

Plum Mountain News

Dear members and friends,

As I write, it is a beautiful Seattle summer day with the bluest sky imaginable. Here in the city we can see from Mt. Baker to Mt. Rainer. After the residential brunch this morning, Carolyn and I were planning to fly to Montana to visit family and Chobo-Ji's founding abbot, Genki Takabayashi Roshi. It would have been a wonderful day to fly except for two things: the plane was down for repairs, and there are many fires between here and Montana compromising visibility. Anyone who has gotten to know me knows that I am a private pilot, and that I love to fly, but not today. I looked at my calendar, and I don't have a free weekend again until mid November. So I won't be seeing either my family or Genki Roshi this summer as planned. Disappointing to be sure, but that's the way it is. I hope weather permits that I can fly in November, but if not, Carolyn and I plan to drive to Montana.

There are three activities in my life that have a profound effect on my mood and perspective. They are zazen (seated Zen meditation), snorkeling and flying an airplane. I'm told that I could swim before I could crawl. I can't remember not knowing how to swim with complete confidence under the water. I do remember being taught how to swim on top of the water when I was in elementary school, and being confused as to why anyone would want to do that. I love swimming under the water where there is complete freedom in three

directions, occasionally coming for up air like a sea turtle. The first time I went to Hawaii and learned to snorkel with a mask and fins, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I've tried scuba diving, but the change in pressure really hurts my ears, and my ears are hard to clear. Snorkeling just seems to me to be so much more natural. I feel like a big fish in the water, able to go any direction at will and there are so many things to see and so many coral canyons to explore.



Summer 2012 Sesshin Participants

When it comes to zazen I feel much the same way. Doing zazen is like diving into the deep end of a bottomless pool. I often stay at the surface, but from time to time, I have fun diving deep and seeing how far down I can go. Sometimes in the dive I lose all sense of a separated individuality. By swimming beneath the surface waters, I rediscover that what distinguishes self from other is only an illusion of my own making. Beneath the waves are the vast waters of what Carl Jung called the collective unconscious. In these waters I quickly realize that

what we call personal mind is indivisible from universal Mind.

During the 1980's, I worked as a software engineer for Satori Software, a company I co-founded with my partner, Hugh Rogovy. Back then I could single-handedly design programs that were marketable and served a purpose. Each new program was like working with a lump of soft clay until it was shaped into an aesthetically pleasing functional vessel. However, after six years, I realized that the software business was taking too much of my time from Zen training and family life. So I sold my interest in the company to Hugh, which gave me the funds to pay for graduate school in psychology, take flying lessons and buy a used Cessna 172. I have never regretted this decision to leave the software business because I find my role as a psychotherapist much more compatible with Zen practice. And ever since I was a small boy looking at birds and planes flying overhead, I wanted to learn to fly. It was obvious to me even then that the same freedom of motion that I felt swimming under the water would be found flying up in the air. From the air, we all get a wider view of the world in

which we live. This wider perspective should be familiar to anyone who has done Zen training.

Recently I've been able to indulge all three of my passions. Chobo-Ji had its Summer Sesshin June 22-29. There were nineteen people in attendance, and I felt deeply that at this sesshin we became grounded in our new space. Dee (Seishun) Endelman was the Shika (host/manager) for this sesshin. In addition to being our Board President, and transcribing my teishos for me, she kept sesshin flowing

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smoothly. Our Dai-Tenzo (Chief Cook) was Steve (Ganko) Hanson and he took good care to see that we ate very well indeed. John (Daikan) Green was our Jikijitsu (time keeper) and kept us moving along in a very orderly fashion. Tom (Shodo) DeGroot was our Densu (Chant leader) who kept the beat rolling. Ezekiel (Mudo) Smithburg assisted by Ralph (Muzan) Leach and Mike (Daiun) Urban served as our Jisha (tea servers) and kept us nourished with tea and snacks. In the background while people were sitting inside, Emily (HoU) Ross and Jonathan (Zengyoku) Schwartz did their own samu (work meditation) sesshin for us by installing a drip water system throughout the back lot of our property. This system is a work of art in and of itself, and has worked very well all summer. You will find a transcription of the Teisho from the fifth day and the closing incense poem later in this issue.

Shortly after sesshin, Carolyn and I traveled to Hawaii to spend a week with a friend of mine, who is also a former member of the Board of the Zen Studies Society, at his small coffee plantation overlooking the Kona Coast. It was a delightful visit; every morning we were served the best cappuccinos I have ever had, and by late morning we were several miles away on a secluded beach with fabulous snorkeling! This restful time was very restorative and I got to swim with sea turtles, a leopard ray, and one time found a large sleeping shark under a coral shelf. I decided to swim back to shore at once!

Then in early August I flew myself to Santa Fe, New Mexico to visit with Joan Halifax Roshi and Roshi Bernie Glassman. It was one hop to Salt Lake City and then over the Rockies of Utah and Colorado to Santa Fe; it was an unforgettable flight alone at 11,500 feet. Roshi Joan and the

entire Upaya Zen Center sangha were very welcoming and I felt warmly loved even though I had never met anyone there before. I met several times with Roshi Joan, and got to spend three fabulous days getting a good introduction to Bernie's brand of socially engaged Buddhism. For a taste of his work see the following YouTube video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IPIgskqXxg>). Glassman Roshi is the principle Dharma Heir of Taizan Maezumi Roshi who founded the Zen Center of Los Angeles. I first met him at the ordination ceremony of Wendy Egyoku Nakao. Egyoku and I both trained under Genki Roshi here in Seattle; Genki Roshi and Maezumi Roshi were good friends. In 1999, the same year I became abbot of Chobo-Ji, Roshi Glassman named Egyoku Abbot of ZCLA. It's a small world and these connections are part of our temple's mandala.

