted. But there is a lot of pain involved is turning away and stopping oneself from witnessing or responding to the world's suffering which only creates more illness - confusion,

isolation and despair. I think this is what "Socially Engaged Buddhism" (though a curious redundant term) has to offer to us - to open our eyes to our place in the messiness of this world, so preferably contemplated from a distance. It is a challenge – It says, "Look up! Do not exclude this work from your practice."

Why does this practice make us feel that "*Conflict is Bad*" and to steer clear? Debate, argument, lively passionate discussion...the stuff of duality. This is where we live! It feels better to avoid this uncomfortable expression or deny its existence and maintain pseudo-harmony around oneself. (Personally, when I smell the slightest conflict, internally, I'm already heading in the other direction.) Conflict though is living in the bright world of conditions and is the nature of dukkha. Sometimes we need to take a strong stand with open heart and hands, without fear so that others may reflect on current conditions with us. Ghandi taught a whole movement to embrace conflict – he invited it and had faith that our better sides would be brought to light when we meet the enemy with respect and dignity and do not back down.

It is not that we need to be grand. It is that we need to be true. Perhaps this just means inviting a discussion with someone very different from you. Perhaps you write a letter even though you think it doesn't count. When we fully bear witness, we turn and are turned. I know one thing; it is that we do not do this alone. I bow to the wisdom that emerges as we all step forward in our own true way.

Gassho, - Debra

# Calendar for February 2001

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	2 Zazenkai at Eugene Aikikai from 8:30 AM
3	4 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	5 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service 7:30-9:30 PM Zazen Dharma Talk-Ejo	6 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	7 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	8 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	9 Zazenkai at Eugene Aikikai from 8:30 AM
10	11 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	12 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service 7:30-9:30 PM Zazen and Sanzen	13 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	14 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	15 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	16 Zazenkai at Eugene Aikikai from 8:30 AM
17	18 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	19 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service 6:15 PM Zendo Meeting 7:30-9:30 PM Zazen <b>PRACTICE PERIOD OPENING</b>	20 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	21 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service <b>INTRODUCTION TO ZAZEN 7-9 PM</b>	22 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	23 Zazenkai at Eugene Aikikai from 8:30 AM
24	25 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	26 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service 7:30-9:30 PM Zazen Dharma Talk-Ejo	27 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service	28 6-7:15 AM Zazen/service 7-9 PM Class on Verses on Faith-Mind		

## Summary of Weekly Zendo Schedule

Monday – Friday: 5:30-6 AM Japanese Service; 6 – 7:15 AM Zazen, English Service  
 Tuesday: 7:30-9:30 PM Service, Zazen, Dharma Study  
 Thursday: 7-9 Zazen and Class (During practice period)