



# Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

In late December we learned that Genki Roshi, our retired founding abbot and his wife were in a car accident. Their car was totaled, but neither was badly hurt.



Genki Roshi New Year's Eve

Genki Roshi spent some time in hospital; however, they seemed in good spirits and had good energy when I visited them the last weekend of the year to deliver a new (used) car to them purchased by the temple and scoped out by Shodo's sharp eye and good efforts. Since then Genki Roshi has been back in hospital twice with complications from the crash: fluid in his lungs and a new diagnosis of congestive heart failure. Genki Roshi's health has gone through some wild swings these last few years, but he has always bounced back; however, at this point, I'm not sure his body will make it to his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday February 21<sup>st</sup>. He is currently in a rehab facility, but may be transfer into hospice soon. As necessary, our weekly email bulletins will keep the Sangha up to date. Please send supportive *Nen* (primal thought energy) his way.

Today when I walked the dogs in Interlaken Park on Capitol Hill it was nearly 50° and there was sunshine! The freezing fog we had for several weeks a bit ago was draining. I never lose faith that the sun is always there, but it is good to have confirmation once in awhile. As I reported in the last issue, I made a trip to Poland in early November to do a five-day Bearing Witness retreat at Auschwitz. If you have already heard me speak about this you know the retreat really moved me. One of the gifts I received was a new appreciation of The Way of Council. Already I've twice invited Chobo-Ji participants to use Council as a means to dialogue and learn from each other. The four intentions of Council are to "speak from the heart," "listen from the heart," "speak spontaneously" and "speak leanly." We used these intentions to process together the tragedy at Newtown, CT and again in a Dharma Dialogue period about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. You can read more about my experience and insights from Auschwitz later in this issue.

We had a wonderful Rohatsu Sesshin at Camp Indianola the first week of December. It was a little on the small



side, but a very powerful gathering. We are working steadily to find the method that will allow us to continue to eat our meals in the traditional manner without passing colds around. So far, all we can say for the innovations is "not yet," but we will continue to experiment and we have some new ideas ready for Spring Sesshin. Steve Ganko Hanson was again our Dai Tenzo (Chief Cook) and along with his principal assistant Rick Muken Proctor served delicious offerings. Scott Ishin Stalnack was the Shika (host/manager) who masterfully rotated everyone through our paces. John Daikan Green kept us marching straight on as our Jikijitsu (time keeper). Peter Shinke Ilgenfritz did his first Rohatsu sesshin as Densu (chant leader) and kept the drumbeat as well as the altar flowers fresh and lively. Rev. Daitetsu Hull and Taag Doshin Ebert served as Jisha (tea servers) and provided us with just the right refreshments throughout the day. Tom Shodo DeGroot served as my Inji (attendant) allowing me to fulfill my role smoothly. Two members did Jukai (taking precepts and receiving Dharma names) on December 8<sup>th</sup>; more about this later.

On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, we had our first Toya celebration (winter solstice party to break all rules) in some years. When we moved Rohatsu a few years ago to early January to accommodate those who wanted to attend Dai Bosatsu Rohatsu, we ceased having our annual solstice celebration. Now that we have returned our Rohatsu to its proper place, I hope that Toya again becomes an annual event. At this year's celebration we had some new talent offerings as well as a reprise of some Chobo-Ji's favorite skits from past years.

Our annual New Year's Day ceremony and celebratory potluck was once again blessed with sunshine, sangha warmth, great eats and joyous spirit. In the sun we could all appreciate the wonderful restoration work that has been done on our building thanks to the great efforts and contribution of extra time

*Continued on next page...*

and goods of our contractor, Larry Palmer, and his excellent crew. At the ceremony, we chanted the heart sutra twelve times using the ancient symbols and once in English and then we rang the *kansho* (big outdoor bell) 108 times to help dispel our delusions and start the year fresh.

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, we heard a wonderful talk by Rev. Kojun Hull, wife of Daitetsu and Dharma Heir of Chosen Bays from Great



Vow Monastery in Oregon. She centered her remarks on Zen Master Dogen's instructions for zazen. We had a huge crowd for her visit, and a lively Dharma Dialogue followed her remarks. Chobo-Ji plans to have quarterly visits from other teachers and we are also planning to hear from senior members of our own Sangha from time to time. We all have true insights and it will be grand to glean from other Followers of the Way.

I spent the last two days in Wenatchee doing a mini-sesshin on Saturday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> for Chobo-Ji members and friends east of the Cascades, hosted by the Stone Blossom Sangha. I was also the celebrant for a Buddhist wedding that same day outside of Leavenworth. On Sunday, I spoke to Cascade Unitarian Universalist Fellowship about engaged Buddhism at Auschwitz in the morning and about Layers of Awareness at the main service. I am so grateful to the efforts of Todd Daiko Petit and Sharon Meho Petit for their hospitality and support.

Looking further ahead: I'll be visiting the Victoria Zen Center and Rev. Eshu Martin and his family the weekend of Feb. 23-24<sup>th</sup>, the Spring Practice Intensive starts March

10<sup>th</sup>, I'll be in San Diego for a spring sesshin there the weekend of March 16-17, and back in Seattle for our quarterly weeklong Spring Sesshin beginning March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our **Annual Meeting** will be held after the mini-sesshin on **April 14<sup>th</sup>**. Please enjoy the other offerings contained within these pages and may this New Year bring great depth and joy to everyone's practice.

With gassho,

Genjo

## Thoughts on Practice

by Genko Ni-Osho

Sometimes, when we find our practice is flagging, we can benefit greatly from revisiting our original intention for beginning practice. In our Rinzai Zen tradition our intention going forward is well and nobly expressed in the Four Great Vows we chant regularly. But each of us came to this practice for different reasons – it might have been a tragic experience in our lives, curiosity or a sense we “should” learn to meditate, or just a vague sense that something is missing, not quite right. Whatever the initial reason for being drawn here, we can strengthen our intention through consideration of the Four Reminders.

*The first reminder is the preciousness of human birth*

Being born as a human is said to be the most auspicious condition for attaining liberation from suffering, because humans experience an ideal mixture of pleasure and pain – just enough pain to cause us to seek relief, but not so much that we are reduced to mere survival. Because we are born into human form, we take it for granted, and do not see it for what it is – an extraordinary and fleeting blessing.

One traditional image is that of a solitary turtle in the vast ocean, coming to the surface for air. On the surface of the ocean a small gold ring is floating, and the likelihood of human birth is said to be the same as that solitary turtle's head emerging through that single gold ring. Our western cultural conditioning does not tend toward

allowing us to feel the full weight and value of this treasure. Instead our time and attention is spent on trying to shape our life circumstances to our own liking.