I hope to have a long association with both Joan and Bernie. Roshi Joan has trained deeply in three lineages of Zen, but considers her association to Bernie Glassman to be her deepest heart connection. I found them both to be deeply liberated free spirits who have learned over the years how to bring Zen training and practice out of the "club house." I will be traveling with Bernie and his Zen Peacemakers organization on his annual "Bearing Witness Retreat" at Auschwitz/Birkenau, November 5-9th 2012. My travel days to Krakow will be Nov. 1-10. If you are interested in attending with me see the following link: (<http://zenpeacemakers.org/events/bearing-witness-retreat-at-auschwitzbirkenau/>). I doubt this will be my last trip to Auschwitz, as I am taking a weekend course in "Auschwitz Council Training" November 3-4, and hope to use the skills developed by joining as a facilitator with Bernie one day. I also plan to make annual pilgrimages to NM to visit with Roshi Joan at Upaya or the nearby Prajna Mountain Forest Refuge. In this way, I hope to have a place to restore, deepen and broaden my own training in the years to come.

On my return trip from Santa Fe, I had the pleasure of flying Bernie to Albuquerque to pick up a commercial flight, then after fixing a flat tire I flew on to Scottsdale, AZ, dodging thunderstorms to spend the night with a close friend. I flew back to Seattle the next day via the red rocks of Sedona, the Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, Elko, NV, Ellensburg and Sequim, dodging the



Flying home over Grand Canyon

biggest thunderstorm I have ever seen sitting over the Strait of Juan de Fuca. A long day in the air, but truly unforgettable; I took more than 500 pictures!

Since the spring issue of Plum Mountain News we have successfully worked to expand our practice offerings. In June we inaugurated a four part series of introductory talks for newcomers with great success. You can read more about this later in this issue. We also had a wonderful



Summer Picnic

Summer Picnic on July 29th where we ate much, had good conversation, and played Frisbee or maneuvered Muken's remote controlled miniature speed buggies! I offered three special Dharma Dialogues on the "Four Noble Truths," "Principle Forms of Zen Meditation" and "Layers of Awareness," the last of which will soon be released as a podcast. All three were well attended, and going forward we will be drawing on not just what I can offer, but inviting others within and beyond our Sangha to share and dialogue with us on various topics. My next offering will be a two-part series on the "Ten Zen Ox Paintings" followed by an exploration of "Tozan's Five Ranks." Some dates will be announced on the last page of this issue and others through our Zen List-serve.

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Upaya Main Zendo Entrance

In addition to what I have already mentioned, you will find announcements in this issue for our upcoming Autumn Sesshin and practice intensive, our book group, Chobo-Ji's first anniversary celebration in our new practice center (to be held after a shortened mini-sesshin, October 14th), an Interfaith Music Fest, and our Fall Potluck. You can also read a board progress report along with an excellent article by HoU on Rinzai Zen and the importance of koan training in our practice. I hope you enjoy these offerings and that as summer comes to a close our practice together is refreshed and invigorated. I certainly already feel this way.

By the way, the [fossil](#) everyone sees upon leaving the zendo is contributed by Zen resident, Edwin Beaty.

Here is some late breaking news. As I mentioned above, my partner at Satori Software was Hugh Rogovy. When I left in 1988, I had confidence that Hugh would grow the company; a bigger firm recently acquired it allowing Hugh to retire from the software business. In gratitude for my original contribution to Satori's success, and after consulting with me about it, Hugh has decided to give Chobo-Ji a substantial gift.



With these funds we will be able to pay off some debts, proceed on some immediate building improvements, and probably pay down and renegotiate our mortgage this fall. Everyone associated with our temple has given much to make our new home a healthy growing concern; moreover, there have been several Dharma Angels, including people like Hugh, Daijo Lowrance and Daigan Timmer to name a few, who have given in such a way that we would not be in our new home without them. It is with a deep bow that I appreciate and thank each person who has deeply given of himself or herself to support the success of this practice.

With gassho,

Genjo

Introduction Series

I just wanted to share a little bit about how the Introduction Series has been going: **Great.**

The second time around we had about 10-15 people coming consistently every week. As the flyer indicates we take a subject and explore that each Tuesday: first week is zazen (posture, method, intention, etc.), then other forms of meditation (kinhin, samu, chanting, etc.), then our zen meal ceremony and everything that goes along with that, and the final week we go over dokusan procedure, purpose, etc. with Genjo giving a brief explanation of koan practice, zazen, Chobo-Ji and then Q&A. The August 12 mini-sesshin was the Series capstone and two attendees were able to make it with several others saying they'd be at the September mini (the first day of Autumn Sesshin).

The feedback from students and Chobo-Ji members who have been coming to the Tuesday nights has been overwhelmingly positive and I think we'll be continuing this four-week series on into the future with a new "leader" each time.

There's been a little contingent of Chobo-Ji members who have been running each class-- about 5 or so-- and this I think has really been key. I would like to invite anyone who is free Tuesday evenings to consider coming and supporting this series. It offers a unique opportunity not only to hear fellow sangha members give their perspective on the practice, but it's a chance to meet with new people interested in Zen, in Chobo-Ji, and in themselves and share our own insight, our own practice, with them.

