

[Zazen]
on high

Purification

All the ancient twisted karma,
from beginningless greed, hatred, and ignorance,
born of my body, mouth, and thought,
I now confess openly and fully.

(Repeat 3 times)

Vandana

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.

[I venerate the Sacred One, the Great Sage, the Truly Enlightened One.]

Ti-Sarana

Buddham saranam gacchami;
Dhammam saranam gacchami;
Sangham saranam gacchami.

I take refuge in Buddha;
I take refuge in Dharma;
I take refuge in Sangha.

The Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, practicing deep Prajna Paramita,
clearly saw that all five skandhas are empty,
transforming anguish and distress.

Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness,
emptiness no other than form;

Form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form.

Sensation, perception, mental reaction, consciousness
are also like this.

Shariputra, all things are essentially empty—
not born, not destroyed;
not stained, not pure;
without loss, without gain.

Therefore in emptiness there is no form,
no sensation, perception,
mental reaction, consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no color, sound, smell, taste, touch, object of thought;
no seeing and so on to no thinking;
no ignorance and also no ending of ignorance,
and so on to no old age and death
and also no ending of old age and death;
no anguish, cause of anguish, cessation, path
no wisdom and no attainment.

Since there is nothing to attain,
the bodhisattva lives by Prajna Paramita,
with no hindrance in the mind;
no hindrance and therefore no fear;
far beyond delusive thinking, right here is Nirvana.
All Buddhas of past, present, and future live by Prajna Paramita,
attaining Anuttara-samyak-sambhodi.
Therefore know that Prajna Paramita is the great sacred mantra,
the great vivid mantra,
the unsurpassed mantra,
the supreme mantra,
which completely removes all suffering.
This is truth, not mere formality.
Therefore set forth the Prajna Paramita mantra.
Set forth this mantra and proclaim:
Gaté Gaté Paragaté Parasamgaté, Bodhi Swaha!

Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo

(The Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra)

Kan Ji Zai Bo Sa Gyo Jin Han Nya Ha Ra Mi Ta Ji
Sho Ken Go Un Kai Ku Do Is- Sai Ku Yaku
Sha Ri Shi Shiki Fu I Ku Ku Fu I Shiki
Shiki Soku Ze Ku Ku Soku Ze Shiki
Ju So Gyo Shiki Yaku Bu Nyo Ze
Sha Ri Shi Ze Sho Ho Ku So Fu Sho Fu Metsu
Fu Ku Fu Jo Fu Zo Fu Gen
Ze Ko Ku Chu Mu Shiki Mu Ju So Gyo Shiki
Mu Gen-ni Bi Zes-shin I
Mu Shiki Sho Ko Mi Soku Ho
Mu Gen Kai Nai Shi Mu I Shiki Kai
Mu Mu Myo Yaku Mu Mu Myo Jin
Nai Shi Mu Ro Shi Yaku Mo Ro Shi Jin
Mu Ku Shu Metsu Do
Mu Chi Yaku Mu Toku I Mu Sho Tok- Ko
Bo Dai Sat- Ta E Han-nya Ha Ra Mi Ta
Ko Shin-mu Kei Ge Mu Kei Ge Ko Mu U Ku Fu
On Ri Is-sai Ten Do Mu So Ku Gyo Ne Han
San Ze Sho Butsu E Han-nya Ha Ra Mi Ta
Ko Toku A Noku Ta Ra San-myaku Sam-bo Dai
Ko Chi Han-nya Ha Ra Mi Ta
Ze Dai Jin Shu Ze Dai Myo Shu
Ze Mu Jo Shu Ze Mu To To Shu
No Jo Is-sai Ku Shin Jitsu Fu Ko
Ko Setsu Han-nya Ha Ra Mi Ta Shu
Soku Setsu Shu Watsu
Gya Tei Gya Tei Ha Ra Gya Tei Hara So Gya Tei
Bo Ji Sowa Ka Han-nya Shin Gyo

Sho Sai Myo Kichijo Dharani

(The Dharani of Good Fortune That Averts Calamities)

No Mo San Man Da Moto Nan

(Veneration to all Buddhas)

Oha Ra Chi Koto Sha Sono Nan

(The incomparable Buddha-power that banishes suffering)

To Ji To En Gya Gya Gya Ki Gya Ki Un Nun

(Om! The Buddha of Reality, wisdom, Nirvana)

Shifu Ra Shifu Ra Hara Shifu Ra Hara Shifu Ra

(Light! Light! Great Light! Great Light!)