This reminder is not intended to make us feel bad about wasting time. Everything arises through causes and conditions, and to be born in human form traditionally indicates we have spent countless lives accumulating merit through our actions in order to have this opportunity. Even if we struggle with the idea of rebirth and having many lifetimes, we can appreciate that as humans we all have this capacity to wake up. At the same time that contemplation of this reminder should spur us not to waste time, it should give us joy and confidence that we have the innate ability to free ourselves, and therefore all beings, from suffering.

*The second reminder is the reality of death and impermanence*

As rare as it is to be born in human form, we must recognize that this life is fragile and fleeting. There are many more causes of death than of life. Death is inevitable, and the favorable conditions that allow us to practice may change at any time. We all know this, but the test is to live from that place of knowing. Everything is in a precarious situation. When we fully appreciate this we can let go of the anxiety that stems from trying to shape our lives otherwise. At the same time, we recognize that each moment may be our last. There is no time but the present to practice.

*The third reminder is karma and its results*

We tend to think of karma in a vague sort of way as the law of cause and effect. We all know that our actions have consequences. But contemplating this reminder in depth can really help shape and focus our practice. Padmasambhava, the great 8<sup>th</sup> Century Tibetan teacher, said: Though my view is as vast as the sky, my attention to the law of karma is as fine as a grain of barley flour.

Karma actually means volitional or intentional action. The situation we find ourselves in at any given moment is the fruit of past karma and limits our choice of action to some degree. However, we have



the ability to know our motivation, and to choose how or whether to act based on that understanding. Our motivation is critical – it determines much of the karmic weight of what we do. Reflecting on this, we realize that the onus really is on us to pay attention to the motivation for our actions and speech.

By falling back into habitual behaviors without clarifying our motivation, we waste priceless opportunities to lighten our karmic burden. This clarification must be done with an attitude of kindness and curiosity. With this quality to our inquiry we are more likely to make an honest assessment of our motivation. Initially it is difficult to build the habit of pausing as a feeling or thought arises in order to measure our response, but it is well worth this initial effort as we become more skillful over time.

But taking karma seriously does make our lives simpler in a couple of respects. We are no longer tempted to “spin” the life we live to make it look more impressive to others, since karma will unfold regardless. Likewise we are much less tempted to critique or correct others behavior, or get hooked on their “getting away” with something, since once again the karmic fruits of their actions will take care of it.

*The fourth reminder is the shortcomings of samsara*

Reflecting on the shortcomings of samsara, we come face to face with our cultural desire for acquisition and personal desire for comfort. We are so fortunate in this day and place to have access to many wonderful things and experiences, and it can be tempting to justify some accumulation of these. On a conventional level, we need to be able to discern the difference between what we need in order to support the functioning of this human form, and what we want for temporary pleasure. Much of what we have is this extra, added stuff. In contemplating the shortcomings of samsara, we are acknowledging how easy it is to become caught on this stuff, and to be distracted from the depths of practice by it.

This does not mean we cannot enjoy or appreciate a cup of tea or a beautiful sunset, but that we fully accept the transience of these things and do not attach to them. When we attach to these temporary

pleasures, we also become caught by our less pleasant experiences, tangled in our opinions of them. When we fully recognize that each experience – pleasant and unpleasant – is like a dream and don’t cling to any of them, when one dream subsides and before the next arises, we can directly experience the open, clear, spacious luminosity through which they pass.

## Board Report

The Chobo-Ji Board of Directors is settling into a pattern of meeting once each quarter and getting much of the work done in between meetings by task groups made up of Board and other Sangha members. This past quarter:

- We launched Chobo-Ji’s new 21<sup>st</sup> Century, simple and clean website. Pete Zengan Comerford, one of our newer Sangha members who just did Jukai at Rohatsu, was particularly instrumental in the site design. Pete has since left to go back to college on the East Coast and we are looking for a Web master who will attend to the site on an ongoing basis.
- The Program and Practice Group (Genko Ni-Osho, Daiki Cadman, Tobin Fudo Youngs and Rick Muken Proctor and Genjo Osho) has continued to shepherd new and exciting offerings. These offerings include a continuation of the newly revamped Introduction to Zen series; they have brought back traditions such as Toya; they sponsored other social events, such as quarterly potlucks and various Dharma dialogues, including the most recent and very popular talk by Rev. Kojun Hull from Great Vow Monastery. They also designed and published that great newly designed weekly email newssheet that we all receive. Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard and Genko Ni-Osho also conducted a survey of women Sangha members

seeking to understand ways in which we can make ChoBo-Ji more attentive to our women members (report in this issue).

- The By Laws task group (Carolyn Josen Stevens, Emily HoU Ross and Genko Ni-Osho) has revised the by-laws to meet the current and prospective needs of the Sangha. At its January meeting, the Board approved these changes and they will be communicated with the Sangha at the April Annual meeting.
- The Finance Committee (Carolyn Josen Stevens and John Daikan Green) has been tracking expenses and income in ways more suited to our increased assets and we will be approving a budget at Annual Meeting.
- Our Building Group (Emily HoU Ross, Genjo Osho, Tom Shodo DeGroot, Rick Muken Proctor) has overseen the upgrades and restoration to the Building made possible by a generous donation received last summer, and the craftsmanship, dedication and generous contributions of our restoration contractor Larry Palmer and his crew. At its January meeting, the Board approved the building of a new fence along the South property line.
- As a Board, we’ve also followed our retired abbot, Genki Roshi’s and his wife Joshin’s needs in Montana and have done our best to be of help.

**Our Annual Meeting** will be on **April 14**, after Mini-Sesshin. Although we welcome Sangha members to all Board meetings, **we especially ask that as many Sangha members as possible attend the Annual Meeting to elect new Board members.**

With gassho,

~ *Seishun*

## Women's Survey

In mid-December, a brief survey was sent to all of the women on Chobo-Ji's email list. Out of 39 sent, 13 responded. Many thanks to all who gave time and thought to help Chobo-Ji meet the needs of its members.

We are pleased to note that many of the changes recently been made in Chobo-Ji's schedule are seen as positive by the women who responded. The **introductory series** and follow-up in particular, are seen as a way to meet both new and old members, learn about Rinzai style, and feel welcomed into the group. The increased offerings of all kinds - **workshops, informal dokusan, lounge, extra talks by Genko and Genjo, sangha get-togethers** – are a “step in the right direction.”

Working from specific suggestions for how we can improve our offerings, the **Program and Practice Group** has made some changes to the sesshin schedule and procedures. We are implementing an **informal Friday evening** prior to start of sesshin, with an “informal-with-bowls meal” and an opportunity for everyone to introduce themselves prior to the formal start of sesshin. We are planning to **re-emphasize silence during sesshin**, especially to those who are long-timers, in order to prevent anyone from feeling “left out” of these conversations. At the same time, we are looking at having at least one time **during sesshin** when the participants can speak to each other, perhaps a **guided discussion** part-way through, so we are not limited to dokusan or work-related talk. We will continue to have a **physical practice** - either qi gong or yoga - as well.