The [next series](#) begins Tuesday August 28 and will be led by Zengyoku Jonathan Schwartz. Please consider coming out to these Tuesdays and posting the updated flyer at your local grocery store or library so we can share the very special spirit of Chobo-Ji with the wider community. My own practice has really been touched and invigorated by these gatherings, I hope yours and many others will be also.

With gassho ~ *Fudo*

Board Report

The Board and Sangha Committees have been working on a variety of matters. Following are highlights:

- The Board has approved a basic set of policies for itself and for the residential practice, including a detailed Ethics and Reconciliation Policy and procedure.
- In June, Dee Seishun Endelman resigned from the Ethics & Reconciliation Committee and the Board approved the addition of Mary Choko Cabaniss-Ballard. Scott Ishin Stolnack and Peter Shinke Ilgenfritz are the other two Committee members.
- The Board approved a schedule for next year's Sesshins as recommended by the Program and Practice Committee.
- The Program and Practice Committee has also helped to formulate a highly successful "Introduction to Zen" series and coordinated an enjoyable Sangha picnic on July 29. Look for the beginning of quarterly Sangha potlucks and dialogues this fall!
- Steve Ganko Hansen, of the Communications Committee, is developing a new web site for Chobo-Ji. We are hopeful that it will be live early this fall.
- The Finance Committee has developed a more detailed budget appropriate to our larger and more complex assets.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Sunday, September 16, 2012 at 9-11 a.m. As usual, Chobo-Ji members are welcome to attend.

With gassho

~ *Seishun*

The Book of Rinzai

Jishu: Teaching the Assembly Chapter 21

Someone asked, “What was the intention of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West?” The Master said, “If there was any intention, he couldn’t even have saved himself.” The student asked, “If there was no intention, why did the Second Patriarch receive transmission?” The Master said, “To attain is the same as no-attainment.” The student asked, “If it is no-attainment, what is the meaning of no-attainment?” The Master said, “You cannot stop your mind from searching everywhere. Therefore, a patriarch said, ‘You fool! Looking for a head on top of the one you already have!’ When you hear such words, illuminate yourself with your own light and stop searching outside. Then you will learn that your body-mind is not at all different from the Buddhas and patriarchs. Then at once, you are free from events (*buji*). It can be called ‘obtaining the Dharma.’

“Virtuous monks, right now this mountain monk has no choice but to make such unworthy statements. But, you monks don’t be mistaken. According to my view, there really isn’t any complication. If you want to act, just act. If you don’t want to act, just don’t!

“There are people who say to practice the Six Paramitas and the ten thousand virtuous deeds is Buddha-Dharma. I would say that these are mere gates of adornment, gates of Buddhist ritual. They are no Buddha-Dharma itself. Even those who keep all kinds of regulations concerning food and uphold old precepts, or those who try to act like someone carrying a bowl of oil without spilling even a drop, unless their Dharma eye is open, they will have to repay their debts. The day surely will come for them to pay for the food they have eaten. Why is this so?

Whoever enters the Way
without penetrating its essence,
Will have to return
the offerings they have received.
When the rich man becomes
eighty-one years old,
The tree will no longer produce
mushrooms.

“Let me tell you that those who live alone on a solitary peak, or who eat once a day, or sit for a long time without lying down, or worship with circumambulations through the six periods, all these are nothing but creating karma. Also, if someone donates his head, eyes, marrow and brain, or his castle, wife and child, his elephant, horse and his seven treasures, these actions invite the suffering of body and mind and end up in sorrow. It is better to do nothing (*buji*), to be plain and simple. Then even the bodhisattvas who accomplished the ten stages of practice all search for the trace of this follower of the Way, but can never find it. Therefore, it is said that all heavenly deities are filled with joy; earthly deities raise their feet in adoration, and of all the Buddhas in the ten directions, there are none who do not praise him. Why? Because the person of the Way who is listening to my talk right now leaves no trace of his being.”

This is a great question, and a very traditional one: “What was the intention of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West?” This is the Zen way of asking, “What is the essence of Zen?” Since Buddhism was already in China and well established, why did Bodhidharma make the arduous trip late in life from India to China? What was it about his coming to China that established Chan Buddhism, later known as Zen Buddhism, and led to us being here today? What’s so special about Zen? All of this is asked in the question: “What was the intention of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West?” What’s it all about?

Why is the question asked obliquely, instead of the more direct question, “What’s the essence of Zen?” The monk asks, “What was the intention of this fellow who traveled so late in life to China?” Asked in this way the question is more open ended, subtle and sophisticated; in other words, there is a lesson found in how this question is asked.