Chishu Sa Chishu Sa Shushi Ri Shushi Ri

(With no categories, this mysterious power)

Soha Ja Soha Ja Sen Chi Gya Shiri Ei Somo Ko

(saves all beings, suffering goes, happiness comes, Svaha)

First Sutra Service Dedication

Leader: *Buddha-nature pervades the whole universe,
Existing right here now,
With our reciting of the "Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra"
(or the "Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo")
and "Shosaimyo Kichijo Dharani,"
Let us unite with:*

All: The Ancient Seven Buddhas, Dai Osho,
Shakyamuni Buddha, Dai Osho,
Mahaprajapati, Dai Osho,
Bodhidharma, Dai Osho,
Tozan Ryokai, Dai Osho,
Matsuzan Ryonen, Dai Osho,
Dogen Kigen, Dai Osho,
Keizan Jokin, Dai Osho,
Mokufu Sonin, Dai Osho,
Daiun Sogaku, Dai Osho,
Hakuun Ryoko, Dai Osho,
Koun Zenshin, Dai Osho;
Robert Chotan Aitken, Dai Osho:

Leader: *Infinite realms of light and dark convey the Buddha Mind;
Birds, trees and stars and we ourselves come forth in perfect harmony;
We recite our gatha and our sutra for the many beings of the world;
In grateful thanks to all our many guides along the ancient way;
All founding teachers, past, present, future, Dai Osho;
Let true Dharma continue,
Sangha relations become complete;*

All: Buddhas throughout space and time,
All Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
The great Prajnaparamita.

(see Appendix, for biographies of the Zen Ancestors)

Torei Zenji: Bodhisattva's Vow

When I look deeply into the real form of the universe,
everything reveals the mysterious truth of the Tathagata.
This truth never fails:
in every moment and in every place
things can't help but shine with this light.

Realizing this, our ancestors gave reverent care
to animals, birds, and all beings.
Realizing this, we ourselves know
that our daily food, clothing and shelter
are the warm body and beating heart of the Buddha.
How can we be ungrateful to anyone or anything?
Even though someone may be a fool,
we can be compassionate.
If someone turns against us,
speaking ill of us and treating us bitterly,
it's best to bow down:
this is the Buddha appearing to us,
finding ways to free us from our own attachments--
the very ones that have made us suffer
again and again and again.
Now on each flash of thought
a lotus flower blooms,
and on each flower: a Buddha.
The light of the Tathagata
appears before us,
soaking into our feet.

May we share this mind with all beings
so that we and the world together
may grow in wisdom.

Emmei Jikku Kannon Gyo

(Ten Verse Kannon Sutra of Timeless Life)

Kan-ze-on

(Kanzeon!)

Na-mu Butsu

(I venerate the Buddha;)

Yo Butsu U In

(with the Buddha I have my source)

Yo Butsu U En

(with the Buddha I have affinity—)

Bup-po-so En

*(affinity with Buddha, Dharma,
Sangha;)*

Jo Raku Ga Jo

(constancy, ease, the self, and purity.)

Cho Nen Kan-ze-on

(Mornings my thought is Kanzeon;)

Bo Nen Kan-ze-on

(evenings my thought is Kanzeon;)

Nen Nen Ju Shin Ki

(thought after thought arises in the mind;)

Nen Nen Fu Ri Shin.