We are also initiating a quarterly **series of senior student talks** about their practice; Dee Seishun Endelman, a longtime member and regular attendee, will give the first one in early April.

One particular idea we are hoping to implement soon is that of **Dharma buddies**. These would be existing members of Chobo-Ji who could partner with newer members, both men and women, and provide assistance or answer questions when needed.

In terms of additional changes we could make, we are looking for **more opportunities for women to connect with other women**: talk, socialize, interact, both after zazen & provide additional opportunities with potlucks, and weekend retreats or workshops. We are open to any suggestions you may have.

The complete survey results have been sent to all Chobo-Ji women who received the initial survey. If you did not have the opportunity to respond or have further thoughts to add, feel free to contact either Genko ([genkokb@gmail.com](mailto:genkokb@gmail.com)) or Choko ([makingtheconnection@gmail.com](mailto:makingtheconnection@gmail.com)).

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## Just the “Fax” Man

by Larry Palmer

*What paltry gifts storytellers possess are eviscerated by the power of raw truth. Disclaimer recorded, the following incident took place near my home in South Seattle on Saturday morning, the 27th of Nov. 2012.*

For the past several months I have been sitting at 5:30am most mornings in formal Zen fashion at the Rinzai Chobo-Ji Temple on South Horton Street. The Rinzai style of Zen practice—who trace their lineage back through tens of generations to the Buddha himself – may be characterized as somewhat formal, a discipline of sharp focus, revived by Hakuin in the 1700's and adopted by Samurai warriors seeking martial advantage in matters of life and death. The blade of human focus – according to Zen principle—must be sharp as a Kasumi knife.

Rinzai Zen is marked by the emphasis it places on kensho (“seeing one's true nature”) as the gateway to authentic Buddhist practice. Seeing one's true nature for the “organizationally challenged” such as myself—most comfortable staring at passing clouds or flinging fake flies at fish – demands discipline, patience, and attention to detail. Good luck to all that. I'm 64, cast in the plaster dust of habit.

God, hopefully, is not through with me just yet.

Moreover I am a general contractor and have been restoring the exterior of the Zendo for months... After Saturday's morning sesshin I zipped off to cash a large check. My entire payroll— a cashed check from the Chobo-Ji Zendo in the amount of \$8321.53—is soon stuffed deep into my jeans pocket in a packet of bills, along with a fistful of one-dollar bills plucked from my office slush fund.

The cell phone rings. I forgot to mail in my insurance premium to Wheat and Associates. An e-mail requiring a signature and “immediate return by fax” the only thing that stands between company business and red tape abyss.

Focus.

I race back to the house, recover the e-mail and set off in search of a fax service. There is a check-cashing service, Payday Loans, just down the street. I walk in the door and stand in line. Soon enough the world's slowest fax machine is spitting out original documents onto the concrete floor. The gathering rain outside is pelting my projects—unfinished paint jobs sit under tarps. Nevertheless I am not anxious, but ebullient, expansive – rocked in the cradle of the morning sit.

Let me explain. I have become serious about formal Rinzai meditation. Practice is opening portholes in the dark tower of “self.” My meditations fall into roughly 3 categories – some days touching the hem of nirvana; other times a cross between nirvana and taking out the garbage. Some sessions I just empty the trashcan of colliding thoughts and leave supposition to the moon and stars.

That particular Saturday morning is a nirvana experience. I float above samsara – the human predilection to endlessly revisit circular patterns of conclusion in expectation of different outcomes.

Meditation is becoming my way out of the labyrinth of inner mirrors.

I am on a roll. Life is good, everything better than normal when, suddenly comes a screech outside; a dilapidated 1971 Chevy

fishtails to a halt. Out of the car bursts a huge man, perhaps half Indian, half black, contorted with rage who slams through glass doors bellowing expletives, his beet-red face sallow and scarred.

A chill of cognition passes through me. I had seen this man before, in a bit part, in Richard Attenborough's movie Gandhi. The man in the movie bursts in on Gandhi who hovers near death, having vowed to fast until the relocation war between Muslim and Hindu stop. The man in the movie is in mental hell, having just swung a Hindu child by his heels, dashing his brains out against a brick wall.

There were differences between this man before me and the man in the movie. In the movie Gandhi offers the Muslim a way out of hell, instructing him to find an orphaned boy and raise the child as his own.

This is not a movie. I am not Gandhi. The man before me is in hell, and, judging by the bulge in his army jacket he is going to take some of us with him on his journey.

Elbowing an elderly Chinese woman aside, he tries to poke his huge head through a hole in the bulletproof Plexiglas, screaming about some check card not going through, now he has no money, **where is his frigging money?!! How can he pay his rent, who are the #@\*\*\*bastards responsible?** An obese black woman backs away from the teller window, trying to make soothing sounds with her lips. Her hands shake. The stooped Chinese woman limps backward, knocking over a trashcan.

Everyone jumps.

The wild man pulls his head out of the teller's booth window and begins to twirl around the lobby aimlessly, consumed, possessed. Something bad is going to happen. There is no escape. Time is up. Months back two gang-bangers across the street at Maya's restaurant, burst out of the bar pumping 3 or 4 slugs into each other

before both slumped dead in pools of blood. I am the only white man in the lobby with an Infiniti FX 45 parked outside.

Is this my time come round at last?

I am strangely calm, but what kind of calm exactly, the Zen kind, the "be here now" variety? That is fine and good, I was here in this now alright, but who wants to die on a Saturday morning in a slim shady check-cashing joint that preys on impoverished souls short on dough?

Is there a play here— some way out of hell? I am 20 feet down the counter with no chance to rush the man — unarmed and slow afoot I figure to be dead halfway home, but, counter-intuitively, as in walking meditation I crab sideways down the counter toward him inch by inch, slitting the cash envelope in my pocket with a fingernail as I go, crumpling the first bill into a wad in my fist, slipping my hand onto the countertop, the bill tucked underneath.



"I am not Gandhi"

I'd seen men like this before when I was a bouncer in a topless bar in Alaska, drunks in rages pistol-whipping patrons on the way to nowhere, and drug addled street punks in Seattle terrorizing tourists, even a thief on a back street in Istanbul with blood in his eye and a knife in his shoe kit. This man was different. He wasn't drunk or drugged. He was focused; the world had done him dirty. He wanted justice; revenge, someone—anyone's—pound of flesh.

Ten feet away the man sees the threat and lunges toward me, plunges his hand into his overcoat. **"You gonna do what old man, you a heero!?"** he shrieks.

