

Friends of Robert Aitken

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"Dropping off body and mind" means dropping off the perennial grind: "How'm I doing?" How was I doing?" How will I be doing?" When that old tedium drops away, you are completely transparent. You mirror the Master as you sit up in dokusan. You echo the helicopter as it flies overhead. When a friend appears, there is a friend. When a little dog appears, there is a little dog. Thus all the ancients explained. - Robert Aitken Rōshi

February, 2009

Dear Friend,

In October 2007 we launched the Dana for Aitken Roshi campaign and you responded with great enthusiasm. With your dana, the depletion of Roshi's financial resources has slowed and he feels very much supported by your generosity. Simply put, your annual pledges and one-time donations have made it possible for Aitken Rōshi to continue to live at the Palolo Zen Center and have contributed significantly to his well being. For this we are very grateful. The Friends of Robert Aitken is committed to continuing this fundraising appeal about once a year for as long as Roshi is with us. If you have not given so far, please consider contributing this year.

Roshi is very happy to be "home" at the Palolo Zen Center and his health has been generally much more stable. In addition to his regular participation in the Sunday zazen program and other sangha activities, Roshi and the sangha recently celebrated the publication of his latest book, *Miniatures of a Zen Master*, with a reading and book-signing party. Roshi also offered a teisho on the occasion of his 91st birthday; the teisho was published in the Oct.-Dec. 2008 issue of our Honolulu Diamond Sangha newsletter. We would be happy to send a copy to you – just let us know.

As we wrote in the June 2008 update letter, Roshi's stable condition at Palolo Zen Center has allowed a reduction in caregiver hours without compromising his health. We bade a fond aloha to his long-time assistant and care coordinator, Carolyn Glass, who moved away from Hawaii in August. His care management and secretarial needs continue to be met with existing staff and a new part-time secretarial assistant. As a result of these changes, Roshi's monthly expenses are currently in the range of \$10,000, which is considerably less than last year. If his health requires, the more expensive 24-hour care will be resumed. Thus, even though Roshi continues to have fairly substantial assets and slightly reduced expenses, our goal remains the same: to supplement Roshi's assets so that he is able to live out his days at Palolo without completely depleting them before the end of his life.

Looking ahead, we plan to celebrate Roshi's 92nd birthday (which falls on June 19th) at an open event on Sunday, June 21, 2009. The following month, on Sunday, July 12, 2009, we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Diamond Sangha in 1959 by Rōshi and his wife Anne Hopkins Aitken. You are cordially invited to these joyous celebrations of Aitken Roshi's life and work. Your continued support of Aitken Roshi in the form of an annual pledge or one-time gift will allow us to continue subsidizing the care that has been so beneficial to Roshi. Please use the enclosed pledge form or our website, www.AitkenRoshi.org, to make your pledge and contribution.

For additional information about the Friends of Robert Aitken and its Dana for Aitken Roshi project, please read the updated "Questions and Answers" on the back of this letter. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact us at the telephone number or e-mail address listed above.

Over the years, each of us, along with countless other beings, has benefited from Roshi's life and teaching. Your continued generosity at this time will be deeply appreciated.

On behalf of the Friends of Robert Aitken,



Doug Codiga



Gillian Coote



Marian Morgan