Rinzai answers with words. He could have answered with a gesture. If he were Zen Master Gutei, he would have held up one finger. Another gesture would be to hold up the hossu, ceremonial fly-whisk that Zen masters sometimes hold during ceremonies or teisho. Another response could have been a Zen shout of “Katsu!” But in this case Rinzai uses very concise words. “If there

was any intention, he couldn’t have saved himself.” The monk gives a slight opening here. Instead of saying, “Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?”, he adds this twist, “What was his intention...?” Did Bodhidharma come trying to impart something specifically? And to that part of the question, Rinzai responded, “If Bodhidharma came to impart meaning or to teach you and me something, he wouldn’t have been of any benefit to himself much less anyone else.” Bodhidharma came with no such intention, purpose or meaning. But as we heard yesterday, he did come looking for someone who could think outside the box. Presumably, Bodhidharma had heard that Buddhism in China was fixated on the sutras (Buddhist scripture), with rules and regulations that could be easily taught. Bodhidharma was looking for someone who was prepared to put all of the sutras and commentaries aside and go directly for their own true insight. He was not looking for someone who would take instruction. Even if asked for instruction, Bodhidharma wouldn’t give it, but waited for someone who was so ripe and ready that they would be willing to die to find the Dharma. Bodhidharma had nothing to teach, and in Rinzai Zen we say the ancient masters and current masters have nothing to teach. Yet, they all point to your true insight.

The monk asking Rinzai doesn’t get it. He says, “But if there was no intention why did the Second Patriarch receive transmission?” We all know that Eka Zenji became the Second Patriarch when he received transmission from Bodhidharma. If Bodhidharma had nothing to teach what did Eka receive? Bodhidharma must have given him something. Rinzai’s response is so clear and simple, “To attain is no-attainment.” In other words, transmission is the transmission of nothing, nothing is transmitted. When he says “to attain” transmission, or attain enlightenment was “no-attainment,” he’s saying that nothing at all was transmitted. More recently, from Gempo Roshi (our Dharma Great-grandfather) to Soen Roshi, from Soen Roshi to Eido Roshi to me, NOTHING was transmitted. All the way back 83 or so generations to the historical Buddha, there was nothing transmitted at “transmission.”

The student goes on pestering, getting himself deeper into a hole. “Well, if there was no-attainment and no-transmission, what is the meaning of no-attainment and

no-transmission?” Rinzai says, “Jeez, you just can’t stop your mind from searching everywhere, can you?” He quotes an ancient saying, “You fool! Looking for a head on top of the one you already have!”

The premise of Buddhism is that we are not really separate from one another; each pebble, grain of sand, each flower, is a unique display of something that is indivisible. Folded up “emptiness” becomes you or me, this or that, but really it’s all the same stuff and that stuff has no form let alone a name. Looking at the incense burning away, it reveals that it is really nothing but a bit of ash and smoke. Likewise, the ash and smoke also have no intrinsic imperturbable forms. Before the incense took shape as incense, it was nothing and it becomes nothing again. Every unique but temporary manifestation of form comes from Nothing, is Nothing, and returns to Nothing. What we call a unique form is just one temporary folding of Nothing. And “nothing to attain or transmit” means you are already seamless with this nothing. You are already seamless with the Universe and beyond, so what is there to attain? You are already seamless with the origin of all universes. What is that? We don’t know. Where does it come from? We don’t know. Why is it here? We don’t know. There’s so much we don’t know, but here it is and we’re already It, so there’s nothing to attain.

The only thing that prevents us from deeply realizing that there is nothing to attain is the Gateless Gate of our own fixed views and perceptions. Gempo Roshi, our Dharma Great-Grandfather, said we start out feeling as if we are in a really narrow box, we might think of it as a crib. We feel imprisoned in this crib. At a certain point, we get tall enough to stand up in the crib and we can literally crawl right out of it but, in the beginning, we’re stuck inside the crib. When we’re stuck inside our personal identity, it’s like we’re stuck inside our infantile idea of self. When we have some “awakening” we realize that the box has no lid and we step out of it. I suppose one could call it attainment but all we’re doing is stepping outside of our own box of our infantile idea of self. Rinzai refers to this as “obtaining the Dharma.” Whether we call it “obtaining,” “attainment,” “realization,” or “enlightenment,” all we have really done is step outside of the box of our infantile idea of self. That’s it!

We should use such words, says Rinzai, to illuminate ourselves with our own light. Then, we will learn through our own investigation that this [Genjo pats his chest] is not separate from the Buddhas and patriarchs or the ancient sages of all traditions and lineages on all planets in all Universes. This is the One Body. This body that is seamless with the rest of form and non-form. This mind that is seamless from the rest of Mind. Of course, all “dimensions” and all “manifestations” are seamless with each other, there are no fences. This is the great truth of Buddhism; the great delusion is said to be a fixed view of separate sense of self.



If we can let this truth in then we are at once free from events. In other words, we’re free from the karmic burden of right and wrong, free to do nothing at all. This can be called “obtaining the Dharma.” The word Rinzai uses repeatedly is *buji*, which means “no action” or action that has no intention, purpose, or meaning but flows as simply and directly as water flowing downhill. Water does not choose where it’s going; it just goes naturally downhill along the path of least resistance. When our response to each circumstance is as simple as water going down a hill or a cloud flowing around a mountain, we have realized *buji*. This kind of free flowing action is why a Zen monk is called an *unsui*, which means “cloud and water person.” Those who are Zen monks

have the intention to flow as freely as water or mist. All of us who are practicing Zen work to respond to every circumstance as simply and directly as flowing water.

Wow! What has been said so far only covers the first paragraph of this case!