The rest happens in slow motion. The moment of truth arrives. I look him eyeball to eyeball, raise hands above my head, exposing the bill, wondering, what denomination is the bill now lying on the countertop, a C note or a dollar bill? The odds were roughly 50-50.

Lives seemingly depend on it.

We both look down as one to see the leering countenance of dear old Ben grinning up at us like a pickerel.

What follows is the longest silence in recent memory.

**"You playing me, man?"** he finally says, but the voice is different, more croak than roar. He shuffles to the counter, picks up the c-note, examines it like an alien thing. I watch the shoulders slump, his eyes cast downward. He stares hard at something none of us can see. After a while he looks up. Pools of wet gather in the corners of hollow eyes. He turns slowly on his heel, makes his way back to the teller to start a rant again, but something is broken inside, some beaker of hope released, searing him down deep. He turns to me, stutters something unintelligible, then gathers himself.

**"Musta come from God"** he announces flatly, and stumbles outside. Two thin little arms poke out of the back window of the old Chevy, waving at Dad.

Then I remember the wad of money in my jeans. I wasn't fast enough, the man follows me to my car...

I turn around. "Look" he says, "man ain't got money ain't no man; I got kids you see, a wife and no damn gas money, no food, that is embarrassing, and... you didn't have to do... this... but I sincerely thank you sir" Tears spill down his face.

I open the door to my fancy car. It was then my hands begin to tremble.

**"You a man of god?"** he asks.

I fumble around in my pocket for the keys.

It all flushes up — 5 marriages gone before the age of 35, the drugs and the alcohol, the worst day of a life trying to navigate a broke down VW bus with shattered windshield and no brakes down I-5 with 43 bucks in my pocket to have one night with a daughter mercifully taken from her deadbeat father.

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“Maybe that could be true,” I said. “I’ve just, well... I’ve been there, you know, where you are. I know how it feels” but a lump in my throat makes me choke on a smile, and I ease unsteadily out into blurry traffic sliding by like grease down Rainier Avenue to make my way home in the driving rain.

## Lessons Gleaned from Bearing Witness

by Genjo Osho

I did my first Bearing Witness Retreat with Bernie Glassman Roshi this last November at Auschwitz. The inspiration for this trip came out of my visit with Joan Halifax at the Upaya Zen Center in New Mexico last August. The first time I met Bernie was at Egyoku Wendy Nakao’s ordination under the late Taizan Maezumi, founder of ZCLA, who was good friends with our founding Abbot, Genki Takabayashi Roshi. Wendy trained for some time with me under Genki Roshi in Seattle, before she left for ZCLA. Joan has been instrumental in helping me to sort through some lingering issues and attachments that remain in my troubled relationship to the Zen Studies Society (ZSS). Bernie was also at Upaya when I was there, and meeting him again gave me hope that the second generation could learn from their own failings and their teacher’s mistakes and bring something new and positive to the world from the heart of Zen.

In some ways my time in Poland visiting Auschwitz/Birkenau was exactly what I expected it to be. It was a time to sit with the deep wound in our collective unconscious arising from the Nazi effort to exterminate undesirables. Just over a hundred participants sat for five days between the sorting tracks where trains, pulling cattle cars, dislodged thousands of people to be selected for immediate death in the gas chambers or slave labor in the camp. Life expectancy in the camp was three months. My sits were very grounded, no distractions; it was hard to be distracted or deluded in such a place. With each inhalation all of us took in a small packet of the pain, loss and horror associated with the history of the camp. Within us each small parcel of suffering was at least partially

digested and then released with each exhalation. This process was repeated breath after breath, sit after sit, day after day. At the conclusion of the retreat, it felt as though the whole place was a little lighter. There is still such pent up unprocessed suffering in this location that more generations will be needed to release it. Therefore, it is my intention to return year after year and help with others so inclined to assist with the work that needs doing. This year’s retreat will be Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>; I already have made my reservation. I will be traveling a few days earlier, and anyone reading this interested in attending with me from Seattle, please let me know.

What I wasn’t fully prepared for was how deeply sadistic the slave labor side of the camp was. Auschwitz/Birkenau was known as a city of death, but this does not do it justice. I’m convinced that it was the most horrid place ever to exist on this planet. I’ve heard of awful things and seen many horror movies, but nothing comes close to what went on in this place. How could primarily Buddhas produce this hell on earth? I sat with this koan and what follows are some insights that bubbled up.

Nationalism taken to its natural extreme means those not in the club become refuse. Power can corrupt otherwise goodhearted people, and unlimited, unchecked power invites unspeakable cruelty. Take Dr. Josef Mengele for example. He was personally responsible for unspeakable cruelties to adults and children. He was never brought before a war crimes tribunal, and lived out his life hiding in Paraguay. It is said that he claimed until his death that he had harmed no one. However, he might have acknowledged that he exterminated and experimented on many cockroaches. Mengele was taught that those transported to the camp were vermin. He had a PhD in Anthropology, as well as being a medical doctor. Surely he saw atrocities on the

Eastern front where he was posted. He saved many German soldier’s lives and became wounded himself, earning the Iron Cross. No longer able to serve at the front he was posted at Auschwitz and became the Chief Medical Officer of the main infirmary at Birkenau.

There is no doubt in my mind that, as with the development of cancer, there were many steps involved in his evolution from a healer to a mass murderer and one of the most heinous sadists ever known. Probably, there was a history of early abuse where Mengele was the victim. This was followed



Sanpai – site of Dr. Mengele’s barracks

by a thorough indoctrination of racism and bigotry, rationalized as natural, appropriate and necessary all the way through graduate school. Add to this desensitization from seeing horrors day after day at the Eastern Front, where members of his own tribe were being killed and maimed in front of him. Then we must factor in the reality of his own war wounds, which were severe enough that he had to be recalled from the front. Top it off with his assignment to Auschwitz/Birkenau where he could really do damage to those whom he felt were the cause of the world’s problems. Give him unchecked, unconditional power of life or death in his world of influence and you get Dr. Mengele. Probably all these steps were necessary to produce the cancer he became. If even one of these steps were removed, I would likely be writing about someone else.

When I think of less disturbed people such as Eido Shimano, the founding abbot of

ZSS, Joshu Sasaki, the founding abbot of Rinzai-Ji Zen Centers, and in my opinion even less disturbed characters such as Genki Takabayashi, Chobo-Ji's founding abbot, and myself, I see similar patterns. Perhaps most of us have some kind of trauma from early childhood that is carried unresolved into adulthood. In my own case, through the help of family, friends, three intense year of psychoanalysis and thirty years working through father issues with my surrogate father figures Genki Takabayashi and Eido Shimano, I feel blessed to have turned a corner. Hopefully, my own sense of some deep integration with my early abuse history is real. The effect is that I feel much less haunted by the past, and therefore, much less likely to act out my early trauma in present relationships. Moreover, even though I succeeded Genki Roshi as abbot of Chobo-Ji and have been named a Dharma Heir in my lineage of Zen, I've grown enough to know not to take this role or recognition too seriously.

