



### What is Missing?

In 1245 at Daibutsu-ji Temple, Dōgen preached to the assembly a talk now collected in Shōbōgenzō as O-saku-sendaba, which when translated means “A King’s Seeking of Saindhava.” In it, Dōgen quotes a story from the Sutra of the Great Demise (Mahaparinirvana-sutra):

*For example, it is like a king telling his retainers, “Bring saindhava!”* Saindhava is one word for four products. The first is salt, the second is pots, the third is water, and the fourth is horses. These four things have the same name, (yet) a wise retainer is able to know the meaning of this word. If the king requests saindhava when eating, the retainer at once serves salt. If the king requests saindhava after eating, when he wants to drink water, the retainer at once serves a pot. If the king requests saindhava when he wants to go out, the retainer at once serves a horse. A wise retainer like this is able to understand

in four ways a great king’s secret talk.

The translators of the version I am using go further and identify “saindhava” as a Sanskrit word meaning not just four things, but “products of the Indus basin.” So what IS saindhava? It is “something.” Something needed at that precise moment in that precise situation. When the king requests something while eating, his alert retainer perceives what is missing and that is what he brings. It’s more than the simple fact that the king needs something and the retainer from habit knows what it is, though that may be the case. Actually, both the king and his retainer are seeking what’s missing from that moment, much as children are encouraged to draw in the missing bits of those pictures that appear in the comics section of the morning newspaper.

We sometimes say, “What we need to complete the picture is...” Likewise, when

someone asks us what we need, we say, “I don’t know, but something...” This is our way of expressing our search for what will make an action or an event whole and complete. Dōgen says of this search for saindhava, for the missing element: “We can guess that those who have experienced the same state as the World-honored One have made saindhava into their own practice.”

We all have the potential for finding the missing element, for we all have an innate desire to complete things, to bring them into their appropriate balance. This isn’t something we need to learn intellectually, nor to study hard to understand. It’s an intuitive seeking for what makes a visual construct, a relationship or an activity right, just as a cook tastes a dish to see if it needs more seasoning. How the cook knows whether seasoning is needed and, if so, what to use, is partly based on

experience, but also on a simple sense of knowing when something tastes right.

However, although we are innately endowed with the ability to find saindhava, both for ourselves and for others, it takes being awake, alert and observant to exercise this ability. I believe that it was Shakyamuni’s extraordinary alertness, his being fully in tune with his surroundings, that enabled him to awake that morning so many thousands of years ago to the fact that he was the saindhava being sought by the universe. He and the universe found completion together. This is why Dōgen says that those who have experienced the same state as the World-honored one have made saindhava into their own practice.

But often we are too busy or too self-absorbed to see what’s needed. A long time ago, during my years managing professional theatre companies, I was invited

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to give a talk on the job of managing director to a group of acting students at a local university. I've a feeling that the young would-be stars were less than impressed, but the professor was delighted. After the class he and I left the room together as he enthused about my presentation. "Why," he burred as we stepped into the elevator, "I don't think they had any idea what a managing director does!" Then he noticed that we weren't moving. "Oh, dear, the elevator has broken down! Should we use the phone to call the emergency number?" I said, "This is what a

managing director does," leaned over and pushed the button for the first floor.

On other occasions we may be seeking completion, but can't locate it because we are viewing the situation from the wrong angle. When this happens, another person offers us *saindhava* when they jolt us into the proper perspective. Here's a story about two of my favorite Ch'an masters, Joshu and Nansen:

Once Joshu was in charge of keeping the fires at the monastery. One day, while everyone was out tending the garden, Joshu went inside the monks' hall

and shouted, "Help, fire! Help, fire!" Everyone rushed back to the monks' hall, but Joshu had closed and barred the door from the inside. No one knew what to do. Finally Nansen took the key from its hook and tossed it through the window. (Temple doors lock from the outside.)

Talk about *saindhava*! Nansen is saying, "For heaven's sake, dolt, you've barred the door against your own escape! But if you think you need a key, here it is!" Joshu of course came out. Sometimes in our lives, too, we need the jolt of a key thrown to us to

remind us that we've locked ourselves in.