Rinzai goes on to say, “Virtuous followers of the Way, right now this mountain monk, has no choice but to make such unworthy statements. But you followers of the Way, don’t be mistaken. According to my view, there really is not much complication. If you want to act, just act. If you don’t, just don’t!” I could go on and on about this statement, but why? (laughter)

To those who practice some sort of devotional Buddhism Rinzai says, “I would say all these deeds and paramitas are just gates of adornment of Buddhist ritual. They are not the Dharma itself. Even those who keep all kinds of regulations concerning food and uphold the old precepts or those who act like someone carrying bowl of oil without spilling even a single drop, unless their Dharma eye is open, they will have to repay their debts.” I have to be careful, I have to be mindful, I’ve got to be soooo mindful. I’m not going to spill a single drop (laughter) Oh, damn! (laughter) But we go on “I’ve got to be mindful!!! I’m going to be mindful!!!” It’s good to be mindful but we make mistakes. We can spill a little oil. It’s all right!

Unless our Dharma eye is open, we will all have to pay our debts for thinking that the Buddha Dharma can be found in the precepts, rules and regulations, rituals or in formulas like, “Be mindful and don’t spill a drop.” The Dharma can’t be realized by following some formula. It has to come from our own insight and awakening by stepping outside of our infantile sense of self. And, when we do, our heart opens. What’s it like to step out of the box? At that moment, you meet the Buddha and that’s you. You meet the Bodhisattva of Compassion and that’s you. Your heart is open and you can’t look at anything without feeling love, and wanting to dance with everyone and everything. Inside our box, we are free to love but not as much as when we step out. Only when we step out of our infantile sense of self can our heart open to deep, deep love. And it’s love for

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everything, animate and inanimate, great and small. This experience is the origin of our Great Vows. We can all repeatedly say the Great Vows, but until we've stepped out of the box, we don't really know what the Great Vow is. Immediately, upon stepping out of our box, we have a caring attitude and we vow to continue it.

If you haven't yet stepped out of your box and think emancipation is going to come from following some formula, being in the presence of the right teacher or getting hit on the head with a magic wand, think again. Rinzai says, "Whoever enters the Way without penetrating its essence will have to return the offerings they have received."

Rinzai then goes on to say a strange thing, "When the rich man becomes eighty-one years old, the tree will no longer produce mushrooms." This makes no sense when translated alone into English. Thank god for footnotes; here is the story behind this statement. Some monks were taking alms from a farmer, but they really weren't genuine practitioners of the Way, they had never really stepped out from their infantile sense of self. In order to repay their debt, at their death they were reincarnated as mushrooms on a nurse log on this farmer's land. The farmer always had bountiful harvests of mushrooms, that is until the farmer was 81 years old, when karmically the debt was finally paid off. Believe me that's a long time to be reincarnated as a mushroom. Take care!

The same goes for "... those who live alone on a solitary peak, or who eat once a day, or sit for a long time without lying down, or worship with circumambulations through the six periods, all these are nothing but creating karma." Even very noble actions will provide little or no help realizing Nirvana or enlightenment. Without investigating our own True Nature sufficiently, we will never really leave our box of infantile self-identity. In fact, relying on noble actions to emancipate ourselves backfires and creates more negative karma that in turn gives rise to negative consequences. So watch out!

Also, if you donate your head, eyes, marrow and brain to science, or give away your castle, wife and child, your elephant, horse and the seven treasures, don't think that that's the way to attain merit or Nirvana

or enter the Pure Land. Actions done with this intent invite the suffering of body and mind and end up in sorrow. I'm telling you, says Rinzai, it is better to do nothing than make all these efforts trying to accomplish something. In fact, doing nothing is much closer to being it. In other words, just be ordinary. There is nothing to attain; yet, there needs to be a shift in perception away from a fixed sense of a separated individuality. Nearly everything else will take care of itself.

Then Rinzai continues by pointing out that even a bodhisattva who accomplished the ten stages of practice, will never find a trace of this Follower of the Way. A genuine Follower of the Way moves like a bee, and leaves no trace. They are there and then gone, flowing as freely as water moving down a hill. Leaves no trace. Action without intent to gain anything leaves no trace, it just flows and is called *buji*. Action that is no action perfectly, spontaneously and creatively matches each circumstance as it arises. If one encounters such a person it is said, "that all heavenly deities are filled with joy; earthly deities raise their feet in adoration, and of all the buddhas in the ten directions, there are none who do not praise him. Why? Because the person of the Way who is listening to my talk right now leaves no trace of his being."

Rinzai is holding up a mirror to us and concludes his talk by saying we who are listening to his discourse are the beings that leave no trace. Yet, I'm sure we feel like we go through life leaving lots of traces. On the whole we are probably aware that we don't flow very well, in fact usually we feel pretty clunky. So how is it that we are the being that leaves no trace, but most often feel like a klutz? Any of us can have, and most people here have had, an experience where our heart opens and we feel free and wondrous. In other words, most have or will one day step out of the box of our separated sense of self. Even so, we live most of our life inside our box. It is as though we are mostly little baby Buddhas who live a lot of life in our cribs. When we step out of the crib, living outside the box is so simple. And, when we find ourselves back in our cribs, living inside the box feels narrow and difficult. We all have a lot of growing up to do to learn how to live outside our cribs. First we need to step even briefly outside of the box, get that open-hearted feeling, and let in the truth that we are one with Kannon

and the Tathāgata, then the real work begins when you come back to your crib. Before we can more consistently live out of the box we must clean out the stinky karmic baggage we have collected since birth. This may take as long to clean out as it took to collect. There's lots of karmic baggage that we must learn to combust, and this is the deep work leading to maturity in the Way. Zen practice is initially all about pushing us out of the box, which is helpful and grants us some perspective for doing the hard work of clean up our karmic baggage. We think of our box as something small and narrow, and it's true, we're rather small beings, nonetheless within the box is a whole universe. Cleaning it out and sorting through it is certainly not an easy task.