In fact, all I want to be is the temple priest who is responsible for setting the tone of training at Chobo-Ji. I don't want followers or students; I have nothing to teach. The training is designed to allow those who practice at Chobo-Ji to have a direct experiential relationship with their own deep nature. The best I can do in a leadership position is set the tone with my own dedication to practice, and on occasion (dokusan and Teisho) point at the moon. I believe this awareness, attitude and intention will limit the possibility of falling into the elevated guru trap that infects many spiritual centers throughout the world.

Certainly both ZSS and Rinzai-Ji centers fell into the trap of raising the Japanese founders to guru status. This kind of status given to teachers is one big step towards unconditional power and authority, which can corrupt even genuinely awake and openhearted people. The other important step towards corruption in any organization that raises a person to guru status is lack of effective oversight or mirroring. If those in a strong leadership position have no way to receive sufficient mirroring from peers, and also have no effective oversight by superiors there is a real danger that power will corrupt the leader, leading to inappropriate actions and abuse of the authority invested in them. Put all these things together, under-processed early trauma, skillful means and the talent to use

them effectively, rising to a position of leadership and authority, imbued with a cultural sense of specialness or superiority, with little peer oversight or supervision and the situation is ripe for misuse of power and abuse.

Looking forward to the further unfolding of Zen in the West, it becomes evident we must be careful not to elevate leaders responsible for organizing practice and training to guru status. Those who are in leadership positions must become cognizant of the fact that early wounds and trauma can sneak up on us and have a profound impact. If we are not cognizant or appropriately cautious about this we may begin feeding on our own sangha to meet our primitive unmet needs and wants. In other words, we must never feel complete and be willing to do all the inner work necessary to assure that we won't abuse our position of trust and authority. Furthermore, it is imperative that Zen leaders seek out a close cadre of peers with whom they can consult and be willing to be challenged and confronted. Moreover, I think some sort of national consortium of Zen leaders that focuses on the voluntary oversight and ethical education and support of constituent members is sorely needed. On this note, I am wholeheartedly supporting the efforts of two Zen priests who occasionally train at Chobo-Ji to start such an organization.

Egyoku Wendy Nakao, who went on to become the current abbot at ZCLA, has provided an excellent example to the nation of how a Zen organization can process the failures and shortcomings of its founder. It is not that any recovery process is going to satisfy everyone, but she has put the organization back on its feet without sweeping the past under the rug and admirably started ZCLA's recovery by focusing on reaching out and being of service to those most harmed. Egyoku has also been instrumental in the healing process that has begun at Rinzai-Ji around the misdeeds of Joshu Sasaki. It is still my hope that ZSS will learn from her actions, but disappointingly not yet. For example, there has never been an organizational



apology from ZSS admitting any responsibility for how the abuse went on for decades, and there has only been one meeting that made any attempt to reach out to those most harmed by Eido Shimano's actions.

My trip to Auschwitz certainly helped me see these sorts of situations from a deeper perspective. We are all flawed human beings with the potential to actualize our deep Buddha nature. In addition, we certainly have at least an equal potential to act selfishly and even sadistically from our most base instincts. Moreover, collectively humans are so hungry for leadership and inspiration that we have the bad habit of venerating and investing too much power in talented narcissists. How will we manage and harness our extraordinary range of potential for the benefit of all beings great and small, animate and inanimate? This question represents our most important generational koan.

## The Mumonkan

1<sup>st</sup> Case, Joshu's Mu  
Rohatsu, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

### Koan

The monk asked Joshu, "Does the dog have Buddha nature or not?" Joshu said, "Mu."

### Mumon's Commentary

In studying Zen, one must pass the barriers set up by the Ancient Masters for the realization of incomparable Satori. One has to cast away one's discriminating mind. Those who have not passed the barrier and have not cast away their discriminating mind, are all like phantoms haunting trees and plants. Now, tell me, what is the barrier of the Zen Masters? Why, it's just this "mu." It's known as the barrier of Zen and also known as the Gateless Barrier. Those who pass this barrier will not only see Joshu clearly but will go hand in hand with all the Masters of the past, to see them face to face. In fact, you will see with the same eye that they see with and hear with the same ear. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Don't you want to then pass this barrier?

*Continued on next page...*



Then, concentrate yourself into this “mu”, with your 360 bones and 84,000 pores, making your whole body one great inquiry. Day and night, you work intently at it. Do not attempt nihilistic or dualistic interpretations. It is like having a red-hot iron ball bolted in your belly. You try to vomit it but cannot. Cast away your illusory discriminating knowledge and consciousness accumulated until now and keep on working harder. After a while, in the readiness of time, when your efforts come to fruition, all the oppositions or dualities such as in and out, life and death, will naturally be identified (or seen through). You will be like one struck dumb, who has had a wonderful dream. He knows it within himself personally. Suddenly, you break through this gateless barrier and you will astonish Heaven and shake the Earth. It is as if you have snatched the great sword right out of the hands of General Kahn. You kill the Buddha if you meet him. You kill the ancient masters if you meet them. On the brink of life and death, you find yourself utterly free and, in the six realms and four modes of life, able to live in great joy, a genuine life in complete freedom.

#### *Mumon's Poem*

The Dog! The Buddha Nature!  
The truth already manifested in full.  
A moment of yes-and-no, right and wrong  
Lost are your body and soul.

When I made my introductory remarks last night, I spoke about the bottomless depths of our own True Nature, the deep still quiet waters; these images are another way of referring to Mu. However, no matter how we imagine it, a description can only be a finger pointing at the moon. Such ideas can only hint at the experience of being unified or feeling seamless with our own depth. Moreover, even a clear experience doesn't answer the question, “What is it?” We have no way to say what it is, but we can say it has no dependence on form, has no beginning or end and is fathomless. The experience is quite wondrous, but it still leaves us forever curious, what is it really? Does it have a purpose?

When our discriminating knowledge is cast away, as Mumon says in his commentary, we are struck dumb, we are at a loss of words. It's as though we have had a wonderful dream that we only know

within ourselves. At such a moment, we feel powerful and fearless and easily dispatch the Buddhas and ancient masters as nothing more than pretenders. We feel utterly free and there's a great joy. This is how Mumon describes the experience of full awareness, the feeling of being seamless with Muuuuu.