*(Thought after thought is not separate
from mind.)*

Second Sutra Service Dedication

*Leader: The Buddha and his teachers and his many sons and daughters
turn the Dharma wheel to show the wisdom of the stones and clouds;*

*Whenever we send forth these invocations they are
heard and subtly answered. We give thanks to:*

All: Rinzai Gigen, Dai Osho,
Hakuin Ekaku, Dai Osho,
Satsu, Dai Osho,
Torei Enji, Dai Osho,
Choro Nyogen, Dai Osho,
Hannya Gempo, Dai Osho,
Mitta Soen, Dai Osho,
Maurine Myoon Stuart, Dai Osho;

*Leader: ...and to our relatives and companions of the past who
rest in deepest samadhi,*

All: All Buddhas throughout space and time,
All Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
The great Prajnaparamita.

(see Appendix, for biographies of the Zen Ancestors)

Great Vows for All

All beings, one body, I vow to free them.

Greed, hatred and ignorance rise endlessly--I vow to abandon them.

Dharma gates are countless-- I vow to wake to them.

The Buddha Way is unsurpassed-- I vow to embody it fully.

(Repeat 3 times)

Hakuin Zenji: Song Of Zazen

All beings by nature are Buddha,
as ice by nature is water;
apart from water there is not ice,
apart from beings, no Buddha.

How sad that people ignore the near
and search for truth afar,
like someone in the midst of water
crying out in thirst,
like a child of a wealthy home
wandering among the poor.

Lost on dark paths of ignorance
we wander through the six worlds;
from dark path to dark path--
when shall we be freed from birth and death?

Oh, the zazen of the Mahayana
to this the highest praise:
Devotion, repentance, training,
the many paramitas,
all have their source in zazen.

Those who try zazen even once
wipe away beginningless crimes--
where are all the dark paths then?
The Pure Land itself is near.

Those who hear this truth even once
and listen with a grateful heart,
treasuring it, revering it,
gain blessings without end.

Much more, those who turn about,
and bear witness to self-nature—
self-nature that is no nature—
go far beyond mere doctrine.

Here effect and cause are the same
the Way is neither two nor three;
with form that is no form,
going and coming, we are never astray;
with thought that is no thought,
singing and dancing are the voice of the Law.

How boundless and free is the sky of samadhi,
how bright the full moon of wisdom:
truly, is anything missing now?
Nirvana is right here, before our eyes;
this very place is the Lotus Land,
this very body, the Buddha.

Short Sutra Service Dedication

*Leader: Infinite realms of light and dark convey the Buddha Mind;
Birds, trees and stars and we ourselves come forth in perfect harmony;
We recite the "Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra", our gatha and our
sutras for the many beings of the world;
In grateful thanks to all our many guides along the ancient way;
All founding teachers, past, present, future, Dai Osho;*

All: Buddhas throughout space and time,
 All Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
 The great Prajnaparamita.

Great Vows for All

All beings, one body, I vow to free them.

Greed, hatred and ignorance rise endlessly--I vow to abandon them.

Dharma gates are countless-- I vow to wake to them.

The Buddha Way is unsurpassed-- I vow to embody it fully.

(Repeat 3 times)

On Opening the Dharma

The Dharma, incomparably profound and minutely subtle,
is rarely encountered,
even in hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas;
we now can see it, listen to it, accept and hold it;
may we completely realize the Tathagata's true meaning.
(Repeat 3 times)

Shigu Seigan Mon

(Great Vows for All)

Shu Jo Mu Hen Sei Gan Do
Bonno Mu Jin Sei Gan Dan
Ho Mon Mu Ryo Sei Gan Gaku
Butsu Do Mu Jo Sei Gan Jo
(Repeat 3 times)

APPENDIX

OUR ZEN ANCESTORS

—Mary Frost-Pierson Spring, 2002

The dedication list was updated by Katie Egart and Sam Branson, Spring 2007. There are many sources now available to research women ancestors in Zen traditions.