Stepping out of the box and having a great heart opening, feeling yourself connected seamlessly to Kannon, is a wonderful thing! But this is not the only kind of connection we can make outside of the box. Let me share with you some places you may have already visited or have yet to visit. Each koan in the Rinzaï Zen curriculum invites us to look in one direction or another outside the box. For example, not only can we feel incarnate as the protective and loving mother, Kannon, we can encounter the protective and loving father energy of Jizo, or realize the rigor, vigor and wisdom of Manjusri. Moreover, we can sit entirely alone in the universe, atop a sublime peak. We are invited to jump off a fathomless cliff where all sense of self and other are obliterated. We can meet the vast void from which everything arises. We are invited to connect with a rain drop, a moonbeam, or a flash of lightening in a summer storm. Eventually, we are invited to the pinnacle of Zen where Rinzaï says, "It is better to do nothing and to be plain and simple." This is when we incarnate as Hotei, the Holy Fool, returning to the market place with nothing to teach, or impart. As Hotei, we have no care for whether it is a blue sky or cloudy day and we make a cup of tea, wash a dish or sweep the floor in complete equanimity. Hotei has nothing to teach but teaches by example how ordinary activity can be enlightened activity or *buji*. This is considered the ultimate of Zen, nothing to impart, nowhere to go, and nothing to do. Completely transcending any idea of right or wrong, Hotei has no goals and does what needs doing, always with a generous loving heart.

It is difficult to connect with this sense of emancipation and unconditional compassion for very long. Sooner or later we discover that we have once again returned to the box of our own making. And the real work, according to Gempo Roshi, is to clean the karmic baggage in our box. Most of us have some resistance to working with our baggage. In some cases we can become so resistant to working with our baggage that we actually believe we have none. A big mistake! It is great to step outside the box, make a heart connection with Kannon and rest with Hotei, but our real work is to dedicate ourselves to cleaning out our karmic baggage. Since we are all seamlessly connected to one another, when our own box is relatively clear, our great vow motivates us to begin clearing the baggage of the collective unconscious. This is the deep work of Zen practice.

With gassho,

Genjo

Closing Incense Poem

Summer Sesshin 2012

*At noon a rainbow circles the sun,
Great Plum Mountain stands tall,
Ego is not separate from non-ego,
Who then hears the thundering silence?*

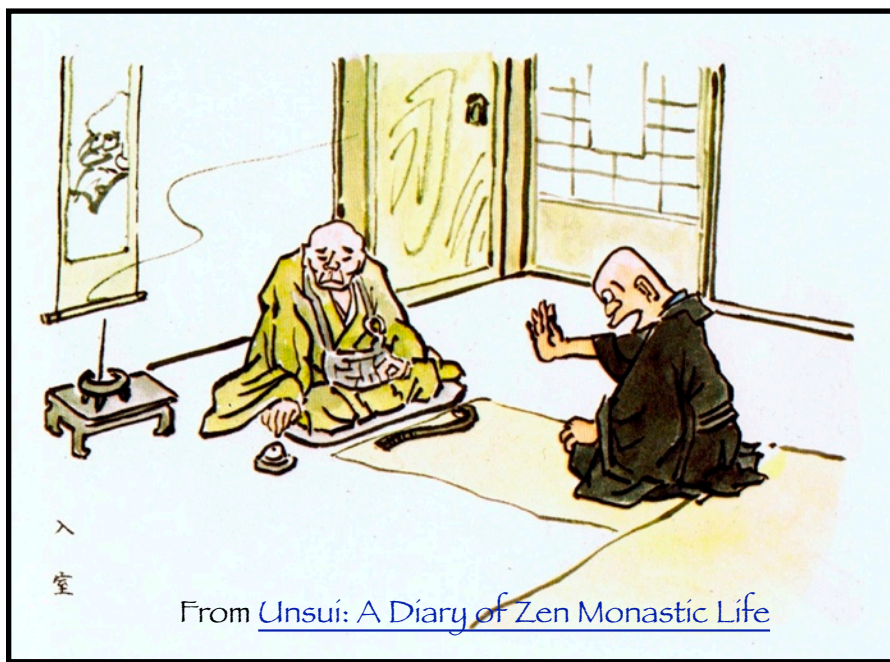


Dokusan in Rinzai Zen

Emily HoU Ross

Dokusan is a private dharma interview between a Zen student and a Zen teacher. The interview provides Zen students an opportunity to work on their practice one-on-one with a trusted teacher in confidence. The Japanese word dokusan translates as “going alone to a respected one” (独参). In this translation, it is clear that the student must be willing to “go alone” to meet the teacher, and that the encounter be respectful. The forms we practice for dokusan prepare us for this activity.

The content in dokusan relates more to the student’s personal practice and experience rather than to academic or theoretical matters. In our tradition, we often are presented with a koan during dokusan. With the support of the teacher, we practice with koans to get beyond “ordinary reality” At times, though, koans are not right for a student, in which case the teacher and student work on other matters of practice. Dokusan is a good time for the student to come to the teacher with questions about practice that arise while practicing zen. It is also a good time to share an insight or revelation that zen practice brought about. Students are discouraged from going into a personal issue (such as a challenging relationship or job) unless the issue relates very specifically to practice.