We are all, on one level, fearful of penetrating Mu. And, on another level, we all long for it. We're fearful because when, through rigorous practice, a catalytic crisis or gift of grace, the barriers between self and other and life and death fall away, we have no way to posit who we are and the prospect of that can be terrifying. Every one of us in this room, gratefully, has a pretty solid ego identity. Without a sufficient ego identity, we would be at the very least schizophrenic. Therefore, our sense of a personal identity has its uses and we don't want to lose our sense of who we are. And yet breaking through our personal sense of identity is exactly what's meant by penetrating MU. Actually, Mu is shining even through our separate sense of identity. But when we're stuck in our separate sense of identity, we don't feel Mu. On the other hand, there's something so restorative, freeing, powerful and dynamic when we *do* feel it.

In moments of breakthrough, the curtains of our separate sense of identity are pulled back. More often it feels like our own curtains are stitched shut, that we can't get past the veil of our own separate sense of identity and we feel locked in, isolated, and separated. There are three ways to get past this curtain that I'm aware of. One is a crisis that brings you right to the brink of life and death. Perhaps a near-death experience itself. The experience of being “dead,” can certainly trigger a breakthrough. But we can't go around hoping for near-death experiences or sudden crises. These events come from time to time, but I don't particularly recommend them as a way of breaking through! However, I do think this is part of what's behind extreme sports; extreme sensation can bring you to the brink of life and death. Not only does it give you a high or rush, but it also can momentarily break through the veil of separation, often leading to an experience of fearlessness, freedom and a deep sense of the infinite expanse which is our true nature.

A second way to prompt a breakthrough, which has been known by most if not all cultures, is through some sort of psychedelic/psychotropic boost. There are many substances that have been used in various cultures, some are better than others with less side effects. But the problem with this method, not that I have anything against it, is that it's hard to know what's the effect of the drug and what's real. Sometimes I suspect that the method is effective in giving someone with a very thick veil a peek around the corner. It may be brief and distorted, but it is still a peek around the corner.

Finally, there's what we're doing here in Rohatsu. With our rigor and exhaustive effort we are brought gently, hopefully in a safe controlled way, to the brink of life and death. Slowly but surely we come to face our own complexity, entanglements and shadow. If we sit here long enough we will all become raw, vulnerable and exposed. This will afford us an opportunity to break through without having a psychotic break or a near death experience and that's a good thing. A psychotic break is not at all desirable and of course not funny. I work hard for the group not to go this far.

We do create a certain amount of exhaustion here at Rohatsu and expose practitioners to the danger of having to face yourself without any drugs! That is a scary prospect to face all of our complexities, hindrances, shortcomings and our deeper nature too. In the course of becoming exposed and raw, we will have the opportunity to break through our veil between self and other. We may break through while sitting on the cushion, walking on the beach, while sweeping or chopping vegetables. If we do break through we can be confident that our experience is real and not a hallucination. We will have less doubt than those who break through via an extreme sport high, drug high or even near death experience. If we break through here at Rohatsu, we will end up with confidence that what we experience is real. We will come to realize for the first time or again that our separated sense identity is the principal illusion. Moreover, when the great breadth of freedom and fearlessness diminishes and we find ourselves back in our shell of a separated ego, we're more likely to have trust or faith that we're operating within our illusory self. This will allow us, even after



the breakthrough fades, to act and move in this world in a more free and dynamic way. That's good for us individually and especially fine for all those who come into contact with us.

**T**wo people at this Rohatsu are going to do Jukai (Buddhist Precepts Ceremony) late on the evening of December 8<sup>th</sup>. Normally, we would do it on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> day, which is traditionally the time when the historical Buddha's breakthrough is celebrated. We are told that the historical Buddha sat night after night, day after day, facing all of his complexities and all the entanglements of the human condition. He sustained himself sufficiently, but had the fortitude and dedication to sit there under



the Bodhi tree and wait for a breakthrough or die in the effort. I think whenever we break through, we realize immediately that, "Oh, right! I knew this!" It's like finding lost keys; we feel such joy realizing, "Oh, I had the keys all along." Take that realization to the 10<sup>th</sup> power and you get the idea! Anyway, the historical Buddha just sat and sat and sat. I'm sure he got up to stretch once in a while, did a little kinhin (walking meditation) but, mostly, he sat and sat. That's what we're here to do. This Sesshin is a reflection of that effort.

**I**t's said that after the historical Buddha's breakthrough he thought to himself, "Should I even try to prod or offer anything to anybody else? I know they already have all that they need and only they can realize this. They're not going to believe me, what could I say that's useful?" But he did put forth the Four Noble Truths, which included the Noble Eightfold Path. In other words, he offered a container and a practice so that people who gave themselves over to it might have a good frame to sincerely investigate their true nature. No doubt he wanted everyone to have the same breakthrough that he had. He realized we're all Buddhas sitting behind the veil of our sense of a separated selfhood. We are all Buddhas but most have not awakened

sufficiently to see behind the veil. Buddha means "one who has awakened;" in other words, one who has seen beyond the veil of a separated ego identity. That's all it really means! With this true insight we are free to care without reservation or expectation.

**B**ack to Jukai, we're going to do it on December 8<sup>th</sup> because this day is celebrated around the world as Buddha's day of awakening. During Jukai we'll say the Ten Precepts together. In Zen, the Precepts are de-emphasized. It should be clear that there are dangers to over-emphasizing and dangers to under-emphasizing the precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path. The reason it's de-emphasized in Zen is because, when we have experienced the transcendent, as Bodhidharma would say, beyond any dependence on words or letters, we have reached the origin of the Four Noble Truths and precepts. These codified truths can never substitute for the dynamic Heart-Mind that gives rise to them.

**O**ver the last few years, I've come to a whole new appreciation for the precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path. I've come to see that these codified truths serve us in at least two ways that are perhaps not so obvious. One I became aware of some years ago and the second has only recently dawned on me. Allow me to share what I have gleaned.

**T**he first is that the precepts are a guide or a kind of roadmap when we are not feeling clear. When feeling lost it is very nice to have a map for guidance. The precepts are like a GPS that can help us negotiate life. Of course, once in a while, just as with Google Maps or Apple Maps they will lead us into a dead end! But most of the time, they are right on target, and a big help when we don't know our way.

**T**he second more recent insight is how the precepts and Eightfold Path should be used to check how we're doing on our journey, to check and re-check our progress against the standard map. On occasion our dynamic insight and reason may direct us down unexpected paths; however, it is only prudent that we check our progress because it's easy to fool ourselves! Even after having a breakthrough as big as the historical Buddha's, we all eventually come back to the view of our sense of a separated identity, and once again this view will become prominent and perhaps dominate. Even if we have complete faith that this

view is an illusion, it doesn't mean that this illusion can't still fool us! So, we'd better know and review the Precepts and Eightfold Path in order to check our progress as we walk through this path of life and death. We must continually ask ourselves, "Are we on the path?" I'm not saying that we have to be thinking about them all the time, but when in doubt and regularly, perhaps daily, check our progress. When we notice that we are far from the letter or intent of the Precepts, a course correction becomes necessary. Can we be smart enough and humble enough to see this? Not always! Therefore, we must be vigilant with our assessments and seek out the mirroring of others when in doubt. I've always respected the Precepts, but I have a new appreciation of their usefulness and application.