To make *saindhava* into our own practice is to be ever alert to what's needed right here, right now, the "something" that will complete the picture or fulfill the moment.

"This soup needs something..."

"Here, add a dash of pepper."

-Tonen O'Connor

**Note:** Dōgen quotes from *Shobogenzo*, Book Four, translated by Nishijima and Cross

Joshu story adapted from *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu*, translated by James Green



*Leaves have fallen  
in this village  
at the foot of Mount Ogura  
and I can see the moon  
shining in the tops of the trees.*

-Saigyō (1118 -1190)

(trans. by Burton Watson in  
*Poems of a Mountain Home*,  
Columbia University Press, 1991)



## Dates to Remember

### December 5, 6 and 7

Rohatsu Sesshin  
in honor of Buddha's  
Enlightenment

Full days of zazen  
on Friday and Saturday,  
practice ends at 4:40  
p.m. on Sunday. Dharma  
talk Saturday morning.  
During services and at  
the end of each day  
we will offer chants  
expressing the nature  
of the Awakening that  
the Buddha has passed  
on to us.

Please join us for any  
portion of these days.

### January 17 and 18

Regular two-day sitting

### February 21 and 22

Shohaku Okumura,  
director of Sanshin Zen  
Community as well as  
the Soto Zen Buddhist  
International Center, and  
a remarkable teacher, will  
join us for this two-day  
sitting. He will give  
Dharma Talks on each  
day. For information  
on accommodations  
and fees for out of  
town attendance, please  
contact Tonen O'Connor.

## News Notes

From October 14-19, Tonen was in Los Angeles to participate in the Memorial Jukai-e ceremonies surrounding the 80th anniversary of the founding of Zenshuji, the first Soto Zen temple in the United States. It gave her the opportunity to renew friendships with many Japanese and American friends. Working backstage in the chiden-ryo was a wonderful way to participate in the hard work that goes into making ceremonies run smoothly. She also had the pleasant experience of serving with Toshu Neatrou as attendants to Tozen Akiyama as he officiated at a morning ceremony.

Special thanks are due to the many sangha members who kept the Zen Center running during her absence.

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This has been a busy period in other ways. Tonen has taught classes on Buddhism at University High School, PiusXI High School (two

sections), Sacred Heart College of Theology, and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh as well as participating in interfaith activities at a Unity Day in an inner-city park, at St. Joseph's Hospital, sponsored by Covenant Health Care, and a panel at UW Oshkosh on the Earth Charter. She also made presentations on Buddhism at the San Camillo Retirement Community and Pilgrim United Church of Christ. The subcommittee on which she serves for the Department of Corrections Religious Practices Advisory Committee met twice to work on suggested revisions to the Internal Management Procedures document governing religious practice, and these revisions were presented to the full committee at a meeting at Fox Lake Correctional Institution.

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We're pleased to note that the *Jizos for Peace Project* created by Jan Chozen Bays of Great Vow Monastery in Oregon has been officially approved within the Department of Corrections and as of this date six institutions are participating.

## Lay ordination

On September 27, Colette Brown received the precepts at the MZC, and was given the name of Tokatsu, which means "cave of life or activity." On November 17, Derek Kramer received the precepts at Green Bay Correctional Institution and received the name of Tojū, which means "cave of residence, a place in which to carry out one's life". Our congratulations to them both.



Tonen O'Connor and Colette Brown

## Milwaukee Zen Center – Schedule

### November

- 5 Introduction to Zen
- 15 & 16 Two-day sitting
- 27 Closed for Thanksgiving

### December

- 3 Introduction to Zen
- 5, 6 & 7 Rohatsu Sesshin
- 25 Closed for Christmas
- 31 Party following evening zazen

### January

- 1 Closed New Year's Day
- 7 Introduction to Zen
- 17 & 18 Two-day sitting

To see the entire 2003 Schedule, visit our web site at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

