



Eugene Zendo

February 2004 Buddha Eye Dharma Association Volume 4 Issue 2

News

Mid-Winter Zendo Potluck

On February 20th, beginning at 6:30 PM, there will be a potluck at the zendo. The zendo will provide a large pot of dahl, basmati rice and pita bread. Please feel welcome to bring what you can, or nothing at all.

Floor Fundraiser Update

We've made it to 1/3 of our goal of \$1500 dollars for the new floor in the zendo meeting area. Thanks to all who've donated.

All Day Study Retreat

On Saturday February 21 we'll be having a daylong study retreat focusing on chanting. We'll start around 8:30 A.M. and there will be several periods of sitting, lunch, and a whole lot of chanting. We're planning to close around 5 P.M. For those who wish to attend, we will hold our usual weekday morning schedule from 5:30 until 8 A.M.

Dharma Talk by Ejo

During the spring Ango we will take up the study of Dogen-zenji's essay Bendowa, or The Wholehearted Way. For those of you that have read Dogen-zenji's work before, you may have found it challenging to follow. He leaves us with very little to hold on to conceptually, and this can be frustrating until we learn to approach his teaching with more than just our conceptual habits. I would like for us to explore this piece together in an attempt to help people past some of these challenges, or more properly put, to help people into a more practice based relationship with them

The Bendowa was one of Dogen-zenji's first writings after returning from China and, along with the Fukanzazengi that we recite each Tuesday evening, forms Dogen's foundational works that directly present Zazen. It is so important for us to read the works of great masters like this so that we can refine our understanding and practice of Zazen. We take the time to encounter works like this, not for the purpose of gaining knowledge, but more for something like chiropractics. We are always leaning a little to the left or right in our approach to life and sitting. Working with a text like Bendowa gives us a chance to uncover some of our leanings and return to upright sitting. Dogen-zenji engages a series of "typical questions" about Zazen in Bendowa and works through them carefully. This format makes the work easy to access as the discussion links clearly with many of the questions we ourselves ask as students of Zen.

There are copies of Bendowa with a short introduction available at the Zendo. We have also ordered 20 copies of Uchiyama-roshi's book The Wholehearted Way. We will be working directly from the text of the Bendowa in the classes, so it isn't necessary to buy this book for the Class. But Uchiyama-roshi's commentary is very down-to-earth and helps to draw a clear line between Dogen-zenji's words and our lives. I hope many of you will choose to read this book as well.

Lets take this opportunity of Ango to strengthen our resolve in clarifying Dharma and work together to create a community of practice that supports each other on this path.

Bendowa

Begging Bowl

*May we, with all beings,
realize the emptiness of the
three wheels; giver,
receiver and gift.*

Quality TOOLS

*New or in very good shape
contact: Ejo*

6 ft Fiberglass Ladder
Hammers
Tape Measures
& Assorted Basic
Carpentry Tools

Flooring

*Please notate donations
intended for flooring*

9 BOWS

*in gratitude
for **Flooring**
lots of folks
for **Doormat**
Gensei's Mom
for **Picture**
Robin*

*Please let the editor know if
you wish to remain anonymous
for your donation*

Sangha Reflection

WHY I STUDY

When I first started sitting, with a Rinzai group in New York City, I was told that *special transmission outside the scriptures; no reliance on words or letters*. Just sit and go to sesshin- that's all you need. So I sat. And sat. And sat. For years. This practice was very beneficial and changed my life. Whatever I learned about Buddhism and the Dharma I picked from doing koans, listening to teishos and, yes, some reading on the sly of mostly pre digested Dharma by teachers and writers.

When asked to explain Buddhism to a friend on day, I could talk with ease about sitting, posture, breath and how to handle thoughts. But when it came to the Dharma, I glossed over the major points and felt uncomfortable in my attempts to answer questions demanding more specific explanations. I knew the basics but my knowledge of the Dharma was shallow and second hand. I realized that I had the Zen part down pat but I didn't fully grasp the Buddhist part. So I began to study in earnest especially the Pali Sutras where the early history and the basics of our practice were first recorded. Soon, it became apparent to me that the non-dual Dharma, which is difficult for anyone to grasp, is especially difficult for a Westerner. It is fine for someone from a Buddhist culture to just sit and sit since they have grown up in a culture saturated with the Dharma. But study of the basics for us is imperative.