**W**hat I haven't yet figured out is where we're going to incorporate reviewing the precepts at Chobo-Ji more than during Jukai. When there's no one doing Jukai for a while, we end up not reviewing them regularly. This must change. We've got to incorporate them somewhere. Recently, during the Spring and Autumn Intensives we have investigated the Precepts in our book group. Each of the last several books have had something to do with the Precepts.

**T**he best check as to whether we are on the Path is to assess if our actions are bringing benefit and not causing harm. In our wake, as we pass through life, the quotient of benefit to harm should be heavily lopsided. It's impossible not to cause some harm, but we must work to minimize the harm we cause. Ready awareness of the Precepts and Eightfold Path should help us not to fool ourselves, and help us discern the course correction when necessary. It's an act of maturity to make course corrections so that our actions leave little or no discernible trace and some sort of beneficial wake.

**O**ur efforts will only come to deep fruition after the veil that separates us from the rest of reality is seen through. This veil is of our own creation and it serves as protection for our separate sense of identity. It's absolutely necessary because, if we didn't create this veil, we wouldn't be able to distinguish self from other, we wouldn't know when our finger was burning in the fire. Moreover, I wouldn't be able to discern that I have caused some harm or made some blunder if I couldn't distinguish so-called self from

*Continued on next page...*

other. It's an important faculty, but one that becomes so entrenched that we often can't see beyond it. Thus, we feel bereft of a deep sense of freedom, fearlessness and joy that comes naturally from seeing beyond the barrier.

Every sesshin is about diving into the bottomless depths beyond the veil. If we even briefly surrender our attachment to our separate sense of ego identity, we will immediately feel freedom, fearlessness, powerfulness and joy! A breakthrough manifests as loving, tender open-heartedness towards everything. It is so simple, there is nothing to attain or get, nothing to do. This flood of freedom, power and joy will fill anyone who has broken through. And everyone can break through. However, we can't say, "Okay, today I will break through." All we can do is sit, breathe and observe. In this way we slowly digest our own barriers. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that we just sit here and compost our own karmic excrement. At a certain point, by honestly facing ourselves, the compost slowly becomes hot and eventually is transformed into fertilizer. All we have to do, all we *can* do, is sit here and compost. It does take some time, and we must patiently wait and let the process run its course. However, while we sit and observe ourselves we do become curious and turn over the material a bit. If not done in excess, turning over this inner material from time to time can assist the process, but mostly we just sit, wait, breathe and observe. As I often instruct, just sit, breathe and listen, then occasionally turn over what you meet. Koans also serve to stir the pot. Many koans arise naturally, such as: "What is this?", "Who am I?", "What is this barrier?" This kind of open-ended investigation helps turn over the compost. We can't say, "Oh, today the compost will be ready." It will be ready when it is ready and not before.

What's the best way to compost? Just concentrate your whole being in the direction of your own depth, which is Mu. Direct your gaze towards the bottomless depth of your true nature, which we find is the bottomless depth of everything seen and unseen. This bottomless inconceivable depth is Mu. "With your 360 bones and 84,000 pores," making our whole body one great inquiry, one great compost. Day and night work at it. Don't get stuck in absolute or relativistic views of this or that. Stay away from judgments about sitting well or

poorly. Just sit, breathe and listen! As much as your body will allow, push your limits, get raw, exposed, and allow yourself to become more and more vulnerable. However, if you feel like you're going over a cliff, bow and change positions or, if necessary, bow out! It doesn't serve the Dharma to hurt your body or fall off a mental cliff.

It is like having a "red-hot iron ball" in your stomach. That's the compost heating up. And with that fire in our belly, we should be able to handle the cold, although we're all aging and I've turned up the thermostat to be 3 degrees warmer than last year. Aren't we lucky!

When I was sitting at Auschwitz-Birkenau, there was no thermostat. We sat between the tracks where people were sorted between sadistic slave labor and the gas chamber. We were all told, "Bring long underwear!" So we did, all sitting with long underwear and only ponchos to keep the rain at bay. Actually, I was usually sufficiently warm. How was that possible? Was it because of the poncho and long underwear? I don't think so. These items were essential but I don't think they provided the warmth. The reason why I was warm was because at such a location I couldn't do anything else but compost! It was impossible to get lost in my own fantasies and delusions. Even though the events happened 70 years ago, I think everyone sitting there could feel the horror and ghosts from the past, so there was no room for daydreams. All we could do was receive the suffering, breathe, and ground it. By allowing the suffering to be acknowledged and released, grounded into the earth through our tailbones, I believe we were the catalyst for a small amount of healing. With each inhalation, we would each take in a tiny piece of the suffering, and to the best of our ability feel it in our belly and then exhale it. This effort stoked the fire in our *hara* so that the suffering could be composted and released throughout the universe on every exhalation. The 110 of us who were there for a week peeled back another layer of the onion of the scrunched up suffering of that place. Good Effort, but the work is far from completed. I'm already making plans to return next year.

There was no way to be distracted or fool myself being there. Each inhalation took in a small packet of the suffering and with

each exhalation it was released. Sometimes tears would roll down my cheeks, but I was not deeply disturbed. It was more disturbing when we got up and toured the camp. Learning about the atrocities that took place there for eleven years bowled me over! Whenever away from the cushion at the tracks, I longed to be back there where I could once again just sit, breathe and listen. Composting the suffering at the tracks was far easier than learning of the atrocities done to the living. Whenever there was a break and people were milling around, I'd go back to the tracks to sit as soon as possible. All I wanted to do was sit. At least while I was sitting, there was something to do with the suffering, namely, "breathe it in and breathe it out." When sitting, there was little notice of how cold it got, the heat arising from the *hara* kept me warm.

"With your 360 bones, 84,000 pores make your whole body one great inquiry." "It's like having a red-hot iron ball in your belly; you try to vomit it and you can't." Composting even a little of the suffering can take hours. When the compost is ready, then without any effort, we become speechless. There is nothing to say. It is like a wonderful dream. Tears easily streamed down one's face. We are astonished by heaven and earth and we astonish heaven and earth. This is the Universe waking up to Itself. "With might and main, work at being Muuuuuu." Work at diving into the bottomless depth of your true nature. It is important to keep pointing yourself in this direction throughout sesshin. No matter what, don't stop or waiver. Even when taking a break, give yourself completely to taking a break. It is essential to give our all to each and every activity that we are engaged in. In the readiness of time, when our efforts come to fruition, we see that the dog, the Buddha, Joshu's answer, yes and no are fully manifesting the Tao of no name. But if we get caught in yes or no, right or wrong, relative or absolute then lost are our body and soul. Here at sesshin we need only sit and breathe and listen. On the inhalation, take in and digest whatever you encounter, on the exhalation let it go. Compost, digest or exhaust whatever arises. Even if there is no breakthrough, we will be warmed by our *hara*, and over time a little of our shadowy karmic history will be combusted. Let's do our best to be present to what is.