FIRST SUTRA DEDICATION

The Ancient Seven Buddhas, Dai Osho Shakyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha, is not the first and only Buddha. The very earliest Hinayana texts list six others who came before him, and these seven are often referred to as the “seven mortal Buddhas” in the Mahayana texts. The accounts of first six – Vipashyin, Sikhin, Vishvabhu, Krakuchchanda, Kanakamuni, Kashyapa – do perhaps not represent actual historical figures, but even the most critical of scholars think that there is evidence for Kanakamuni and Krakuchchanda. If you see a painting of seven Buddhas, all in identical poses, and all golden, chances are you are seeing a depiction of The Ancient Seven Buddhas.

Shakyamuni Buddha, Dai Osho Born Siddhartha Gautama c. 563 bce, the “Buddha of our age” gained (among others) the titles “Sage of the Shakya clan,” Shakyamuni, and “Tathagata, the thus-gone, thus perfected one”.

Mahaprajapati, Dai Osho Shakyamuni’s aunt and foster mother. Indian Ancestor. We felt she is of utmost importance in that she led the demonstration that, with Ananda’s help, finally convinced Buddha Shakyamuni to consider women equal to men in terms of capacity for enlightenment and suitability for monastic life.

Bodhidharma, Dai Osho Revered as the teacher who brought the “face-to-face transmission” to China, Bodhidharma was the 28th patriarch after Shakyamuni Buddha in the Indian lineage, and the first Chinese patriarch of Ch’an (zen). There are several tales of his encounters with the famous Emperor Wu of Nanking; somewhat concerned at the thick-headedness of the Emperor, Bodhidharma traveled to the north of China, perhaps ending his days in the monastery of Shao-lin (c. 550 ce). He is often called “the barbarian from the West” and portrayed as a thick-set, heavy-browed man dressed for hard traveling, crossing a broad river on a reed.

Tozan Ryokai, Dai Osho Information about Tozan Ryokai, a Chinese Ch’an master (807-69 ce) can often be located by looking up his original Chinese name, Tung-shan Liang-chieh. He began training in the Vinaya school, but troubled by a line from the Heart Sutra, he left his first master, and became a pilgrim, traveling to visit a number of Ch’an masters. He reached enlightenment after years of struggling with his master’s injunction to “just say: ‘Just that, that!’” Revered as one of the co-founders of the Soto school, he formulated the five degrees of enlightenment.

Matsuzan Ryonen, Dai Osho (Summit Mountain) (9th century – Chan). Chinese Ancestor. She is the first woman dharma heir in the Chan tradition, a student of Ka-on Ta-yu. She is the first recorded woman with a chapter in Transmission of the Lamp, the

official Chan transmission line, and cited as a role model for her wisdom by Dogen in his essay Raihai Tokuzui “Paying Homage and Acquiring the Essence.” Also known as: Moshan Liao-Jan, Laoran, Massan Ryonen, Myoshin, Miao-Hsin. Moshan Liaoran.

Dogen Kigen, Dai Osho (just to keep us on our toes) Remember that Dogen Kigen is often referred to as Dogen Zenji or Eihei Dogen. (1200-1253 ce) Dogen Kigen brought Soto Zen to Japan, and although soon famous, he feared falling under the undue influence of imperial power and worldly matters in the royal city, and retired to a small hut in Echizen Province, which has now grown to the world-famous Eihei-ji Monastery. His most famous work is the Shobo-genzo, Treasure Chamber of the Eye of True Dharma. Dogen Kigen did not reject koan training, usually considered to be part of the Rinzai school, but put together a collection of 300 koans, with his own commentary.

Keizan Jokin, Dai Osho Keizan Jokin (1268-1325 ce) was the 4th patriarch of the Japanese Soto school of Zen. He founded Soji-ji Monastery and wrote the Denko-roku, which is a collection of transmission stories in the Soto school that preserves for us many fascinating stories about the 52 Patriarchs. He also wrote the Zazan-yojinki, “Precautions to be Taken in Zazen”.

Mokufu Sonin, Dai Osho (Ordered Silence, Enduring Ancestor) (14th century – Soto) Japanese Ancestor. One of several female students of Keizan Jokin. She was one of the first Japanese women to receive Soto Dharma transmission. Keizan and the nuns founded Enzuin convent, dedicated to the well-being of women forever, and meant to honor Keizan’s grandmother (who he believed was reincarnated as Sonin with whom he had a very deep spiritual connection). She was the first abbot there.