From [Unsui: A Diary of Zen Monastic Life](#)

Dokusan has become a critical element of Zen training, and is especially emphasized in the Rinzai tradition, which is the tradition of our temple. The spirit of dokusan is for the student to succinctly present the state of her practice to the teacher. This achieves two ends: the teacher can track, guide, and encourage the student's understanding, and the student can receive guidance, support and encouragement to continue her practice. The teacher applies a set of skillful means to help the student grow through zen practice. Dokusan hence is really about the student meeting herself, encountering her own nature directly. The teacher creates the space for the student to be met, exactly where she is in her understanding.

The essence of dokusan is for the student to present her understanding as succinctly as possible. That being said, dokusan may extend to a longer interview in some cases. If the student is working on a koan, say, and her understanding is clear, the teacher may test several koans during one interview, to take advantage of the student's heightened understanding in that moment. This is simply one form of encouragement the teacher can give the student. Other times, by means of deep practice, the student may become bewildered or scared, having uncovered a deep wound or a dark place in herself, and it is clear to the teacher that the

Continued on next page...

student is standing on shaky ground. In this case, the teacher may elect to stay with the process unfolding in the dokusan room until the student equilibrates to a more stable footing, before ringing the bell and sending her back to the zendo.

Although the formality of dokusan and all the teacher's "props" (the dark, candle-lit room, the robes, the incense, the keisaku, the pictures of the ancestors) may be intimidating, ideally during dokusan there is neither teacher nor student. Rather, there is "an encounter that goes beyond what's conceivable." (See <http://www.joansutherland.net/Pages/Talks%20and%20Essays/dokusan.htm>) The teacher is a student and the student is a teacher, and the apparent hierarchy may even become a source of play to further explore the dharma. All formality aside, the encounter between teacher and student is beyond rank or post.

It is quite natural for the student, however, to face fears of performing well for the teacher during dokusan. Self-consciousness, anxiety, doubt, and other emotional reactions that often accompany self-revelation are all part of what students have to practice with. Dokusan is a good place to share these reactions mindfully -- presenting them to the teacher illuminates to both parties where the student is at. Furthermore, facing the seeming terror of dokusan may uncover obstacles the student has to being naturally confident in her practice, and in her life. What matters is that the student be honest with herself in order to "go straight on." As Shunryu Suzuki wrote in *Crooked Cucumber*, "Every thing you do is right, nothing you do is wrong, yet you must still make ceaseless effort."

When studying koans in the Rinzai curriculum, in dokusan the teacher will usually give a short reply to the student's presentation of her koan. Common replies include "No", which means "more zazen, try again", "Not Yet", which means "making progress, but not yet a bullseye", "Isn't there more?", which means "yes, that's fine, but what more can be gleaned?", or "Let's move on", which means "Okay, let's work on the next koan." Occasionally, the student might hear the teacher say, "Good insight but it doesn't match what this koan is pointing at," or, "Wow, that's a new one!" which means the "student" has just shown the "teacher" a brand new way to

turn over an old koan. Each koan has the potential to spring open entirely new depths of understanding. It's as if each koan is a unique piece in a giant jigsaw puzzle, but one that has no borders. The koan curriculum is designed to reveal, over time, a multi-dimensional picture of reality. This is why it can be of great value for the student to journal her own response and the teacher's reply to a koan. After some study, the student will be able to go back and see how her understanding has developed.

Although the word koan means "public case", and interpretations of koans are publicly discussed and written about, and have been for centuries, koan study during dokusan remains a private matter between the student and the teacher. The whole purpose of koan study is for each student to cultivate her own true insight. In dokusan, the student receives assistance and encouragement to do so from a fellow trusted "follower of the way." It is poor form to share one's response to a koan with other members of the sangha. Also, in koan study, comparing where one is in the koan curriculum to where others are is imprudent; koans are about gaining an understanding through experience, and not at all about getting ahead, performing well, or being "more enlightened." With a borderless jigsaw puzzle and an infinite number of pieces to put together, where one begins or how far one has gotten are entirely irrelevant.

At Chobo-Ji, dokusan occurs primarily during sesshin and at scheduled times after zazen for students enrolled in Chobo-Ji's Spring or Fall Intensives. During sesshin, dokusan is offered 2-3 times a day. This ample access to private time with the teacher affords the student support in her practice during the accelerated practice of sesshin. But, it's important to remember that the essence of dokusan is to be concise. Ideally the private interview lasts one or two minutes. Also important to remember is that the teacher, not the student, determines when the interview is over by ringing the hand-bell. If a student has a matter of concern that either does not pertain to her practice or is experiencing a personal crisis that requires a more in-depth meeting, Genjo Osho is always available to schedule time outside of sesshin to discuss what's going on.

Autumn Sesshin

Sept. 21st - 28th

Please send a deposit by Sept. 16th, earlier if you want to guarantee a reserved spot. Make your deposit check to Chobo-Ji. The cost of sesshin is \$250 (less dues). **Sesshin will start Friday evening, 9/21, 7:30 PM; one sit, followed by a 30 min. orientation.** If you can't make Friday night please be at the zendo before 5AM the morning of Saturday, Sept. 22nd. Sesshin will end around 11AM, the morning of Friday, 9/28. The first half-day of Saturday, 9/22, may be taken as a mini-sesshin.

You may participate in daily zazen during sesshin, 6/22-27, mornings, 5:30-6:30AM and evenings, 7:30-8:30PM.