With gassho,

Genjo



## Closing Incense Poem

Rohatsu Sesshin Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012

*Seagull, Blue Heron and  
Bald Eagle mingle,  
flying below endless clouds.*

*On a rocky shore of Puget Sound,  
Who hears the wind, rain and surf?*

*Beached ancient mariners watch  
wistfully from shore,  
a dream of life and death.*

### Jukai

#### Buddhist Precept Ceremony

On the evening of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012, during Rohatsu Sesshin, Eric Soroker and Peter Comerford formally accepted the Buddhist precepts. Both have been followers of the Way for some time and each has attended a minimum of two weeklong sesshins.

Eric wrote in his Jukai application letter that, "I have been seeking for as long as I can remember. As a young child, I spent most evenings prior to sleep contemplating the experience of death and ceasing to exist... Over the years, I have had many deep insights but none as profound as my experience during last year's Rohatsu. It was as if a great sneeze... was finally released and in so doing blew away all that I previously believed... Though I still have doubts within, I do know on the innermost level that I am on the right track... I want to go beyond my "self" and make my life meaningful through the service to others. I feel that this has been the direction I have always been going and now I wish to walk this path deliberate and committed." I gave Eric the Dharma Name DaiMu or Vast Dream.

Peter wrote: "Jukai is not for my true nature; it is a trick for my ego. The vows bind me to the way; the Rakusu is a heavy anchor around my neck.... My vows will be my lifeline to refuge in times of deep

confusion, laziness, arrogance, and despair. My Rakusu will make me as stone, a staunch foundation for the Sangha and all beings." I gave Peter the Dharma Name ZenGan (Zen Rock).

Jukai candidates need to petition in writing at least one month prior to the ceremony. Jukai candidates usually have attended regular zazen at Chobo-Ji for a minimum of six months (including at least two week-long sesshins), must be regular financial supporters of the temple, and feel ready to give themselves to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha).



Daimu and Zengan

### New Posts

#### Beginning March 1st

Peter (Shinke) Ilgenfritz:  
**Shika** (Host - Manager)

Emily (HoU) Ross:  
**Dai-Tenzo** (Chief cook for Sesshins)

Ralph (Muzan) Leach:  
**Jikijitsu** (Timekeeper)

Dee (Seishun) Endelman:  
**Densu** (Chant Leader)

Tobin (Fudo) Youngs:  
**Densu Assistant**

Mike (Daiun) Urban:  
**Jisha** (Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Randal (Daigetsu) Tanabe:  
**Jisha Assistant**

Sally Zenka) Metcalf:  
**Inji** (Abbot Assistant)

Carolyn (Josen) Stevens:  
**Fusu** (Accountant)

Tobin (Fudo) Youngs &  
Steve (Ganko) Hanson &  
Sally (Zenka) Metcalf:  
**Introductory Zazen**

## Spring Intensive

Chobo-Ji's Spring Intensive will start March 10<sup>th</sup> with mini-sesshin, and conclude on June 28<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the intensive is to give students the maximum opportunity to release entanglements by giving one's self to the Dharma.

To participate one must commit to:

- 1) ZAZEN:** Five hours of zazen per week, most, if not all, mini-sesshins, and attend two weeklong sesshins full-time (or nearly full-time) during the intensive. This is the most important ingredient of the intensive.
- 2) Do a minimum of five hours of samu** (working meditation - gardening or cleaning) per week. Most of these hours can be in your own home, garden or community, but at least one should be at the temple.
- 3) Read [Zen Radicals, Rebels, and Reformers](#).** Also, attend most if not all of the scheduled sessions of the Thursday **Book Club Meetings:** April 11<sup>th</sup> - June 6<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30 PM. *All interested Chobo-Ji students are encouraged to attend the Book Club meetings.*
- 4) Keep a journal about your practice,** at least one paragraph per week, and email a minimum of one paragraph per week each Friday to Genjo Osho on how the intensive is working on you.
- 5) Come to Dokusan at least once a week** or if out of town try and schedule a Skype video call with Genjo Osho.

## Important Dates to Remember

Daily zazen, M-F, 5:30 AM; Sat. 6:30 AM; M & W, 7:30 PM, Sun. 6:30 PM

Dharma Talks, Sundays: 2/17, 3/3, 3/17, 3/31, 4/7, 4/28, 5/5, 5/19 - 7:30 PM

Next Intro to Zen Series, Tuesdays, 7:30-8:30pm, April 16 - May 7

**Dharma Interview (one on one), with Genjo Osho ...**

**Genjo Osho sits with Victoria Zen Center ...**

**Mini-sesshin (half-day Zen retreat) ...**

**Spring Sesshin ...**

**Dharma Interview, with Genjo Osho ...**

**Buddha's Birthday Celebration ...**

**Zen Book Club (Zen Radicals: P'ang Yun) ...**

**Mini-sesshin (half-day Zen retreat) & Annual Meeting ...**

**Zen Book Club (Zen Radicals: Rinzai) ...**

**Three Day On-Sesshin ...**

**Zen Book Club (Zen Radicals: Bassui) ...**

**Genjo Osho sits with Walla Walla Dharma Sangha ...**

**Zen Book Club (Zen Radicals: Ikkyu) ...**

**Dharma Interview, with Genjo Osho ...**

**Zen Book Club (Zen Radicals: Bankei) ...**

**Mini-sesshin (half-day Zen retreat) ...**

**Zen Book Club (Zen Radicals: Hakuin) ...**

**Dharma Interview, with Genjo Osho ...**

**Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, 8 - 8:30pm**

**Feb. 22-24**

**March 10<sup>th</sup>, 5-11:30am**

**March 22-29**

**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 8 - 8:30pm**

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30PM**

**April 11<sup>th</sup> 7 - 8:30pm**

**April 14<sup>th</sup>, 5am - 2pm**

**April 18<sup>th</sup> 7 - 8:30pm**

**April 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>**

**April 25<sup>th</sup> 7 - 8:30pm**

**April 26-28**

**May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7 - 8:30pm**

**May 5<sup>th</sup>, 8 - 8:30pm**

**May 9<sup>th</sup>, 7 - 8:30pm**

**May 12<sup>th</sup>, 5-11:30am**

**May 16<sup>th</sup>, 7 - 8:30pm**

**May 19<sup>th</sup>, 8 - 8:30pm**



*Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji*

Plum Mountain News  
1733 S. Horton St., unit 7  
Seattle, WA 98144