Daiun Sogaku, Dai Osho Harada Roshi’s full name was Daiun (Great Cloud) Sogaku Harada Roshi (1870-1961). Trained originally in the Soto tradition, he also became a monk at Shogen-ji, at the time a great RinzaI monastery. He thus was fitted to teach an integral zen, and more than anyone else in his time, revived the teachings of Dogen. Because he was so famous as a fiercely exacting teacher at his monastery Hosshin-ji, located on the Japan Sea, where the climate was equally fierce, with incessant rains, snowstorms, and typhoons, not everyone remembers that for 12 years he was a very rare phenomenon in the Japanese academic world – a brilliant professor during the academic year, and a Zen master during the summer vacation. Ultimately he found the academic life too narrow, and spent 40 years as abbot of Hossen-ji. Most of us have encountered his writings through his commentary on Shushogi, a codification of Dogen’s Shobogenzo.

Hakuun Ryoko, Dai Osho Yasutani Roshi’s full name was Hakuun (White Cloud) Ryoko Yasutani Roshi (1885-1973). As Aitken Roshi has so lovingly recounted, “our Rodaishi Sama, by his own great power, planted a little tree of international Zen, and then cultivated its field”. For nine years he traveled to the United States. He would first conduct sesshin in Hawaii, then travel on to California, and finish in New York. He kept this workload, answering every letter he received, even as he continued to publish many books. And as Yamada Koun notes, Yatsutani Roshi brought to fulfillment something that Daiun Sogaku had long advocated: when permission finally came for the separate independence of temples, he separated from the Soto sect, adopting a position of direct connection with Dogen Zenji.

Koun Zenshin, Dai Osho You may more often see Koun (Cultivating Cloud) Zenshin (1907-1989) referred to as Yamada Roshi. His high school room mate was the Soen Nakagawa who would one day be so instrumental in bringing Zen to the West, but he himself took a degree in German law and worked in insurance. While on assignment in Manchuria, he once again met Soen Nakagawa, who persuaded him to take up the practice of zazen. Throughout his life he labored to find teachers who could assist groups of lay practitioners, and although he continued to work “in the world” he became Yasutani’s successor, having the great kensho described in *The Three Pillars of Zen*. When Yasutani Roshi retired, the Diamond Sangha was left without a visiting teacher, and Yamada Roshi took his place. As Aitken Roshi’s teacher (and head teacher of the Diamond Sangha for 13 years) Yamada Roshi is largely responsible for the vitality of the Diamond Sangha today.

SECOND SUTRA DEDICATION

Rinzai Gigen, Dai Osho His proper Chinese name is Lin-chi I-hsuan. (d. 866 ce) During a time of great persecution of Buddhists, he founded the Rinzai school of Zen. There are many colorful stories about his skillful use of shouts and blows; however the single greatest innovation in Zen after Lin-chi was the koan or “public notice” of that which cannot be solved by reason.

Hakuin Ekaku, Dai Osho Hakuin Ekaku, 1689-1769 ce, is often referred to as the father of modern Rinzai Zen, because he reformed a school which had been gradually deteriorating since the 14th century. In his time the Rinzai school was famous for its intellectual pursuits; he re-emphasized the importance of zazen. He systematized koan training, and what may be the most famous koan in Zen – “what is the sound of one hand clapping” is from him. He was also a prodigious artist, excelling in calligraphy and sculpture, as well as painting (several of his self-portraits still exist). He also stressed the importance of work as part of “practice in action”.

Satsu, Dai Osho (18th century – Rinzai) Japanese Ancestor “Brilliant and iconoclastic” student of Hakuin, from age 16-23. She continually engaged him in dharma combat. After her enlightenment, Hakuin recommended she get married and have children, bringing Zen into everyday life practice, which she did. We felt she was important to us as we are a lay lineage, influenced by Hakuin’s encouragement of lay practice.