In-Depth Dharma Dialogue

Genjo Osho will be leading an in-depth Dharma Dialogue on the following three topics: (\$10 per meeting suggested)

Zen Ox Paintings, part 1,

Zen Ox Paintings, part 2,

Tozan's Five Ranks.

These are sequential, but they also each stand alone.

The dates for the three In-Depth Dharma Dialogues are as follows:

Saturday, Sept. 8, 9 – 10:30 am,

Thursday, Sept. 13, 7 – 8:30 pm,

Thursday, Oct. 25, 7 – 8:30 pm,

Please join Genjo Osho as he delights to explore these topics in-depth with you.

New Posts

Beginning Sept. 4th

Dee (Seishun) Endelman:
Shika (Host - Manager)

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

Steve (Ganko) Hanson:
Tenzo Assistant

John (Daikan) Green:
Jikijitsu (Timekeeper)

Tom (Shodo) DeGroot:
Jikijitsu Assistant

Peter (Shinke) Ilgenfritz:
Densu (Chant Leader)

Jane (Buji) Orvis:
Densu Assistant

Ralph (Muzan) Leach:
Jisha (Serves tea and takes care of zendo)

Sonny Sandeep Mishra:
Jisha Assistant

Edward (Daiki) Cadman:
Inji (Abbot Assistant)

Carolyn (Josen) Stevens:
Fusu (Treasurer and financial manager)

Tobin (Fudo) Youngs &
Jonathan (Zengyoku) Schwartz:
Introductory Zazen

Fall Intensive

Chobo-Ji's Fall Intensive will start Sept. 8th, with the Zen Ox Paintings Dharma Dialogue, and conclude on Dec. 9th. The purpose of the intensive is to give students the maximum opportunity to release entanglements by giving one's self to the Dharma. Anyone can participate who has...

A) made three consecutive monthly dues contributions; and

B) attended at least one weeklong or mini-sesshin in the last quarter.

Then to participate commit to the following:



An Introduction to *Zen*

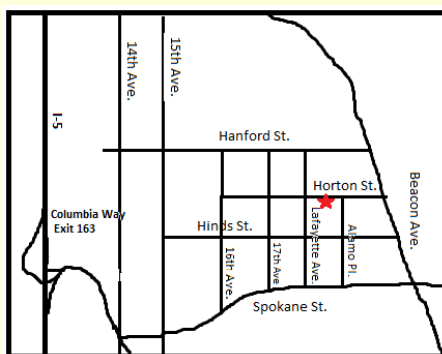
Four Weeks at
Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Temple

Tuesday Evenings 7:30-8:30

- 8-28 Zazen: seated meditation
- 9-4 Meditation in Motion: walking, chanting, bowing, working
- 9-11 Zen Meals: eating and preparing food mindfully
- 9-18 Roots of Rinzai Zen: koans and the Zen master
With Rev. Genjo Marinello-Osho



(Sat.) 9-22 Half-day Mini-Sesshin (intensive zazen retreat) 5:00-11:30 am



\$20 Donation Requested
\$40 for Series and Mini-Sesshin

Located on North Beacon Hill at:
1733 S. Horton Street
Seattle, WA 98144

For questions contact Fudo Tobin Youngs at
425 351 3929 · zen@choboji.org

www.ChoboJi.org



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 and the only one that is non-negotiable.

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 two books, one assigned to the group, [Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life](#) and a second selected from our reading

list found in the Chobo-Ji amazon.com [Bookstore](#). Also, attend the three scheduled sessions of the Sunday Book Intensive: 9/8, 10/28, 11/11.

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, 5:30AM; Sat. 6:30AM; M & W, 7:30PM, Sun. 6:30PM

Special Zen Introduction Series, Tuesdays, 8/28, 9/4, 9/11, 9/18 - 7:30-8:30PM

Dharma Talks, Sundays, 9/2, 9/16, 9/30, 10/7, 10/21, 11/4, 11/18, 12/16 - 8:30PM

Dharma Dialogue, "Zen Ox Paintings, part 1"...

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

Book Group, "12 Steps to Compassion"...

Dharma Dialogue, "Zen Ox Paintings, part 2"...

Board Meeting...

Autumn Sesshin (week-long Zen Retreat)...

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

Dharma Dialogue, with Genko Ni-Osho...

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

1st ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION...

All Faiths Music Program at S.U.

Dharma Dialogue, "Tozan's Five Ranks"...

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

Book Group, "12 Steps to Compassion"...

Dharma Dialogue, with Genko Ni-Osho...

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

Book Group, "12 Steps to Compassion"...

Sept. 8th, 9 - 10:30am

Sept. 9th, 5 - 11:30am

Sept. 9th, 12 - 2pm

Sept. 13, 7 - 8:30pm

Sept. 16th, 9 - 11am

Sept. 21st - Sept. 28th

Sept. 22nd, 5 - 11am

Oct. 11th, 7 - 8:30pm

Oct. 14th, 5-10:00am

Oct. 14th, 10am - 1pm (everyone is welcome)

Oct. 14th, 5 - 7pm

Oct.. 25th, 7 - 8:30pm

Oct. 28th, 5 - 11:30am

Oct. 28th, 12 - 2pm

Nov. 8th, 7 - 8:30pm

Nov. 11th, 5-11:30am

Nov. 11th, 12 - 2pm



Dai Bai Zan Cho Ba Zen Ji

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