Despite being an atheist, I had been nurtured by a socio-spiritual culture that was Judeo-Christian in nature and I absorbed its basic premises. So, when I came to Zen Buddhism, I brought with me the dualistic outlook and instinctive thought processes of that conditioning. Whether I liked it or not, deep down I thought in terms of good and evil and felt that if you avoid evil and practiced good you get a reward. This gaining idea was operating deep in my mind. Enlightenment replaced the Judeo/Christian heaven and I subconsciously felt if I just sat and followed the precepts I would get enlightened. The Four Noble truths, The Eight Fold Path, and other foundational doctrines were also viewed through the distorted lens of my inherited cultural bias.

So the question was how to overcome these deep ingrained cultural biases? This is where continuous study comes in. I don't know if careful

study of a new tradition can ever completely replace our cultural indoctrination, but by getting to understand deeply the new tradition we can also see our cultural baggage more clearly. This can allow us to find and stay on the new path we are on and to be able to see when old conditioning or thinking lets us wander off.

Study and review of Dharma has other benefits. Studying basic texts and concepts and going back to them again every year or so - especially in group discussions - not only deepens our understanding but often suddenly opens up new doors that seems to have always been there waiting to be opened. Someone can make a comment about a familiar text or concept, just slightly different from your understanding, that instantly makes clear something you never saw before. It doesn't seem to matter if you are just starting out or are a long-term practitioner - the benefits of study and review are the same.

Without study with Sangha and a qualified teacher, in combination with regular sitting, we risk only going through the motions of practice. For me, study is a core element of our practice. I am deeply grateful to Ejo, Seido, Gensei and all the others in the Sangha who have given of their time and themselves to make this study practice available to all.

Tenkan



In the Dharma-nature
there is no "non-
Buddhist" or "demon,"
but only *Come for
breakfast!*
Come for lunch! and
Come for tea!

About the Eugene Zendo Web Site: www.eugenezendo.org

The Eugene Zendo is a Soto Zen Practice community open to everyone. The Buddhist teachings of compassion and wisdom are fostered amidst Sangha so that we can express these naturally in our daily life. The temple is entirely supported by donations from its members. There is no fee for any event, although donations are gladly accepted. Activities center around zazen (silent meditation) which is the foundation of our practice. Gatherings may also include service, chanting, dharma talks and study & discussion. If you are new to Zen practice, you may want to attend our periodic introduction class or just drop by 1/2 hour early before our Tuesday evening gathering to receive an orientation or contact our resident priest for more information:

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Newsletter Items: Seido Martin hortonorganics@earthlink.net 925-3019

Web guy & contact to receive this newsletter: Gensei Morris gensei@efn.org 302-4576

**Eugene Zendo
2190 Garfield St
Eugene OR 97405**

EZ February 2004

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>1</p>	<p>2 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>3 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7:30-9:30 PM Ango Opening Dharma Talk</p>	<p>4 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>5 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 6:30 PM Zazen 7- 8 PM Sangha Circle 8 - 9 PM Fusatsu</p>	<p>6 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>7</p>		
<p>8</p>	<p>9 <u>5:30- 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7 - 9 PM Introduction to Zazen</p>	<p>10 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 6 PM: Zendo Mtg! 7:30-9:30 PM Service/ Zazen Double Sit/ Sanzen</p>	<p>11 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>12 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7 - 9 PM Class/ Discussion Bendowa #1</p>	<p>13 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>14</p>		
<p>15</p>	<p>16 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>17 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7:30-9:30 PM Service/ Zazen Dharma Talk</p>	<p>18 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>19 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7 - 9 PM Class/ Discussion Bendowa #2</p>	<p>20 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast 6:30 PM Mid-winter Potluck</p>	<p>21 <u>5:30 AM -</u> <u>9:30 PM</u> One Day Retreat <i>Chanting</i></p>		
<p>22</p>	<p>23 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>24 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7:30-9:30 PM Service/ Zazen Double Sit w/ Sanzen</p>	<p>25 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>26 <u>5:30 - 8 AM</u> Standard Morning 7 - 9 PM Class/ Discussion Bendowa #3</p>	<p>27 <u>5:30- 8:00 AM</u> Zazen, Service, Soji, Breakfast</p>	<p>28</p>		
<p>29</p>	<p>*If Double Sit Evenings are difficult, you may come and join us for only the one of the 40 minute periods. Please leave or enter during Kinhin. You may also enter morning zazen any time before 7 AM Service (the best time is during kinhin 6:10 - 6:20AM), and depart either after service or temple cleaning (Soji).</p>							