Torei Enji, Dai Osho We meet Torei Enji Zenji (1721-1792 ce) every Saturday during our sutra service as we recite his “Bodhisattva’s Vow” . He is among the most famous of Hakuin’s heirs, and there are numerous translations available of his famous “Discourse on the Inexhaustible Lamp”. He was by all accounts a very precise teacher and self-contained man, and his traditions at Ryutaku Monastery are still lovingly preserved by Eido Shimano Roshi, for every sesshin there still begins with *The Seven Regulations of the Monastery*.

Choro Nyogen, Dai Osho Choro Nyogen (1876-1958) is most usually referenced under the name Nyogen Senzaki Sensei. Choro means “morning dew” and Nyogen means “like a phantasm”. He himself commented many times on his pilgrimage as a nameless and homeless monk, remembering that he began life as an abandoned baby in Siberia, the son of a Japanese mother and a Russian father. A brilliant young student, he finished the Chinese Tripitaka by age 18, and became a monk. He loved his teacher, but came to reject

what he called “Cathedral Zen” with its rather worldly hierarchy of titles and authority. He loved his years in Japan as priest of a little temple where he was a “hands-on” director of its kindergarten. When he set up a Zen center in San Francisco, he called it a “mentorgarden”. Strout McCandless reports that he once said “I want to be an American Hotei, a happy Jap in the streets”. (Ironically, he was interred in a camp during WWII). Senzaki actively searched for and encouraged Japanese Zen masters willing to come to the United States, and as Aitken Roshi comments “the Diamond Sangha in Hawaii, the Zen Center of Los Angeles, the Zen Studies Society in New York, and the Rochester Zen Center – all can trace their lineage through the gentle train of karma that Senzaki began.

Hannya Gempo, Dai Osho Yamamoto Gempo Roshi (1866-1961) is often called the “twentieth-century Hakuin, yet his life story reads like something out of a myth. Left exposed as an infant by poverty-stricken parents, he grew to be the teacher of hundreds of monks, artisans, and prime ministers. Yet he never attended a day of school in his life (as a young man he worked as a woodsman) and was virtually an illiterate until middle age. At 19, blinded by eye disease, without money (or even shoes), he vowed to cure his blindness and to dedicate his life to mankind. He made the round of all 88 temples on Shikoku 6 times (an ordeal of years), and on the seventh round, collapsed at the gate of the only Zen temple on the circuit. The kindly abbot nursed him to health, and encouraged Gempo to adopt his own name (Yamamoto) and to undertake the study of Zen. Gempo Roshi regained part of his eyesight and became a modern master of shodo. He was one of the first Zen masters to travel throughout the world: to India, Africa, Europe, and the United States.

Mitta Soen, Dai Osho Nakagawa Soen Roshi (1908-1983) was a brilliant scholar of the poet Basho, and his love for the ancient bard/wandering monk not only led Nakagawa to the monastery, but was ultimately the source of his first personal connection with Robert Aitken. In 1952 Aitken had a fellowship to study haiku and Zen in Japan, but could not manage the difficult practice at Engakuji while studying at Tokyo University. Aitken enclosed a haiku with his letter of inquiry to Soen Roshi, and received an answering invitation via another haiku. Somewhat eccentric, perhaps quietly “humored” by other Zen masters of more conventional habits, Mitta Soen lived a life of ritualistic imperatives, a “body artist”. Robert Aitken has compared him to Black Elk, and called him the Balanchine of Zen, because of the way he would choreograph his students into ecstatic bowing exercises or elaborate kinhin through the garden. Eccentric or not, his teacher Gempo Roshi did see him installed as his successor at Ryutakuji, even though Mitta Soen was uncomfortable with the role of teacher. Aitken and other American Zen teachers hoped that Mitta Soen would settle in the United States, but in 1962 he referred his American students to Yasutani Hakuun.

