



AN AUTUMN UPDATE

As the wind blows through the turning leaves and the nights bring freezing temperatures, the atmosphere in the zendo is crisp and sharp. After a two-week hiatus, DBZ is off to an energetic start.

Some fifty people attended our September samu weekend, including a group from Yoga Sole. Ten fall kessei residents have now gathered, and Golden Wind Sesshin is about to start. Registration is open for Harvest Sesshin, November 1 through 6. Participants are welcome to stay on through Saturday, November 8, when we will hold jukai for six students.

The summer was busy with Open Space guest groups, supported not only by our full-time resident but by participants in our new internship program. These enthusiastic and hard-working students from Colgate University, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Vassar College, University of California Los Angeles, and Syracuse University experienced a thorough immersion in Zen practice and daily monastic life, from gardening to cooking, from cleaning to participating in ceremonies.

For many months we have studied a wide array of sustainable energy options, with the help of several professionals in the field. When Dokuro Osho, abbot of Charles River Zen, brought ten of his students to the summer Introduction to Zen weekend, among them was a sustainability expert, who recommended that we get a feasibility study done on the heating needs of the monastery. We had been investigating the best replacement system for our aged cord-wood boilers, and knew we wanted to ensure environmental sustainability (thus ruling out propane, oil, electric, and coal options), but the more research we did, the more confusing it became. We narrowed our search down to a biomass boiler, but what size? What kind of fuel--pellets or chips? How would they be delivered and stored? How would we integrate the new equipment into the current spatial configuration?

These and many other detailed considerations have been answered by the feasibility study, and we now know the best boiler to suit our needs far into the future: an EvoWorld wood-chip (with pellet capabilities) biomass boiler. We also know the cost: approximately \$100,000 including the cost of the boiler, engineering and hydronic modifications, installation, woodshed adaptation for chip storage, and the chips themselves. We are exceedingly grateful that several leadership gifts, totaling \$87,000, have been made during this period of research, and we look forward to further donations during these coming months of preparation and implementation.

By next fall we will be using our new wood-chip boiler. It has an automatic feed (thus not requiring residents to load logs every four hours, night and day), and will provide a consistent and comfortable level of warmth. Meanwhile, we have made some short-term repairs to the existing cord-wood boilers, which can get us through until after Rohatsu Sesshin, and we have decided to close the monastery during the worst of the winter. David, our zomu, and Myoho, our head gardener, will stay on to monitor the buildings and clear the road, living in the gatehouse and O-an; the other year-round residents will take time to visit family and will practice at Shobo-ji and Hoen-ji until we open again in March.

(see next page)

Therefore, New Year's Eve celebrations will take place at Shobo-ji and Hoen-ji this year. I will lead Martin Luther King (January 16-18) and March-On (March 13-15) Sesshins at Shobo-ji.

In closing, I am happy to report that on the afternoon of January 18, Koge Louise Bayer will be ordained. She began sitting at Shobo-ji thirty-five years ago, has been a resident at DBZ for the past two years, and was elected to the Board of Directors of the Zen Studies Society last January. She will continue her training at DBZ, with stints at Shobo-ji and Hoen-ji.

Gassho,

Shinge