Maurine Myoon Stuart, Dai Osho Most of us know something about Stuart Roshi thanks to the collection of her talks gathered by her student, Roko Sherry Chayat, published under the title *Subtle Sound* (Shambhala, 1996). Stuart Roshi, a student of Soen Nakagawa Roshi, lived most of her life in Massachusetts, where she served the Cambridge Buddhist Association as a Rinzai Zen Priest. She was a concert pianist, and also raised a family. She passed away in 1990 at the age of 68, after a long struggle with cancer. As Pat Hawk says, “[her] talks are simple, direct, and exactly to the point”.

Robert Baker Dairyu Chotan Gyoun Aitken (June 19, 1917—August 5, 2010) A lifetime resident of Hawai'i, Aitken Rōshi was a graduate of the University of Hawai'i with a BA degree in English literature and an MA degree in Japanese studies. In 1941, he was captured on Guam by invading Japanese forces, and interned in Japan for the duration of World War II. In the camp, he met the British scholar R.H. Blyth, who introduced him to Zen Buddhism. After the war, he practiced Zen with Senzaki Nyogen Sensei in Los Angeles, and traveled frequently to Japan to practice in monasteries and lay centers with Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi, Yasutani Haku'un Rōshi, and Yamada Kōun Rōshi. In 1974, he was given approval to teach by the Yamada Rōshi, Abbot of the Sanbo Kyodan in Kamakura, Japan, who gave him transmission as an independent master in 1985.

Aitken Rōshi was the author of more than ten books on Zen Buddhism, and co-author of a book-length Buddhist-Christian dialogue. In Hawai'i he was instrumental in founding the Koko An Zendo, the PĀlolo Zen Center, the Maui Zendo, and the Garden Island Sangha. A number of other centers in Europe, North and South America, and Australasia are part of the Diamond Sangha network.

Aitken Rōshi was co-founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and active in a number of peace, social justice, and ecological movements. His writing reflects his concern that Buddhists be engaged in social applications of their experience.

Aitken Rōshi had given full transmission as independent masters to Nelson Foster, Honolulu Diamond Sangha and Ring of Bone Zendo in Nevada City, California; John Tarrant, Pacific Zen Institute in Santa Rosa, California; Patrick Hawk, Zen Desert Sangha in Tucson, Arizona, and Mountain Cloud Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Joseph Bobrow, Harbor Sangha in San Francisco, California; Jack Duffy, Three Treasures Sangha in Seattle, Washington; Augusto Alcalde, Vimalakirti Sangha, in Cordoba, Argentina and Rolf Drosten, Wolken-und-Mond-Sangha (Clouds and Moon Sangha), in Leverkusen, Germany. He authorized Pia Gyger, One Ground Zendo in Luzern, Switzerland, as an affiliate teacher of the Diamond Sangha. He joined with John Tarrant in giving transmission as independent masters to Subhana Barzagli in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia; and to Ross Bolleter in Perth, Western Australia.

Kanzeon

the Bodhisattva of Compassion

"Kanzeon" or "Kannon" is the Japanese name for the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Her name is usually translated as "she who hears the cries of the world." However, it would be just as appropriate to translate "she" as "he;" "hears" as "sees;" and "cries" as "sounds."

Historically, Kanzeon Bodhisattva appears to have been an Asian-cultural reinterpretation of the original Indian Bodhisattva of Compassion, "Avalokitesvara." The latter was traditionally depicted in masculine form, and was viewed as the counterpoint to another masculine figure: Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

When Buddhism arrived in China, the Chinese people found it more appropriate to regard compassion as a relatively feminine quality. Accordingly, they began to portray their adaptation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, "Guanshiyin" or "Kwan Yin," as a female. Kanzeon underwent the same feminine transformation in Japan.

With her headdress and flowing robes, the traditional Kanzeon bears a significant resemblance to the Blessed Virgin of Christianity. Some scholars believe that that resemblance is not coincidental, and that Asian artists were inspired by early missionary paintings of Mary. It would not be surprising for the Eastern and Western personifications of mercy to have been so mutually identified.

Although Kanzeon is honored as a Bodhisattva, she is not worshiped as a distant deity. Rather, she is invoked as the embodiment of the compassion within each of us, whether we be male or female, and in whatever corner of the world we live.